

THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2015

11:30–13:00

Panel a:

room ES 226

A question of genre? Afro-European encounters in contemporary Black British fiction

This panel focuses on how Afro-European encounters are depicted in contemporary Black British fiction. It takes a particular interest in exploring the role of genre in narrating Black cultures and identities in Europe. Concentrating on neo-slave narratives, historical short fiction as well as travel and crime fiction, the papers demonstrate in which way generic features (such as plot structures, motifs, style) determine and/or enable different contemporary Afro-European visions. They inquire how encounters between Europe and Africa are imagined in texts engaging with genres that have either been perceived as traditionally 'white' (travel, crime and historical short fiction) or 'black' (slave narratives) respectively. Moreover, close attention will be paid to the question if, and to what extent, the contemporary texts in question encourage or impede transcultural dialogue.

This panel figures in the context of an international collaborative research project that addresses the manifold ways in which the idea of Europe has lodged in the imagination of artists from across the globe since the nineteenth century. Entitled *Imaginary Europes*, the project brings together academic partners in Belgium, Germany, Finland, Poland, Spain and the UK. Some of its findings are presented in a special issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (no. 51.2, 2015, Taylor & Francis), edited by Elisabeth Bekers, Maggie Bowers and Sissy Helff, with contributions by Jopi Nyman and Janine Hauthal.

Conveners: Elisabeth Bekers (U Brussels), Janine Hauthal (U Brussels) and Irene Pérez-Fernández (U Oviedo)

Chair: Janine Hauthal

Elisabeth Bekers:

"Addressing Britain's historical amnesia in British neo-slave narratives"

Several decades after the first female neo-slave narratives appeared in the US, Black British women writers, too, have begun to critically examine the issue of slavery and Britain's historically fraught relationship with Africa, their works appearing around the time the former British Empire was commemorating the bicentenary of the abolition of the African slave trade. They expand the African American genre of the neo-slave narrative (B.W. Bell 1987) by taking a specific interest in Europe's involvement in the slave trade and slavery, but likewise approach the institution of slavery from a myriad perspectives and embrace a variety of styles of writing (V. Smith 2007). This paper shows how authors like Bernardine Evaristo and Andrea Levy use the genre to address (prevailing) colonial biases and to restructure the tissue of lies that continues to be taught (Phillips 1987) by drawing explicit attention to the fictionality of history and the bias of the Western canon in their neo-slave narratives. Their approach, which relies on such postmodernist narrative strategies as role reversal, irony, humour, intertextuality and metafiction, is unmistakably agnotological (Proctor & Schiebinger 2008) as their literary efforts contribute to the rememorying (Morrison 1987) of the history of slavery and the acknowledgment of Britain's historical amnesia (Evaristo 2011).

Irene Pérez-Fernández:

"Re/visiting history in short fiction: Andrea Levy's *Six Stories and an Essay*"

For Andrea Levy, writing has become a personal tool for exploring historical and personal relations that contribute to the mapping of an Afro-European identity. In her latest work, *Six Stories and an Essay* (2014), Andrea Levy continues to explore the historical connections between Britain and the Caribbean in order to, as she herself has claimed, put the Caribbean back where it belongs in the main narrative of British history (2014: 19). In this paper, I shall focus on Uriah's War as a clear example of historical short fiction that revisits the Great War and gives Caribbean soldiers authorial voice. The 4th August 2014 marked the centenary anniversary of the outbreak of the conflict. Remembering fallen soldiers has been part of the commemoration campaign; yet, as has traditionally been the case with other events of historical proportions, the his/her-stories of some participants have been relegated to the margins of official accounts of history. Levy's short story points

towards the need to use historical fiction as a means to recover such lost voices and subvert the processes by which stories of combatants from the West Indian Regiment were rendered silent in Western historiography of the Great War. I shall demonstrate how Levy's short story undermines the authority of the archive as a starting-point for a journey into the past, makes the reader aware of the shortcomings of historical records, and validates fiction as the only means of bringing to life words persistently left unrecorded in official historical accounts.

Janine Hauthal:

**"Rewriting 'white' genres in search of Afro-European identities:
Travel and crime fiction by Bernardine Evaristo and Mike Phillips"**

Starting from the premise that both travel and crime fiction can be described as traditionally white genres, which tend to rely on national and ethnic stereotypes and a binary representation of space, this paper investigates how contemporary Black British authors revisit these genres and conjure up transcultural spaces and identities in their writing. Focusing on Mike Phillips' *A Shadow of Myself* (2000) and Bernardine Evaristo's *Soul Tourists* (2005), the paper examines the transcultural shift that emerges as the two authors engage with and rewrite the white genres of travelogue and crime fiction. At the same time, it seeks to demonstrate how the search for Afro-European identities in the two novels coincides with a second transcultural shift that results from imagining and locating Black British identities within Europe and not within an exclusively British (multicultural) context. While, previously, scholars have already scrutinized the colouring of crime fiction in Mike Phillips' writing (cf. Plummer 2006; López 2012) on the one hand and noticed a transcontinental sensibility and a hybridization of Europe in both novels on the other hand (cf. McLeod 2009, 2011; Nyman 2009; Pirker 2010), this paper seeks to connect both aspects in a comparative case study in order to explore the impact of genre on the imagination of Afro-European encounters in both novels.

The focus of the case study will be threefold: Firstly, genre-specific elements will be analysed in each novel. Special attention will be paid to instances of stereotyping with regard to the representation of characters, space and plot. Secondly, an analysis of how Europe is imagined will show how each of the two novels relates national, ethnic and transcultural discourses in a different way. Thirdly, genre-specific motifs and styles as well as the integration of verse and other text types (Evaristo) and instances of multilingualism (Phillips) are investigated in order to establish if (and to what extent) they allow transculturality to emerge on a formal level and thus contribute to the rewriting of travel and crime fiction's traditional literary formulas from an Afro-European perspective.

Respondent: Michaela Mudure (Babes-Bolyai U, Cluj)

Panel b:

room ES 227

Black Muslim identities

Chair: Ismahan Wayah (U Münster)

Margarita García Casado (U Cantabria):

"À part ça, tout va bien!

How irony and humor can become powerful tools in demonizing the other and oneself"

This communication will present the cinematographic productions of what started as a funny strategy chosen by a group of French youngsters of Muslim background from the city of Bordeaux to express their difficulties with living their dual culture. They created a web page called *À part ça, tout va bien / Besides this, all is fine* and started uploading short movies dealing with their identity problems. Humor and irony were to be their main weapons, as their motto is: 'Who said that Muslims have no sense of humor?'

Irony and humor in their videos constitute a double-edged weapon. They use it first of all to make fun of themselves, to laugh at the many lies and concessions they have to accept in their everyday life to cope with their dual culture. By so doing, humor enables them to establish and to maintain a safe distance between what they are supposed to be as Muslims and their own desire as youngsters living in a non-Muslim secular society. Their videos deal with controversial issues such as food prohibition, the question of the veil, the way immigrants are perceived back home, or the way Muslims are perceived in the western world, but also the way

they consider themselves, how their sense of identity and belonging traps them and prevents them from approaching the others from a non-biased perspective. As the videos demonstrate, they are victims to the same bias and stereotypes that affect their western counterparts.

I will then analyze how they use humor as a distorted mirror to confront western viewers who are not of immigrant origin and not of Muslim background with their own limitations and biases, equating us with them in our own limitations.

Sally Mary Riedel (U Hamburg):

“Black Muslims in Germany”

Through colonialism and the ongoing flow of migration over the past decades, Black Muslim communities and networks have been established in Europe. Black Muslims are part of German society. However, literature and data about African Muslims and their community structures is still scarce. Hybrid identities are a reality in segmented societies. But unfortunately, the discourse on hybrid identities and inclusion is dominated by fear, resentments and racist defense reactions. Focusing on Black Muslims in Germany, we observe multi-dimensional social boundaries. On the one hand, Islam in Germany is associated with stereotyped images and one-sided views on specific ethnical and national groups. On the other hand, African immigrants, not only in Germany, sustain individual and structural discrimination. Exclusion and othering has a huge impact on people’s self-definition. Through the perspective of youngsters born in Germany, with African descent and Muslim belonging, I will discuss what it means to be Black and Muslim in a white Christian majority society.

Asunción Aragón (U Cádiz):

“Voicing the silence: Diriye Osman’s *Fairy Tales for Lost Children*”

Diriye Osman is a gay British-Somali artist and writer who grew up in a very religious Muslim home. In 2013 he made his debut with the publication of *Fairy Tales for Lost Children*, a collection of short stories. The following year it was awarded The Polari First Book Prize for a first book which explores the LGBT experience. Diriye Osman is the first African-born author awarded with this prize. *Fairy Tales for Lost Children* has also been considered as one of the best books of that year by *The Guardian*.

In spite of its title, the book is an adult collection of stories interspersed with illustrations and Arabic calligraphy similar to the medieval form of fairy tales. The characters in these eleven short stories grow older as the book progresses, but they are always Somali queer people, lesbians, gays, transgenders, living under dire needs in London, Nairobi or Mogadishu – human beings trying to overcome displacement, alienation, stigmatization or solitude through optimism and the exercise of freedom. The myriad of characters portrayed by Osman speaks out the silences wrapped around their sexualities and desires since, as one of the characters in a short story states, “your silence will not protect you.” These stories may have been written for those children coming to terms with gender normativity and growing up lost in the midst of walled silences around the taboo of non-heterosexual practices. In fact, the author is heavily influenced by his own experience as a gay Somali disowned by his family but, as he comments, he is not interested in victimhood narratives but in proud and defiant people who face the hardships of life. Diriye Osman finely crafts the scattered lives of those queer survivors in their quest for freedom, and he achieves this in a beautiful prose full of poetry, Somali words and hope.

Panel c:

room ES 24

Reading children’s literature

Chair: Marga Munkelt (U Münster)

Petra Tournay-Theodotou (European U Cyprus):

“Representing diversity in Black British children’s literature: Jackie Kay’s novel *Strawgirl* (2002)”

Within the lively scene of Black British and British Asian writing, literature for children still occupies a marginal space. Even though some authors have managed to gain wider visibility – such as John Agard, Grace Nichols, Malorie Blackman, Benjamin Zephaniah, James Berry and Trish Cook, to name a representative few – children’s literature written by authors from an ethnic and racially diverse background is especially underrepresented when it comes to critical attention in (postcolonial) academic circles.

With the success of Malorie Blackman’s teenage book series *Noughts and Crosses* (2001) and her nomination

as the 8th Laureate for Children's Books in 2013, recognition has been given to and awareness has been raised about the necessity of books that provide a more representative range of fictional characters and reflect the cultural diversity of young people in Britain. However, the racist abuse following an inaccurate headline by Sky News which stated that Blackman had allegedly said that children's books have too many white faces indicate that children's books still have a long way to go (*The Guardian*, 26 August 2014).

Jackie Kay, who is predominantly known for her adult poetry and fiction, published two award-winning collections of poetry for children, *Two's Company* (1992) and *The Frog Who Dreamed She Was an Opera Singer* (1998), prior to the publication of *Strawgirl* (2002), her only children's novel to date. The experiences made by the novel's mixed-race female protagonist Molly (Maybe) MacPherson, who grows up on a farm in rural Scotland, in many ways echo Kay's own hybrid background as the daughter of a Nigerian father and a Scottish mother. While racism and Molly's dual heritage are prominent issues raised in the novel, *Strawgirl* also deals with difficult universal themes (such as loss, growing up, bullying, friendship etc.) relevant to a young readership irrespective of ethnicity and race.

Hence, in this paper I want to take a closer look at how Kay's novel covers the complexities of the cultural situation of contemporary society in the early 21st century and thus makes an important contribution to the call for greater diversity in children's books.

Sharmilla Beezmohun (*Wasafiri*, London):

"Reading ourselves, writing ourselves: Locating the UK's minority populations in children's literature"

"Malorie Blackman faces racist abuse after call to diversify children's books," ran the Guardian headline on 26 August 2014 (Flood np). The award-winning UK Children's Laureate, who is also the first black writer to hold that post, had been quoted erroneously on Sky News as saying that there were too many white faces in children's books, leading to a flurry of racist tweets and comments and pushing Blackman to temporarily quit Twitter. In the aftermath of this incident, Malorie Blackman referenced a social media campaign #weneeddiversebooks that had been launched in May 2014 following an event on children's literature at BookCon in the USA, where the panel had consisted of an all-white, all-male group of writers. Indeed, the need for change was reinforced by statistics on children's literature in America which showed that, in 2014, the Cooperative Children's Book Centre (University of Wisconsin-Madison) had received around 5,000 books, of which only 289 were by people of colour and 393 were about people of colour (Cooperative Children's Book Center website np).

Monitoring of this kind has not been carried out in the UK, highlighting the need to interrogate children's literature publishing in Britain at a time when nearly one in six of the country's population are black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). Has the British publishing industry failed to take account of the make-up of its population? Has it always been like this? And what can be done to change things? This paper will provide a brief history of the main provisions for the UK's BAME communities in children's literature publishing from the 1960s on. It will sketch out the current climate and situate that within the wider context of BAME authors in the UK, to try and offer suggestions for the present and future.

Aminkeng A. Alemanji (U Helsinki):

"Zebra world: The promotion of imperial stereotypes in a children's book"

Learning materials have become significant determinants of quality learning environment for young children. This study presents an example of such learning material in the Finnish context – a children's book entitled *Bibi muuttaa Suomeen* (transl. *Bibi moves to Finland*, 2005) by K. Kallio and M. Lindholm. The main concern of this article is how the us and them (Finland vs. Africa) meet or co-exist together in the book: it describes a young girl, Bibi's life in a traditional African village, and her move to Finland. The good intention of this book is to familiarize Finnish children with different cultures, and the life of immigrant children. In this study concept such as whiteness, normality and belonging are discussed within a critical approach to intercultural education. The data consist of a focus group interview conducted for student teachers and our own analysis of two experts in the book. The material was analysed with the help of critical discourse analysis and critical incident approach. The results show that despite of the good intention to demonstrate, and educate children about the immigration, and other people in a positive light this book maintains the social structure of Finnish society being white, modern and superior over the others in Africa. It is important that teachers and teacher educators would be able to challenge this type of representation of the world and immigration in children's books and in learning materials.

Panel d:

room ES 3

Memory and museums

Chair: t.b.c.

Carol Ann Dixon (U Sheffield):

“Black bodies, white privilege and the poetics of (mis-)representation: 21st-century ventriloquism masquerading as antiracist art in the live performance installation *Exhibit B* (The Human Zoo)”

In 2014 a broad coalition of anti-racist organisations joined forces with a nascent collective of artists, activists, academics and educationalists to launch parallel protest movements in the UK and France that actively opposed the staging of South African theatre director Brett Bailey’s controversial live performance installation featuring actors of African descent enchained in cages: *Exhibit B*. Through the establishment of campaign groups in London and Paris, “Boycott the Human Zoo” and “Collectif CONTRE-*Exhibit B*” respectively, a series of online and on-street interventions were initiated, which included securing c. 45,000 e-petition signatures and co-ordinating high-profile rallies attended by hundreds of protesters collectively articulating powerful, anti-racist counter-narratives to Bailey’s theatre project set to the drum-and-chant rhythms of the djembé.

Active involvement in these transnational anti-*Exhibit B* happenings on the streets of both capital cities has opened up new possibilities for researching how the historical othering of Africa and its diasporas in the 19th century contrasts with the 21st-century contemporary politics, poetics and cultural geographies of *Exhibit B* in Europe.

Through the use of documentary photographs and film footage recorded during the protests as well as references to contextual information about colonial-era human zoos and World’s Fairs, this multi-media montage of archival content and contemporary visual imagery conveys alternative responses to Bailey’s twelve tableaux vivants, as expressed by attending audiences, non-attending publics, and a diverse pool of cultural commentators who have contributed to the national and international media debates on this subject.

The presentation considers the impacts and legacies arising from the staging of *Exhibit B*, and the subsequent counter-provocations it generated, by reflecting on the events of 2014 within the wider framework of exploring effective and sensitive ways to curate difficult knowledge about past and present racisms for diverse audiences: as documented by scholars such as Okwui Enwezor, David Pilgrim, Leigh Railford and James Smalls; and also expressed aesthetically in the conceptual art practices of artist-curators such as Renée Cox, Coco Fusco and Fred Wilson. Concluding comments offer a tentative response to the question: Can the subaltern black body only speak in Western arts spaces through the ventriloquized voice of white privilege?

Nathalie Mba Bikoro (U Greenwich):

“Future monuments: Reinventing human memorials in post-colonial gestures towards freedom”

This research paper focuses on the generations of African Diaspora whose legacy of a forgotten past is now influencing the present and shaping the future within Germany’s history.

It has been often contested over the last 40 years why Germany’s past from the colonisation of Namibia to the First and Second World Wars has not been put into much public discussion and education. What are local and international communities doing to make these changes? How is our perception of African identities collaborating with other nationals from Europe, the Middle East and Africa within Germany?

In investigating cultural amnesias, the research paper proposes questions and methods concerning alternative historiographies and archives, along with case-studies of influential individuals who helped shaped human rights, and discusses how these contexts can be processed in education through visual interventions as living monuments of yesterday, today and tomorrow. By decolonising memory through aesthesis (visual experience), Future Monuments proposes an active re-invention of legacies and human memorials (www.futuremonuments.com).

Anna Rastas (U Tampere):

“Studying diaspora formations through a collaborative exhibition project”

My paper is a short overview of my ongoing research project in which I have applied participatory and action research methodologies to study African diaspora cultures and communities in Finland. The action phase of the study, the exhibition *The African Presence in Finland* at the Finnish Labour Museum Werstas (28 April – 8 November 2015), was planned and organized in dialogue and partnership with various African diaspora communities and individual scholars, artists, community leaders and NGOs. It provides new knowledge of the

various African diaspora communities in Finland, and their contributions to Finnish society and culture. The project was based on the idea that diversity and transformations of cultures due to migration can best be identified and examined in circumstances that allow people to perform their multiple identifications and agency as transnational and/or diasporic subjects.

My paper discusses how the documentation of the events (workshops, seminars, parties) that were observed and arranged during the project, as well as dialogue with participants, produced rich material for research on diaspora formations. It allows an examination of the places of African and African diaspora cultures in Finnish society, and reveals how individuals' identifications with various different communities and cultures at the same time are articulated and sometimes renegotiated.

16:15–17:45

room JO 1

Roundtable discussion
“Why is my professor not black?”

As predominantly white institutions, European universities play a key role in perpetuating structural racism. However, arguably secondary and tertiary education could also have a role in countering racism, questioning discrimination, and facilitating access for people of colour. These questions are pertinent in the emergent field of African European Studies. This discussion engages with the issue of structural and institutional racism in the German education sector.

Chair: Susheila Nasta (Open U, Milton Keynes)

Speakers: **Karim Fereidooni** (U Heidelberg)
Shanell Johnson (UCL)
Natasha A. Kelly (U Münster)
Emily Ngubia Kuria (HU Berlin)
Linda Supik (KWI Essen)
Vanessa Thompson (U Frankfurt)

FRIDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2015

9:45–11:45

Panel a:

room ES 226

Remembering Black German history

Chair: Nkechi Madubuko (sociologist; free-lance moderator, e.g. Ministry of Family Affairs; TV journalist, ZDF; author of *Akkulturationsstress von Migranten*, 2010, and *Empowerment als Erziehungsaufgabe*, forthcoming 2016)

Marion Kraft (Bielefeld):

**“Transatlantic connections, memory, postmemory and memoirs
of Black Germans of the postwar generation”**

In 2015 we commemorate the end of World War Two, 70 years ago, and Germany's liberation from fascist rule. Among the allied troops there were African and African Caribbean soldiers, whose contributions to the defeat of Nazi dictatorship have only in recent years found adequate recognition in some research works in the U.S. In

Germany, this part of the war and postwar history remains largely unknown. The same applies to the history and present situation of the generation who were the offspring of Black GIs and white German women. During the first two decades after the war, these children were considered to be 'a social problem' in Germany and often were objects of sociological and biological research that was still largely based on racial theories of the fascist era. Many were as children adopted by African American families, and some of them have founded organizations of Black Germans in the U.S. In Germany, many have been active over the past three decades in the growing Black Community that encompasses different groups of the African diaspora.

With a focus on life writing, literary analyses and auto-ethnography, this paper deals with the different experiences Black Germans of the post-WWII generation have made on both sides of the Atlantic and describes social and cultural processes of identification, self-representation and the forging of cross-cultural alliances. This contribution is based on a more comprehensive study to be published later this year in an anthology in which formerly so-called "colored occupation children" speak in their own voice, thus rendering themselves subjects rather than the objects of research. Turning from the signified to the signifier is not only an act of self-definition, but, in this case, also a change of the lens in view of Germany's post-WWII history, transatlantic connections, as well as the experiences and perspectives of Black Germans born in the post-war era.

Christel Temple (U Pittsburgh):

"Longing for Germany/the German: Afro-European African Americans and European nostalgia"

Studies on the Afro-German experience center the narratives of Germans of African descent in their processes and innovations of critically documenting heritage, legacy, community, and personhood within Germany and among geographies of the non-German parent, and a secondary emergent corpus of works increases awareness of how this core experience further becomes transnational and transcultural. Attentive to the latter, this presentation relies on methodologies and paradigms from the fields of cultural memory studies, migration studies, ethnography, and U.S.-based Africana Studies to explore the intersectional identities and critical worldviews of Afro-Germans who have migrated to the United States. Of interest is this group's tendency to define and sustain German national and German familial traditions, to develop practices that celebrate and memorialize nostalgia, and to reconcile traumatic kinship histories. These are key concepts as this group cultivates and transmits German identity, not necessarily Afro-German identity, to their African American descendants. Because most of the Afro-Germans migrated during childhood and maintain contact only with white German relatives, their German identity constructs are not aware of or conversant with themes of empire, colonialism, post-colonialism, and Afro-German socio-political oppression or invisibility. This research is attentive to possibilities of expanding global discourses on Afro-German experience.

Mathias Donfouet (U Paris X):

"Hunting for the colonial: German colonialism and migration in West African postcolonial literature"

Given its relatively short duration, German colonial rule has been accorded a marginal role in the historiography of colonial Africa. Recent writings, however, illustrate that German colonialism has never been fully forgotten. The lasting heritage of the colonial encounter with Germans is still visible in textual productions of African migrants. This contribution focusses on Priscilla Manjoh's *Snare* and Georges Holassey's *Si jamais ils tarrêtent, parle-leur du wharf allemand*, and Nzinsou's *Le médicament* and investigate how the colonial past is reframed in contemporary narratives of African migrants in Germany.

Kevina King (U Massachusetts):

"Ein Schwarzes Wissenarchiv / A Black German Archive of Knowledge: Examining Whiteness and Germanness"

In January 2015 the University of Bremen's Black Studies program was heavily critiqued via a public community statement signed by Black German scholars as well as Black Studies scholars and activists in and from Germany, the U.S., Austria, France and the Netherlands. In the *Community Statement: "Black" Studies at the University of Bremen*, the undersigned, one of them being Angela Davis, argued against the creation of a Black Studies program at Bremen that consists of white scholars only. They maintained that "[t]his is not only procedurally egregious and unethical but also reinforces the colonial model of expropriation: Black Germans can serve as the 'raw resource' or 'native informants' for white academics but are not permitted to act as scholars in their own right." The authors of the *Community Statement* position Black Studies as a crucial addition to higher education at German institutions, which should always involve Black scholars. They also point to the politics that deeply inform Black Studies: "In a world in which the killing of Black people and the wanton expropriation

of Black intelligence is the norm, the inseparability of the academic *and* political found in Black Studies offers as [sic] a significant defense against intellectual and physical violence.” It is precisely this inseparability that enables Black Studies in, or in regards to, Germany to be a fruitful addition to the global scope of Black diasporic methodologies. Black Studies vitally undermine the centrality of western thought, modernity and enterprise by offering an alternative that shifts the focus to the indispensable racial subjugations that had, and have, to take place when creating and perpetuating hegemonic white supremacist power structures.

In my paper I will, from my own positionality as a Black German studying in the US, investigate this inseparability in the form of what Black German Studies scholar Maureen Maisha Eggers called “Ein Schwarzes Wissensarchiv” (“A Black Archive of Knowledge”) in her contribution to *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte: Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*. I will predominately focus on this anthology, but also on the scholarship of Black (German) Black Studies scholars: May Ayim, Noah Sow, Fatima El-Tayeb and Grada Kilomba. I will illuminate how and what the contributions by Black Black Studies scholars add to this Black (German) Archive of Knowledge, which according to Eggers consists of any data on whites collected by Blacks in order to navigate, save, and structure Black lives in the midst of whiteness. Black knowledge about white hegemony, and the examination of it, functions then not only as a way to resist it, but also as a way to make effective space for Black scholarship which in 2015 is still odiously negated.

Panel b:

room ES 24

AfroEuropean visual and online cultures

Chair: Courtney Moffett-Bateau (U Duisburg-Essen)

Jeanne Essame (U Madison):

“I’m every Woman:

Angèle E. Essamba’s ways of seeing and showing the black female body against the colonial gaze”

Cameroon-born photographer, poet, dancer and choreographer Angèle Etoundi Essamba celebrates black womanhood in her works by positioning the black female body outside the exoticizing, oversexualizing colonial gaze. The black women of Essamba’s poetic images are no static, primitive, one-dimensional visions of the black female; rather, they embody the multiple forms of womanhood from singular sensuality to delicate strength. Unlike Saartjie Baartman, the young Khoi Khoi woman who was brought to Europe as a case study in the 19th century, the slaves in Louis Agassiz’s daguerreotypes who were used to collect some measurement data to classify races, or the colonized, exotic men and women whose pictures were turned into postcards to illustrate the essentialized primitivism of Afro-descendants and justify colonial projects, Essemba’s woman seems to have the power to reclaim herself. In pieces such as *Roots 3*, her unapologetic African heritage is empowering her, shielding her away from colonial subjugation.

This presentation seeks to demonstrate how Essamba frees the black female body from the colonial gaze through choreographed stances, striking plays on colors, light, texture, symbolic accessories and powerful backgrounds that situate her models outside of its reach, creating instead a safe space where layered identities can be expressed.

Temitope Abisoye Noah (NYU):

“Towards an African metanoia: Haile Gerima on liberation and the New Man”

In Haile Gerima’s film *Teza*, set in the 1970s through 1990s, the main character, Anbe, is an Ethiopian-born medical student who becomes active in politics during his studies in Germany. Although he does not completely agree with socialist ideals, Anbe accepts them as the only available solution to his society’s problems. Eventually, however, Anbe experiences an identity crisis. The political system he pledges loyalty to turns against him. He is surrounded by a group of socialists in Leipzig who beat him, throw him off a high building, and leave him for dead.

As Anbe lies in his hospital bed fighting for his life, something miraculous happens. He hearkens the call of a priest who ushers him into a new world. This world is not the afterlife, but his own childhood village in Ethiopia. There, he finds himself under the care of his mother, who saves his life, both physically and spiritually. My paper reads Anbe’s transformation as Gerima’s interpretation of Frantz Fanon’s politics of liberation. Through Anbe’s healing, Anbe is able to become a new man, as defined by Fanon, and he is also able to teach

others how to become new men. For Gerima, the Africans' road to liberation is not European politics, but a distinct system rooted in African culture and spirituality. As Fanon asserts and *Teza* demonstrates, Africa possesses her own key to freedom from her travails, and need only look into her heart and soul to find a gateway into serenity.

Eva Ulrike Pirker (U Freiburg):

“Politics and heritage: A reading of Amma Asante’s film *Belle* (2013)”

My paper investigates strategies of representation at work in Amma Asante's recent feature film *Belle* (2013), which was inspired by the ominous figure of Dido Elizabeth Lindsay. Dido (as she is referred to in Asante's picture) appears in a famous painting from 1779 by Johann Zoffany with her cousin Lady Elizabeth Murray. The painting was commissioned by Dido's great-uncle William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield, in whose family she grew up. Information on the circumstances surrounding Dido's life are, in spite of her aristocratic upbringing, scarce; she may have been the daughter of a West Indian slave and a British naval officer, John Lindsay, who brought her to England as a child and placed her in the care of his uncle.

There are countless figures of African descent in European history whose stories are even less accessible than that of Dido. As for Britain, the lives of the "several thousands of Africans [...] living and working [there...] are so ill-documented that it requires an effort of imagination to picture them at all," Robert Winder writes. "We still only have fragments." (Winder, 129–130)

It is not my aim to investigate questions of historical authenticity. My interest is in the ways in which the life of Dido is communicated for a 21st-century British and global audience. Questions addressed in my paper will therefore be: What makes Dido's story exceptional among that of countless other black European subjects in the 18th century? What elements of Dido's story are used in the film, and what aspects of 18th-century life in Britain are emphasized? To what end? What are the film's representational strategies and politics? And what kind of audience is addressed? Last but not least, I should like to touch on the question of whether and how this film might be used in a classroom context.

Karen Afia Peprah-Gyamfi (U Münster):

“How black women use the internet to change the conversation around race and beauty”

As mainstream fashion magazines predominantly have white cover models and continue to photoshop and lighten the occasional black cover model (e.g. Lupita Nyong'o and Kerry Washington), it is becoming more and more important for black women to create spaces and use platforms where they can express themselves away from Eurocentric beauty standards. From 2007 onwards the natural hair movement has become one of many ways for black women to redefine conventional beauty standards and combat Eurocentric ideals. I wish to take a closer look at how Twitter, Instagram and blogs written by black women have helped shape and furthered the discussions on black fashion and beauty in Germany and the UK. The rise of camera phones facilitated the popularity of the selfie, which allowed black women to use sites like Instagram to empower themselves through positive feedback in the form of solidarity and celebration within their own communities and diminish the power of the White patriarchal gaze. The role of the internet had and still has a heavy influence on Black women's renewed empowerment in terms of beauty and fashion, as more and more black women now have a possibility to showcase their talents when it comes to make-up and styling, giving them more visibility and encouraging young black women and girls to do the same. This visibility is incredibly important to the movement, as before the internet black women in the media were presented with the white gaze in mind. I will focus on the sites hairspiration.blogspot.co.uk and womaninthejungle.com, which use social network sites as platforms to frame their and other black women's beauty in a way they see fit. What can be drawn from this is that the internet can be seen as a playmaker for making beauty and fashion more inclusive of black women.

Panel c:

room ES 227

AfroEuropean cities and spaces

Chair: Deborah Nyangulu (U Münster)

Marleen De Witte (U Amsterdam):

“From Bokoe to Azonto: How being African became cool in Amsterdam Southeast”

This contribution focuses on the recent emergence of an “Afro-Dutch” category of self-identification among young people in Amsterdam’s ‘Black’ Southeast district. Over the last few years, young Dutch people of what in official discourse would be termed “different ethnic backgrounds” – “Surinamese,” “Antilleans,” “Ghanaians” and “other Africans” – have been showing a new sense of (and search for) a shared African heritage, and a growing desire for public exposure and recognition of their Africanness. Being hotly debated as part of identity politics, Africanness is also, and increasingly so, mobilized in the arena of lifestyle and entertainment, for example manifesting itself in (social) media initiatives, the performing arts, popular culture, and bodily fashions. A great variety of cultural entrepreneurs, from fashion designers, lifestyle magazines and dance groups to bloggers, djs and other taste-makers, address a growing local market for African styles. Inspired by globally circulating images and sounds of Africanness, and thriving on aesthetic appeal, design, and marketing, they vest ‘being African’ with an aura of urban cool that attracts increasing numbers of young people and provide them with the materials with which to flesh out their – often newly found – identities.

Drawing upon ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in Amsterdam Southeast, this paper argues for approaching ‘Afro-Dutch’ as a subcultural style rather than a given ethnic identity. It thus calls attention to the process of becoming Afro-Dutch and the practices of self-styling that are part of this process. Discussing examples from the realms of music, dance, and fashion, the paper disentangles the different spatial levels in which young black people’s adoption of African music, dance, and fashion styles is situated: the global circulation of African popular cultural styles, the representation of Africa and Africans in the national mainstream media, and shifts in the very localized dynamics between Dutch-born Afro-Caribbeans and African postmigrants.

Madhu Krishnan (Bristol):

“(Re)mapping black Paris: African space in the imperial centre”

In his study of francophone African writing, *Nationalists and Nomads*, Christopher L. Miller makes the observation that, over the course of the twentieth century, “France, through a strange twist of fate, [has become] an appendage of Africa” as much as Africa, through colonialism, was once an appendage of France (56). If the project of French colonialism was to absorb the African continent into a Greater France, its legacy, Miller argues, is precisely an inversion of that same rendering. In this paper, I explore the development, performance and evolution of this Africanised France by examining three novels which centre around the migrant experience in Paris: Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s *Aventure ambiguë* (1961), Calixtha Beyala’s *Le petit prince de Belleville* (1992) and J.R. Essomba’s *Le paradis du nord* (2000). In each of these works, Paris is presented as a striated space characterised by internal tensions and requiring constant negotiation for its migrant-citizens. Through the re-mapping of space, symbiotic entanglement of public and private spaces, and gendering of space, each text presents a vision in which the Africanisation of the city remains an agonistic process mediated by the persistent legacies of imperialism and colonialism. By reading the discrepant means through which a vernacular, Afro-Parisian spatiality emerges across time, this paper considers the often conflictual modes of diasporic engagement which appear across these texts, as well as the tension which persists between the potentiality of Paris as a space of liberated self-expression and its reality as a space of abstract divisions and oppression.

Shauna Morgan Kirlew (Howard U):

“Kei Miller’s cartographer(s) and the mapping of Black identity onto a European landscape”

Kei Miller’s critically acclaimed poetry creates new pathways into language, and speaks from and to a diaspora still struggling to locate self amidst its many evolving and conflicting identities. Both in form and content, this exciting new poetry at once calls out to the Caribbean space while pulling and threading linkages to U.S.-American and Afro-European experiences. Appearing in his collections *There Is an Anger That Moves*, *A Light Song of Light* and *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*, Miller’s poetry presents the experience of a diaspora standing in defiance of cultural, and specifically linguistic, hegemony as the poet defines and reshapes identity and notions of place and belonging through language and body imagery.

This paper explores the ways in which the poet's linguistic movements against the normative engage and map black identities onto European landscapes through corporeal and verbal language. Miller presents male and female cultural cartographers who participate in actively mapping identities across various cultural landscapes. In particular, Miller's various personae represent immigrants who continue to view themselves as outsiders even though they make incursions into the local and ultimately regional culture of their new residential spaces.

Beatriz Gómez Ferreras (U León):

"Hybrid identities: The beyond in *Small Island* and *White Teeth*"

The purpose of this paper is the study of the construction of hyphenated identities in Europe through the analysis of two contemporary literary works. *Small Island* by Andrea Levy and *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith are perfect examples of the evolution of the matter and its problematic. With the beginning of the post-Second-World-War period in *Small Island* and a present-day setting in *White Teeth*, a comparison is established, taking this chronological frame into consideration. Thus, there is a reminder of how diasporic movements have built up this notion of in-between spaces over time.

Since both Levi and Smith are Afro-Europeans, their novels, embedded in their own context and experience, provide very valuable subject matter in the field of African and Postcolonial Studies. These narratives are nourished from a Jamaican inheritance, but preserve their strong British idiosyncrasy. Paradoxically, although second-generation individuals demand and deserve recognition in their homeland, this is not always fulfilled, and a feeling of unbelonging emerges. In the case of immigrants, the same feeling arise when they do not recognize themselves as nationals of their country of origin because their behaviour and way of life have definitively changed as time went by. Then, where do they fit in both cultures and societies?

The methodology employed in this study is based on the interpretation of postcolonial theories applied to those texts. The research paper will offer a perspective of the displacement suffered by some members of society. The role played by the pre-conceived and romanticized ideas of a nation is crucial to understanding certain conducts. The difficulties that they face to feel part of a community, and their inner burdens, will be studied as well. The paper will be of interest to Literature and African European Studies scholars, and to all those involved with these subjects.

Panel d:

room ES 2

Diasporas, migrations and movements

Chair: M'bare Ngom (Morgan State U)

Julia Borst (U Bremen):

"Migration and the transcultural subject in Agnès Agboton's writings"

Agnès Agboton is considered to be one of the most important voices in Afro-Spanish literature. Born in Benin, she has lived in Ivory Coast and then migrated to Catalonia in Spain where she started writing in Gun, Catalan and Spanish. The fact that she lives as an African woman in Europe and is influenced by European and African cultures plays a major role in her writings that revolve around the condition of the transcultural subject. With a close reading of her autobiographical text *Más allá del mar de arena* (2005) and her poetry collections *Canciones del poblado y del exilio* (2006) and *Voz de las dos orillas* (2009), I will show that she understands transculturality – or, as she writes, *mestizaje* – as a condition of multidirectional belonging challenging concepts such as tolerance or integration that, in her opinion, imply a symbolical subordination of the one tolerated/integrated. I will elaborate that, by raising the question of a respectful encounter with the Other and the coexistence of cultures, the author invites her readers to reconsider one-sided truths and world views. By this, Agboton discusses whether a transcultural perspective can be seen as a chance for society to overcome prejudices and discrimination.

Marco Polo Hernández-Cuevas (North Carolina Central U):

"Beatriz de Palacios: The sixteenth-century AfroSpanish woman of Mexico"

While tracing the earliest post-Colombian trade routes that brought Africans to New Spain, I stumbled across references to an Afrodescendant Spanish woman called Beatriz de Palacios who may have been born in Andalusia, Spain, around 1502. Not uncommonly, the colonial racial terms used to describe her varied, but I

have been able to piece together a biographical sketch that surprised me. AfroAndalusian Beatriz fought under Hernán Cortés in 1521 during the siege and surrender of Tenochtitlan, the capital city of the Aztec empire. She remained there and contributed to the material and genetic building of Mexico City and beyond.

To my knowledge, scarcely a paragraph has been written about women's participation in that historical episode of global renown and impact, particularly women perceived as "colored."

I propose to revive Beatriz' life within the historical, geographical and cultural environment that produced her, and in time publish a monograph as well as make a short video documentary. This work would advance Gender, Feminist, Sexuality, Hispanic, Chicano, African, African-American, AfroSpanish, AfroLatin@, AfroHispanic and AfroMexican studies, among others, specifically; and the humanities generally. Until the present, the prevailing academic work regarding Mexicans in Mexico and the United States of America misunderstands Mexicans and Mexican Americans and their gamut of cultures as a mix of Euro-Spanish and Amerindian heritages exclusively. Although the African lineage of Mexico can no longer be negated, the present multidisciplinary work will incorporate the unknown AfroAndalusian dimension of Mexico's past and present Africanization process that started in the sixteenth century with Beatriz de Palacios and countless other African and Afrodescendant women and men who began to arrive in Mexico with the Cortés invading force.

The tentative chapters include:

- I. Historical sources
- II. Africans and Black Moors in Spain 711–1492
- III. The Palacios of Trigueros, Huelva in the County of Niebla, Seville 1490–1502:
Cristobal Palacios and Antona Garcia
- IV Free Blacks in the 1502 Fray Nicolas de Ovando fleet that sailed from Seville to Santo Domingo with royal orders to relieve Christopher Columbus
- V. AfroAndalusian Beatriz de Palacios:
The first Black conquistador woman in Tenochtilan, the capital of the Aztec empire 1519–1521
- VI. AfroAndalusian Beatriz de Palacios: Mother of Mexican Mestizaje/Africanization 1521–1568
- VII. AfroAndalusian Beatriz de Palacios, other Africans and Afrodescendants and
the birth of the current Chilangoor [Afro]Mexican food in sixteenth-century Mexico City.

Francesco Cattani (U Bologna):

"Journeys into Afro-Britain"

In my paper I would like to analyse two texts, *Black Safari*, a 1972 mockumentary directed by Colin Luke, and *Behind the Frontlines* (1988), a travelogue by Ferdinand Dennis. Both texts operate a re-definition of Britishness, defined by Stuart Hall in his essay "Whose Heritage" as a process which implies not a simple inclusion in, but a complete re-vision of, the national tradition.

Black Safari is a parody of the exploration documentary which presents the reversal of a colonial scientific survey: Time has changed. It is time we have our Livingstones, our Mungo Parks, our Stanleys. It tells the journey of a group of Africans approaching the dark coasts of Britain and sailing up the Liverpool to Leeds canal in order to locate the geographical centre of this remote island. The group is composed by a naturalist, an anthropologist, a reporter and a navigator who find and discover a mysterious and hostile environment, collect specimens, rename places and plants, meet the local tribesmen and try to understand their customs and their unintelligible dialect.

Behind the Frontlines collects Ferdinand Dennis' impressions after a journey undertaken in the late 1980s across the Midlands, from Liverpool to London-Brixton, via Sheffield, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol and Bath. He narrates his encounters with different black communities, searching for their physical and cultural space within a Britain in decline, still struggling to come to terms with its loss of Empire and diminished world stature.

Jennifer Leetsch (U Würzburg):

"Love, between the lines: Diaspora wiggle spaces in Helen Oyeyemi"

"Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking. The poem tells me it's no big deal that I'm not like Snow. I can be another thing; I'm meant to be another thing." (Helen Oyeyemi, *Boy, Snow, Bird*)

The twenty-first century sees itself confronted with a plethora of narratives produced by African migration and the diaspora: voices and texts proliferate within the complex and ambiguous interplay between roots and routes, travel and being-at-home and migratory female voices emerge which speak louder and in more wilful and fractious ways than ever before. This talk wants to examine the unruly structures (and non-structures) of love, sexuality, desire and romance and their entangled relationship with the construction of inherently female

and feminine diasporic spaces by engaging with the works of Helen Oyeyemi.

Set in the English border town of Dover (*White is for Witching*), in an America struggling with histories of racial prejudice (*Boy, Snow, Bird*), or somewhere in the interstices of London and Nigeria (*Icarus Girl*), Oyeyemi's novels continuously negotiate the dynamics and movements between spaces, bodies and nations which lie at the heart of their romances. By de-essentialising constructions of Black British identity, Oyeyemi's transnational tales of love and loss show how desire harbours in itself processes of troubling and of resistance, of breaking down certain boundaries. To carve out their self-hoods, her female characters incessantly move between the lines; or, as Sara Ahmed says: "Sometimes to create space we have to wiggle about."

Panel e:

room ES 333

Workshop:

Bodies in transit: Racialized female bodies and Afro-European counter-discourses

Keeping a foot on classic theories of difference (racial, sexual, gender) at the intersection of feminist, postcolonial and diaspora studies, paying special attention to neo-imperialism and neo-Orientalism and their impact on cultural production (using founding texts by Butler, Lorde, Hardt and Negri, Gilroy, Huggan, Spivak, and black feminists), this workshop intends to explore the lingering effects of the commodification and mistreatment of racialized female bodies resulting from both slavery and colonialist inhuman practices. More specifically, by focusing on the work of contemporary women poets and writers from the African diaspora, and more specifically the Afro-European diaspora, the workshop will examine the ways in which they have posited a counter-discourse that reasserts their humanity and dignity through an empowering reassessment of orality, performance, and sexuality.

Convened and chaired by the three speakers: Silvia Castro (U Malaga), Manuela Coppola (U Calabria) and Mar Gallego (U Huelva)

Mar Gallego will draw on the discursive and performative construction of bodies (Butler) to challenge those stereotypical and demeaning images projected onto black diasporic women and articulate their response through healing narratives (Wilenz) that transcend neo-Cartesian rigid dichotomies and rethink their corporal realities and their cultural legacy. Concretely, she will investigate the retelling of traditional tales of two contemporary griots in two different geographical contexts: Agn s Agboton in Spain and Ribka Sibhatu in Italy. In this sense, her analysis will also evolve around vital issues of memory and identity, and the multiple ways in which these two writers/poets choose to transmit their oral traditions as a means of empowerment and resistance against dominant visions.

Manuela Coppola will examine the performative aspects in the work of contemporary women poets of the African diaspora, investigating the ways in which, as they bridge the chasm between body and mind, these poets claim the intelligence of the body (NourbeSe Philip). In particular, she will address the role of performance as intellectual commitment in the work of two Afro-European women poets, Patience Agbabi in Britain and Gabriella Ghermandi in Italy, self-described poetical activist and *cantora*, respectively. The paper will argue that, as they both share a common focus on the interaction between writing and orality, the page and the stage, public and private spaces, memory and performance, their work offers new directions in Europe for the unsettling role of poetry as a form of intellectual commitment.

Silvia Castro will follow specific theoretical approaches which shed light onto our understanding on the self-making of sexual identities and practices as they travel the networks and spaces of the African Diaspora. First, she will approach the fields of sexuality studies, queer theory and black cultural studies from Gloria Wekker's views in her book *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora* (2006), which challenges the historical invisibility of black women's sexuality within Euro-American discourse. As Audre Lorde stated in a series of public addresses delivered between 1976 and 1979, we need to start writing about black women's sexuality in ways that account for difference, being critical about the ways in which most scholarship on black women's sexual lives has focused on the devastating history of systemic and epistemic violence, whilst the innersexual lives of black women, how they think about themselves sexually remain a

mystery (Wekker, 76). The second theoretical tool employed will be Jacqui Alexander's approach to a new interpretation of hegemony and a progressive feminist response to resistance to that hegemony in its alliance with transnationality and globalization. In her book *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (2006), Alexander points to the need of feminism and queer studies to take up transnational frameworks that foreground questions of colonialism, political economy, and racial formation; for a thorough re-conceptualization of modernity to account for the hetero-normative regulatory practices of modern state formations; isolating the ideological/power currents that knit together to show the constraint of sexuality as a tool of the state in the imperialist project. In the light of the above considerations, she will offer a critical reading of the *cuentos* of María Nsúe, and the poetry of Raquel Illombé in Spain.

15:00–17:00

Panel f:

room ES 226

The Black diaspora and Germany: Migrations, imaginaries, interventions

In this panel, the young scholars' research network "Black Diaspora and Germany" would like to present some samples of its research. Founded in 2007, funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) from 2010 to 2014, and currently working on a joint book publication, the network explores the past and present experiences of the Black diaspora *in* Germany, and the myriad connections of the international Black diaspora *with* Germany, from an interdisciplinary perspective. The project attempts to foster networks of young scholars working in these fields – amongst each other, with more established scholars, with Black social and cultural activists, and with the wider Black community – thus creating connections which reach far beyond the network's original core membership. While the panel cannot possibly represent all the research fields covered by the projects, we hope to provide case studies which at least open a few windows on the kind of work currently being done by some of our long-standing members and more recent associates.

We would like to begin with a case study from the colonial period, where historian Robbie Aitken explores the lives of Black people who came to Germany as personal servants before World War One. A second case study on migration experiences focuses on the contemporary period: working with approaches from the field of Human Geography, Inken Carstensen-Egwuom discusses discourses on masculinity, intimate relationships and power in the Nigerian diaspora in Germany. The next two papers provide more directly interventionist perspectives, giving insight into current issues of racism, discrimination, education, body politics, and the use of space. Modupe Laja, a community organiser and activist with a background in Literary and Cultural Studies, traces trajectories of racism among German children and adolescents, addressing the intersectionality of discrimination forms and tackling issues of colorism, racism and sexism. Anthropologist Cassandra Ellerbe-Dueck reflects on the fascination of white people with Black hair, exoticisation, white invasions of Black personal space, and Black resistance. Although these two papers mainly deal with contemporary issues, they also reflect on continuities between prevalent white discourses and older racist imaginaries stemming from the colonial period with which this panel began. The political and educational activist Eleonore Wiedenroth-Coulibaly will act as an official respondent.

Conveners and chairs: Cassandra Ellerbe-Dueck (Berlin) and Silke Stroh (U Münster)

Robbie Aitken (Sheffield Hallam U):

"Masters and servants: The precarious lives of personal servants caught between Africa and Germany"

The growth of a permanent, small, but increasingly visible black presence in Germany was largely an unforeseen consequence of the onset of German colonialism and Germany's emergence as a maritime power. From the period of high colonialism up to the outbreak of World War One there was an almost constant migration of people of African heritage to Germany. Entering by a variety of routes and for a multiplicity of reasons, the new arrivals came from various regions of Africa, in particularly Germany's African protectorates, and from further afield such as Haiti and the United States. A highly significant proportion of this black presence was made up of personal servants.

Variously referred to as 'Boy', 'Hausbursche', or 'Diener', personal servants entered Germany accompanying white colonial civil servants, entrepreneurs, or private individuals on home leave. Typically they were male, single and under twenty years of age, and typically their experience of Germany was fleeting: only in rare cases did they stay more than a few months before returning with their masters. At the same time, many were highly mobile, re-entering Germany on one or more further occasions. Their lives were dependent on their relationship to their master; a relationship based on inequality and conditioned by the global colour line. This was a relationship which could be further complicated by changes in the master's health, finances, and status.

This paper seeks to capture elements of the experiences of this highly mobile, transient group, which has left few traces in the historical record and which, as a consequence, has been largely ignored in the secondary literature. It looks for the moments when the lives of personal servants become visible; often moments of crisis in the master/servant relationship when short-term visits became prolonged, for instance when servants broke from their masters or when they were abandoned to their fate. These crisis points brought their cases to the attention of local, colonial and welfare institutions as well as local newspapers. And they helped shape the views of the German authorities regarding black migration from the colonies in general. Through focusing on personal servants, the paper provides an insight into the impact of transgressing the global colour line and living lives traversing between Africa and Germany. This allows for a discussion of issues pertinent to many of Imperial Germany's black visitors, including the challenges of creating a life worth living in Europe, maintaining family links, overcoming isolation, and the experience of otherness.

Inken Carstensen-Egwuom (U Flensburg):

"Masculinity, intimate partnerships and global inequalities in the Nigerian diaspora in Germany"

Using the concept of the "global intimate" (Mountz/Hyndman 2006), feminist geographers have stressed that intimate experiences of sexuality, partnerships and parenthood are intertwined with transnational and inter-sectional dimensions of power and inequality. I use this heuristic concept to explore discourses on masculinity, intimacy and power in the Nigerian Diaspora in Germany.

My conference presentation shows how intimate partnerships and parenthood in the Nigerian Diaspora interact with restrictive European border regimes and global economic inequalities. Empirically, the paper is based on focus groups with Nigerian immigrants in Bremen, Germany. As a meaningful place in transnational social space, these focus groups served as an opportunity for the participants to (re)construct interpretations of their position in the world and their intimate everyday experiences.

Concentrating on contested notions of mature masculinity, the paper is structured along three main issues. At first, I reconstruct how the migration of young men from Nigeria is connected to the difficulties of reaching a socially accepted and gendered adult status. This is a situation termed *waithood* (Honwana 2012) or *social moratorium of youth* (Vigh 2006). Secondly, after an undocumented migration to Germany, marriage to a German spouse is described as the only legal way to obtain a residence permit within the limits of the current migration regime. In such an intimate partnership, issues of power and dependency surface together with racialized and gendered imaginaries of equality and emancipation (Fleischer 2011; Rose 2008 for Cameroonian and Ghanaian migrants). Thirdly, from a transnational perspective (Glick Schiller et al. 1995), discourses on mature masculinity and social adulthood in Nigeria are connected to intimate experiences of marriage, sexuality and parenthood in Germany. From this perspective, Nigerian-German marriages are often seen as a problem of marrying too early, before social adulthood is reached.

The focus on masculinity within globally intimate social relations thus shows how closely intertwined different geographical scales are: the intimate space of home and partnership, the European migration regime and transnational imaginaries of masculinity and adulthood.

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Modupe Laja (Munich):

"Wie Rassismus betrifft / How racism concerns"

In Germany, the stigmatisation of children starts very early. Already as toddlers, Black children are often forced into categories based on how the social majority sees them, i.e. their behaviour is constantly observed and evaluated. Thus, I could observe a toddlers' group where a Black boy, who could not even walk, was constantly seen as a potential danger to the other children. The Black boy displayed an ordinary joy in movement, but the mother of another toddler interpreted this as wild and overactive. The child had merely taken pleasure in crawling back and forth under a bench.

It is sometimes thought that racism plays no part in childhood and adolescence. This is contradicted by studies which show that even three- or four-year-olds can already identify evaluative patterns and employ them (Prof. Maisha-Maureen Eggers, education scientist specializing in childhood and diversity studies, University of Magdeburg–Stendal). Thus, racism shown by children and adolescents does not suddenly appear out of the blue, but has a prior history. According to a recent study on youth violence in Germany, conducted by the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony (Kriminologisches Institut Niedersachsen, KFN) in 2009, tendencies towards right-wing extremism among adolescents are more common than assumed. Unfortunately, when it came to identifying specific social groups which might be the victims of racist discrimination, this study – like many others – only identified anti-semitism. Other potential victims were not asked about, or only discussed under the euphemistic label *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* ('hostility against foreigners' – which the study identifies in 17% of adolescents).

This paper traces such trajectories of racism in Germany in some more detail.

Cassandra Ellerbe-Dueck:

"Don't touch my hair! Black hair, white people and the invasion of personal space in Germany"

While skin colour is regarded as a visible marker of 'otherness', it is the uniqueness of the structure of Black hair – the most recognizable marker of Blackness – that visibly sets individuals of African diasporic heritage apart from whites.

Not only does Black hair in its natural state and African hairstyles represent a political message of racial empowerment and pride, they are also at times the cause of unwanted attention and curiosity from whites. For many whites, Black hair is often viewed as something strange, exotic, and scary, an object of entertainment and something that they feel magnetically drawn to and desire to touch.

For many Black people in Germany, it is a common phenomenon to have one's hair groped by a stranger unexpectedly in public. In addition, a litany of invasive intimate questions regarding its structure and the care thereof, further underline how the personal boundaries and intimate space of Blacks are completely ignored and disregarded. In particular, Black females and Black children are primarily the targets of such embarrassing and denigrating enquiries. Black children are especially vulnerable in that they are not yet able to adequately protect themselves from this type of invasion into their personal space. However, Black people in Germany are currently employing various modes of resistance. The phrase "Don't touch my hair" has become a mantra of empowerment for many Black people in Germany and is utilised as a logo on clothing and accessories.

This paper is a reflection on the everyday hair-related experiences and the invasion of the personal space of Black individuals living in Germany. I argue that the unwelcomed groping of Black individuals' hair in Germany is comparable to the exhibition and treatment of the body of Sara Baartman, who was subjected to the voyeuristic gaze of white Europeans and seen as an object of curiosity. These phenomena emerged from European imperialist and racist "imaginings" that denied Africans autonomy over their own bodies and lives. Black bodies were viewed as commodities that could be groped and or inspected at any time.

Ethnographic interviews and informal conversations with Black female interview partners will assist me in demonstrating how the "imperial debris" (Stoler 2013) of colonialism continues to infiltrate and complicate their everyday lives, and how these individuals use strategies of resistance in order to reclaim personal space and power.

Respondent: Eleonore Wiedenroth-Coulibaly (Frankfurt)

Panel g:

room ES 227

Afropolitanism and the Afropolitan

This panel takes its cue from Simon Gikandi's definition of Afropolitanism as "a new phenomenology of Africanness – a way of being African in the world" (*Negotiating Afropolitanism*, 2011: 9) and Achille Mbembe's exploration of Afropolitanism as an aesthetics and a particular poetics of the world, as a way of being in the world that refuses the victim position ("Afropolitanism" 2, *Africa Remix*, 2007: 28–9). From these two perspectives, Afropolitanism can also be regarded as an ontology, focussing on the nature and relations of being, in this case, of being African in the world. Thus the panel is particularly interested in the figure of the Afropolitan and how, through this figure, notions of self, home and belonging, encounters and conversations, relationships and journeys are negotiated, constructed and treated to a specific aesthetics or poetics that foregrounds what has become generally known as Afropolitanism.

Conveners: Eva Rask Knudsen, Pernille Nailor and Ulla Rahbek (all U Copenhagen)

Chairs: Maria Cristina Calvopiña Heredia and Julian Wacker (both U Münster)

Eva Rask Knudsen:

"Between coming and going: On home and belonging in Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference*"

Testing Kwame Anthony Appiah's ideas about *Cosmopolitanism* (2006) and departing from Simon Gikandi's open definition of Afropolitanism as a way of being African in the world (2011: 9), this paper explores the notion of home as a floating signifier in the Afropolitan's ontological positioning as citizen of the world, and it reflects upon significant differences between feeling at home and having a sense of belonging. It will do so with reference to Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference* (2013). Afropolitan sensibilities are born out of a global age of increasing mobility and transcultural interaction across borders. This makes it pertinent to enquire into what happens to conventional ideas about home in the process. Home is usually associated with a specific location, a dwelling place that provides comfort, safety, and familiarity against an outside that is far less stable. For the itinerant Afropolitan, such provisions cannot be taken for granted; rather, home becomes an unhinged term. Afropolitans have many different faces and stories to tell; some are fortunate enough to enjoy the privilege of mobility and choice, some emphatically are not. Atta's protagonist Deola is trained in the ambivalent politics of relocation as she performs the role of the privileged Afropolitan commuter for whom the classic migrant dream of returning home is but a regular activity. What and where is home in the context of Afropolitan mobility? A new vocabulary is needed for making home and belonging serviceable terms in the dissemination of the Afropolitan experience and there is a need to uncouple these terms as Afropolitans may feel at home in different locations without necessarily feeling that they genuinely belong to all (or any) of them. A residual effect of engaging with the world and its continued hegemonies keeps Deola in a state of longing; not for home in the old sense of the term, but for a homing of the self that transcends pre-conceived ideas of what it means to be African.

Ulla Rahbek:

"Julius in Brussels: Lost and found in Afropolitan encounters and conversations"

In Teju Cole's novel *Open City* (2011), the narrator-protagonist, Nigerian doctor Julius, is a wanderer and a traveller, a man prone to meandering thoughts which lead him to revisit the past and, interestingly, to visit Brussels. This paper focuses on what happens to Julius when, half-way through the novel, he decides to go to Brussels. The paper explores the likely and unlikely encounters and conversations and the effect they have on Julius. It takes its cue from cultural historian and expert wanderer Rebecca Solnit's thoughts on loss and getting lost as a loss of self, as the result of a conscious choice. How does this chosen surrender, a psychic state achievable through geography, affect Julius, and can we agree with Solnit that, in that loss of control, there is a life of discovery (*A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, 2005: 6, 14 and 22)? What does Julius discover when he loses himself in conversations with strangers and fellow Africans, such as Moroccan Farouq? What thoughts are set in motion in missed encounters, such as the evening Julius finds himself alone in a restaurant watching what he assumes are young Congolese people, behaving as Selasian Afropolitans, only to be told that he has been watching Rwandans? This is another type of loss for Julius: "It was as though the space had suddenly become heavy with all the stories these people were carrying. What losses, I wondered, lay behind their laughter and flirting" (139). Do these conversations tell us anything about Afropolitanism as, in Simon Gikandi's words, a way of being African in the world? And, finally, what do we make of the conclusion to Julius' sojourn in Brussels,

presented to the reader in a Joycean fashion, with Julius as a Gabriel Conroy figure, drifting off to sleep as rain falls heavily on the living and the dead and spreads from Brussels, further north to Denmark, France and Germany? What is so Afropolitan about that?

Pernille Nailor:

“Perceptions of belonging in the 21st century:

Exploring African/Black identity practices in autobiographical moments”

Few concepts are perhaps as essential to present-day life as identity. It is not only referred to frequently in public debates, but also constantly experienced from the subjective positions of human beings who exercise it on a daily basis. With this in mind, this paper focuses on a discussion of self-referential moments in essays by Caryl Phillips and Taiye Selasi. The texts that have been selected are generally structured on a discussion of identity, race and national belonging, but they also pivot on personal experiences that are employed as tools to ground the author’s point of view. What is interesting in relation to the two writers in question is how they include such experiences, or moments, in their essays, and whether this can be said to work as performances of an African and/or Black identity. In their essays, Phillips and Selasi assert an autobiographical self that highlights the idea of a multifaceted I in what I refer to as autobiographical, or de Manian, moments. These moments are interlocked with general statements on questions of identity, race and national belonging. Both writers include and ponder their own diverse backgrounds and this often leaves the reader with a sense that self-definition and lived experiences are indeed significant in relation to our perception of such concepts. However, despite the fact that questions of identity and belonging are common themes, one important difference is that Phillips refers to an autobiographical I and mainly considers his black individual identity, whereas Selasi alludes to her African identity and also employs a collective ‘we’ so as to celebrate a shared heritage with fellow Afropolitans.

Donald Morales (Mercy College):

“Afropolitanism: 2015 update”

The term Afropolitanism, a word coined by Taiye Selasi in a 2005 essay, is murkily defined as well-educated, young African artists with global and multicultural sensibilities who have settled in a number of cosmopolitan capitals in Europe and North America. In the literary world, these artists have produced a number of intriguing works that describe their hybrid status and identity but also defy categorization. Selasi argues that the practice of categorizing literature by the continent from which its creators come is past its prime at best. Yet, Afropolitanism has engendered a lot of criticism and controversy. Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina labels it an empty style and culture commodification. An Irish/Nigerian artist, Emma Dabiri, complains that in “Afropolitanism [...] insights on race, modernity and identity appear to be increasingly sidelined in sacrifice to [...] consumerism.” Norwegian/Tanzanian Marta Tveit, argues that the term addresses “a Westernised audience, explaining to them the strange ways and particulars of this tribe of Afropolitans.”

How does the writer define one’s base within such a dynamic diaspora? Critics complained, when Tope Folarin won the 2013 Caine prize for *Miracle*, that he was not an African writer since his entire upbringing was western. Further, how comfortable or authentic are these writers in depicting their transplanted environments? The term itself is nearing ten years. Is it truly a fad or a durable literary term?

Danticat provides, for me, a perfect coda. Though she proclaims herself Afro-Haitian-American and her work (published in 2005) predates the term Afropolitan, her ideas on the creative process within a diaspora seemingly bridge the controversy surrounding the term:

That experience of touching down in a totally foreign place is like having a blank canvas: You begin with nothing, but stroke by stroke you build a life. This process requires everything great art requires risk-taking, hope, a great deal of imagination, all the qualities that are the building blocks of art. You must be able to dream something nearly impossible and toil to bring it into existence.

And from *Create Dangerously*, the writer bound to the reader under diabolic, or even joyful, circumstances inevitably becomes a loyal citizen of the country of her readers.

Panel h:

room ES 3

Music and identity politics

Chair: Felipe Espinoza Garrido (U Münster)

Gianfranco Salvatore (U Salento):

“‘Celum Calia’: African speech in a 16th-century songs cycle from Naples”

Around the mid-16th century, in Italy, a group of anonymous humanists – courtiers versed in the arts of music, letters, and theatre – created a set of songs that depicts African slaves and freedmen singing and playing in an Italian town, probably Naples.

While serenading their girls, the African characters in this song cycle cherish being freed by their masters and plan a great wedding party where the local African community will gather for dancing all day and all night long. While singing, courting and quarrelling, they speak an Afro-Neapolitan pidgin that combines the mispronounced local dialect with authentic African words and sentences in Kanuri, an Afro-Nilotic language still in use in the Borno region (North-East Nigeria). The songs are known as *canzoni moresche*, meaning ‘Moorish [i.e. black African] songs’.

Although the *moresche* were intermittently studied by a handful of European musicologists since the late 19th century, nobody had recognized yet that the most obscure sections in the lyrics were not a zany made-up African speech, but a true language. Talking Kanuri, *moresche* characters utter conventional greeting formulas and idiomatic expressions of racial pride, summon the black slaves in the neighbourhood, and make reference to song and dance as traditional ways to celebrate and communicate.

For a long time, it was thought that the first known instances of written Kanuri were those found in scattered European manuscripts and documents dating from the late 18th to early 19th century. Only the *canzoni moresche* offer earlier traces of written Kanuri. They are also powerful cultural effects of the African diaspora. A whole microcosm of African tradition, customs, feelings – and probably also shreds of original melodies and rhythms – appear to be featured in the Italian Renaissance.

Gianpaolo Chiriaco (U Salento):

“Singing voices and Afro-European identities: The experience of the project ROTVOSCIAME”

This paper aims to present methodologies and results of the research project ROTVOSCIAME (The Role of Traditional Vocal Styles in Reshaping Cultural Identities Related to African Diasporas in America and Europe). The project, financed by a Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowship, can be considered an attempt to develop a cultural history and an anthropology of the black singing voice within the Atlantic diaspora. If, as Ronald Radano reminds us, "the voice [was] the primary possession of a possessed people" throughout the slave trade, how can we understand values and meanings of such ancient and potent expressive tool? And if, today, political and social practices aiming at 'giving voices' to black, diasporic and African migrant communities are key to international political agendas, what can we understand from the ways in which professional vocalists and vocal artists construct identities and define communities using that same tool of the singing voice? These are two of the main questions that ROTVOSCIAME addresses.

Although musicology represents the principal area of investigation, the research has proved to be significantly interdisciplinary, blending together media studies, archival documentation, and ethnographic fieldwork. The presentation will focus on the website of the project – where a cartography of the black singing voice has been implemented – as well as on audiovisual material related to Afro-European vocalists operating in Italy. The goal is to show the vast variety of vocal styles and the complex strategies developed in order to use the voice as a tool to orientate and define cultural identities within the space of European modernity.

Gayle Murchison (WMC Virginia):

“Crazy Afropean identity defining ourselves before anyone else defines us:

Les Nubians and Zap Mama, and Afropean musical praxis”

Popular music has long served as a forum for Afro-European artists. Indeed, the term ‘Afropean’ initially gained global recognition in connection with musicians Zap Mama (Marie Daulne) and Les Nubians (sisters Hélène and Célia Faussar). Though ‘Afropean’ glides ‘African’ and ‘European’, the term encompasses a diverse community of languages, nationalities, immigration statuses, and national origins reflected in Daulne’s and the Faussar’s music. Drawing on European, African American, and African traditions, their music reifies Afropean identity. It also signifies black Atlantic circulation where African, black American, and black European identities overlap,

collide, and re-form. In 2003 Les Nubians (sisters H el ene and C elia Faussar) recorded *Immortel* Cheikh Anta Diop, homage to the African historian and politician whose research challenged European views of African history. That year they toured with Daulne, who posed to them creating an Afropean cultural movement. This song provides a critical framework for interpreting how Daulne has long sought to express Afropean identity, from *Adventures in Afropea I* (1993) to *ReCreation* (2009). The creation of the group Zap Mama reflects her awareness, assertion, and representation of her own fluid Afropean identity. Daulne’s work in music also reflects Diop’s overarching influence: she challenged the early art and jazz education she received that focused on European culture and marginalized African art and music. Her subsequent library research, fieldwork, and self-ethnography were instrumental in founding Zap Mama. *Babanzel e* (1991/1993) reflects her research (ironically aided by the legacy of Belgian colonialism) of Ituri rainforest pygmy music and her Congolese heritage. By 1999 Daulne’s music reflected black hip-hop, rap, and R&B (heard during her youth), fused with African music, as in “W’happy Mama.” Rather than fixed, her Afropean musical praxis can be seen in how she posits herself as a post-modern continental diva in 2009’s “Paroles Paroles” from *ReCreation*. Les Nubians followed in Daulne’s footsteps, eventually joining her tour in 2003. Regardless of a particular single or CD album’s musical style, both Les Nubians’ and Zap Mama’s visual and stage representation reflect pan-African diasporic and pan-European identity, opening cultural space for self-representation and resistance against white European cultural hegemony and supremacy.

Antti-Ville K arj a (Finnish Jazz & Pop Archive):

“Music at the ‘Black Baltic Sea’”

Music is intimately implicated in racialising discourses. This is particularly pronounced in so-called black music, i.e. the types of music that are commonly associated with African-American identity, most notably jazz and various forms of popular music. Racialisation is nevertheless present in all kinds of music, albeit conditioned by generic conventions. Genres of popular music are furthermore constructed continuously on the basis of a notion of their black roots, and especially in the historiography of jazz and rock the late-19th-century African-American blues is invested with ultimate authenticity as an originating form of musical expression.

The idea of the black roots of jazz and popular music is an essential ingredient of Paul Gilroy’s (1993) analysis of a specific authenticity of blackness, where economic, ideological and psychological processes are deeply intertwined. To stress the history and consequences of the pre-20th-century slave trade and institutionalised racism, Gilroy has coined the concept of the Black Atlantic that builds on the idea of a distinct double consciousness inherent in blackness as simultaneously a fundamental constituent and the ultimate other of the West. According to him, the politics of authenticity of the Black Atlantic are of particular importance in popular music, as different definitions and conceptualisations of authenticity are crucial in attempts to introduce black cultural expression into the international marketplace of popular culture.

In my presentation, I aim at rethinking the notion of the Black Atlantic in relation to North-Eastern Europe, in the context of popular music in Finland in particular. At issue are the ways in which the assumed authenticity of blackness and the idea of double consciousness are related to, and recontextualised by, popular musical phenomena in Finland. By way of marine analogy, I ask how to formulate an analytical design called the Black Baltic Sea.

Panel i:

room ES 24

African American dreams of freedom: Travel, sojourn, and escape

Three papers on this panel focus on the experiences of 20th-century black American intellectuals and radicals who sought to define the parameters of freedom through travel. These papers examine the global odysseys of Langston Hughes, George Padmore, and Angela Davis as representative of their efforts to articulate the values of universal human rights and racial equality by embarking on long-distance journeys.

The Eastern European dimension of these case studies will be complemented by a fourth paper which focuses on black Soviet actors and the construction of blackness on the Soviet screen.

Conveners: Larry Greene (Seton Hall U), Maxim Matusevich (Seton Hall U)
and Tatiana Tagirova-Daley (ESCU North Carolina)

Chairs: Larry Greene, Maxim Matusevich and Irina Novikova (U Latvia)

Larry Greene:

“Langston Hughes and the reimagined beloved communities of Europe: Rhetoric and reality”

Langston Hughes was one of those sojourning intellectuals of the black diaspora during the interwar years whose travels took him to Europe and the Soviet Union. It was in the midst of the Great Depression when the Communist Party of the United States of America sent its best organizers to Harlem to recruit African-American intellectuals to its ranks. Langston Hughes and other black intellectuals and artists set sail on the ship *Europa* in 1932, looking for a utopian oasis from American racism and seeking to make a film in the Soviet Union exposing American racism. As Hughes anticipated his journey, he claimed the *Europa* was an Ark to him. I would argue in this paper that the Soviet Union was an imagined lifeline to a transnational and transracial global vision. A precursor of Martin Luther King’s beloved community free of racial, class, and gender oppression. Yet, the Soviet Union was not the first European port of call for Hughes and other black intellectuals. Black travelers, students, and expatriates to Europe in the nineteenth century commented on the relative absence of racism and more egalitarian treatment of blacks in England, Ireland, Italy, Germany, and France than in the United States. The pre-Soviet Union travels and experiences of Hughes are analyzed in the creation of his visions of the Soviet Union of 1930s, views of France from Paris in the 1920s, and European colonialism and treatment of their resident colonials in Europe throughout his lifetime. His dualistic and sometimes conflicting visions of a more racially egalitarian yet oppressive Europe are analyzed as they evolve over time through various ideological lenses. His consistency is based ultimately not on political ideology but on a commitment to ending economic inequality, political subordination, and social injustice. Ideology provided an evolving, but ultimately not binding framework.

Tatiana Tagirova-Daley:

“George Padmore: The role of travel and politics in the formation of global struggles for justice and equality”

In this paper I analyze the role that travels in the United States, Europe, and Africa, as well as George Padmore’s early training in Communist International, played in his formation of transnational and transracial global consciousness. While his early engagement with Soviet politics ignited his fight for freedom within African American and Pan-African concepts, he later rejected Soviet politics and the Western communist parties due to what he considered to be their indifference to the struggles of the people of the African diaspora. As a journalist and author of books on the difficulties confronting the people of African descent, he significantly contributed to the development of Pan-Africanism and the formation of Pan-African consciousness around the world. While living in Europe, he published in short, cost-effective periodicals that were distributed to different corners of the world to create a wider global readership and to challenge the established ideological currents and institutions of that time. Furthermore, his role as a mentor of Kwame Nkrumah, the father of independent Ghana and its first president, showed his politics of nonalignment, of playing off the East against the West, and contributed to the development of the Organization of African Unity. While he was cognizant of the tendency of Marxist ideology to reach the oppressed masses of the world, he questioned its true intentions and used socialism and communism to solely advance the particularly African and Asian agenda. Both his international traveling and engagement with social and political issues of the twentieth century reveal his influence on the global struggle for justice and equality in Africa, the Americas, Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific, and his vision of a world dedicated to equality, solidarity, and hope.

Irina Novikova:

“Black Soviet actors and the construction of Blackness on the Soviet screen”

This paper consists of two interconnected thematic sections. First, I argue that cinematic representations of Africa and blackness (as an idea and a categorization) participated in the Soviet cultural narrative of identity. By giving examples from different movies (1920s–1980s), I will demonstrate how racial imagination of 'blackness' was constructed in Soviet cinematic practices, and how the cinematic racialized imaginary (Dyer) of dominant identity discourse inflected a wider range of social discourses and practices circulating in Soviet society.

Further, this argument will be connected to a discussion of the black actors’ lives and community in Soviet cinematic history, and the roles that they played in movies of different genres. I will specifically talk about Wayland Rudd and his performance in screen adaptations of the 1940s.

From this perspective, I will explore visual patterns of blackness in Soviet cinema, their alterations (revealing a pattern’s most meaningful elements), as well as their taxonomized use in the racialized constitution of cultural hegemony and of operations of political power.

The major objective is to generate a critique of visual politics of blackness and its scopical patterns in racialized nation-making in the USSR/Russia, and to locate this process within a wider realm of science, rationality and

enlightenment as legitimizing frameworks in the socialist project of modernity.

Maxim Matusevich

“Angela Davis and the Soviet dreams of freedom”

In the early 1970s, the case of a radical black American academic, Angela Davis, accused by the state of California of being an accessory to murder, captured the imagination of the millions of Soviet citizens and the residents of other Communist nations. For the Soviets and their ideological allies, the travails of Angela Davis were but another example of the pervasiveness of Western racism. Soviet propaganda capitalized fully on Angela Davis’ celebrity to turn her into a potent symbol of America’s alleged decline and degeneracy. Yet the preeminence of Angela Davis as a cultural symbol on the other side of the Iron Curtain also reflected on the eagerness of Soviet citizens to engage in a discourse on freedom. The plight of the black Californian professor became the subject of intense public debates but also of private conversations. Bombarded by incessant official propaganda, many Soviet and East European citizens accepted the ideologically correct version of the case which squarely placed Davis on the historical continuum of Communist martyrs. For others, this tale of guns, hostage-taking and daring escapes became an extension of the familiar Hollywood-fueled American myth of the Wild West, rough justice, and a free-wheeling and gun-toting pursuit of liberty. Others yet, particularly Soviet dissidents (Alexander Solzhenytsin among them) took a far less charitable view of Angela Davis, often arguing that her superstardom throughout the Communist world not so much promoted as undermined the cause of freedom.

SATURDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2015

9:30–11:00

Panel a:

room ES 226

Roundtable panel discussion:

“‘Traveling without moving’: Digital media and the Black Europe experience”

This roundtable panel discussion will focus on the creation and maintenance of digital media as they relate to the Black Europe experience. What does the digital world of Black Europeans look like, and how are students and researchers accessing those realities while staying in place? How does access to global communities via new technologies facilitate pedagogy and research amongst individuals who inquire about the world while remaining in place? The contemporary utility of online archives and popular media access provide a window into the more ‘grounded’ reality of enhanced global interconnectedness, moving us away from the ‘utopia’ narrative and closer to the experiential dimensions of how global media can be actually ‘lived’. For the past two decades, the question of how technologies change human experiences with space and place has continued. The roundtable will allow for brief presentation remarks as exemplar digital media are highlighted, followed by interactive audience discussions. The presentations will focus on questions of access, design, production, dissemination and peer-review in the collection of digital artifacts. In the quest to digitize African Diaspora lives, particularly in regards to their presence in European collections, two archival specialists will present the attributes and difficulties of digital archiving. In addition, two academics who have spent time conducting field-work and creating digital archives will highlight the methodologies, the changes in technology, and focus on the ways these digital stories are used in classroom settings.

Conveners: Maggi M. Morehouse (UC Berkeley) and Elisa J. White (UC Davis)

Chair: Sharmilla Beezmohun (*Wasafiri*, London)

Speakers: **Maggi M. Morehouse**
Elisa J. White
Maureen Roberts (London Metropolitan Archives)

Panel b:

room ES 227

On being Afro-Spanish

The panel will focus on the life experiences of the younger Afro-Spanish generation who have already been born or raised in Spain (as opposed to the previous generation of Equatoguinean immigrants, who were born Spanish citizens and found themselves in a no man's land after independence in 1968). The two speakers, both of them highly qualified professionals, politically aware and basically "Afropolitans," will offer their complementary perspectives on the lack of sensitivity towards racial and cultural diversity in contemporary Spain.

Convener and chair: Marta Sofía López Rodríguez (U León)

Ladislao Bapory Sité (BasiléConsulting S.L.):

"Growing up without the n-word..."

I am a mixed-race 37-year-old man, half Spanish and half Equatoguinean.

In my lifetime, Spain has experienced debates which have not only transformed the political and social landscape but have also generated new words, expressions and connotations that currently allow us to speak in a more educated manner about those topics. Not long ago, gender-based crimes were referred to in national newspapers as passion crimes, Catalanian was still called a dialect – and not a language – by many, and the term 'faggot' was widely used, with a socially accepted negative connotation. Not any longer.

The gender perspective, regional political claims and gay rights are all normal debates in the so-called developed countries, and key to understanding Spain nowadays. This confirms the capacity of my country to incorporate new sensitivities to its linguistic reality. It is remarkable, though, that the racial debate hasn't taken place yet and that, consequently, people like me grew up with a lack of terms and connotations observed and disseminated by our opinion leaders and media. This can also explain why most Spaniards may doubt when picking among the available options – 'person of the black race', 'negro' (black person) and 'negrito' (little black person) are used alternatively but not without an insecure tone, especially in public. Meanwhile, the Royal Spanish Language Academy – the highest linguistic authority in the country – still struggles to explain why 'thief' remains one of the secondary meanings for the term 'gypsy' in its most famous dictionary.

I'd like to share what I think are the pros and cons of not having a sensitive and politically correct racial terminology or other cultural references, as well the repercussions of growing up and forging a multicultural identity in Spain.

Lucía Mbomío (journalist, TVE):

"The invisibility of black communities in the Spanish media"

My talk will focus on the black community's (lack of) presence in the Spanish media in quantitative and qualitative terms, and on the effect this has on both white citizens and peoples of African descent who are completely devoid of cultural references.

I will also talk about my experience as a black consumer and producer of mass media products, my career as a journalist, and the emergence of the new media (particularly the internet) which are increasingly helping to reinforce the presence of the Spanish black community in mainstream culture, although still from a rather peripheral position.

11:30–13:00

Panel c:

room ES 226

Challenging integrationist discourses

Chair: Markus Schmitz (U Münster)

Vanessa Eileen Thompson (U Frankfurt):

“Black collective solidarity after and beyond identity”

Whereas race was formerly written out of the hegemonic cultural archive in the French Republic, issues on the Black condition have been surging to the front lines of the public and political sphere since the turn of the millennium. This shift is strongly informed by self-identified Black urban movements and their responses to the French Republican avoidance of thematizing its vital colonial legacies and the pivotal status of racialization processes for the structuring and manufacturing of contemporary social inequalities.

How to maneuver through a supposedly race-blind discourse and space when the act of identifying race as a category of subordination risks the backlash of being disqualified as communitarian against the background of Republicanism as an abstract universal and thus being symbolically and institutionally criminalized? What kind of (collective) subjectivation processes take place against the background of spatial-racist subordination, and which conceptions of collective blackness and inherent decolonial practices of resistance are mobilized?

This presentation explores the aforementioned questions by drawing on findings from long-term critical ethnographic activist research with the Brigade Anti-Nérophobie from a decolonial perspective and through a critical engagement with theoretical conceptions of black solidarity (Shelby), identity politics (Alcoff) and collective action (Arendt). Exemplified through the case of the long-term protests around a colonial storefront in the 5th arrondissement of Paris as well as of the violent expulsion of the group from the national commemoration of enslavement and its abolition in 2011 and 2012, a form of black solidarity will be discussed that goes beyond identity and still takes the epistemological frame of the lived experiences of blackness(es) seriously.

Matti Traußneck (U Marburg):

“Un-belonging as a category of knowledge. Or: conditions of politics”

In Germany, the Black movement often focuses on the fact that we are Black Germans, which means we can't be excluded from the nation. Post-1989 multi-cultural Germany seems to accept the claim, if only after the white riot years of the early 1990s.

Yet, being born a Black person in self-perceived white Germany can mean to be non-existent as a Black person on various levels. Today's post-racist racist society has seemingly embraced us, but actually caught us in a double bind: as racialized and thus rendered invisible others. Like other marginalized groups, we are performatively excluded from the nation and at the same time asked to approve of racist (or other discriminatory) arguments in order to show our identification with the nation. We are turned into the others that we are then not allowed to be. The claim to be German has therefore lost its revolutionary promise: to be equal among equals. It's delusive and prevents us from realizing the invisible traumatic gap in our identity racism continues to cause. Whereas activists have mostly highlighted the hidden Black history as the subversive empowerment, I suggest, in addition, giving room to the experience of a void not as merely something to overcome, but as a source of knowledge. It is also the source of a radical critique of the nation and the source of solidarity.

In my talk, I will explore the potential which derives from this kind of knowledge for our community in a theoretical manner, as well as present documents from the movement in which a void is thematic, and the various forms of self-understanding which have developed especially in the last 30 years, but also before that.

Benda Hofmeyr & Marieke Borren (U Pretoria):

“Arendt, Levinas & the postcolonial: African-European encounters par excellence”

Political processes of decolonization and the end of Apartheid in South Africa have confronted us with the reality that a change of political power does not necessarily result in a 'decolonization of the mind'. More specifically, it has lent urgency to the issue of decolonizing the philosophical canon and of reevaluating the place of African philosophical traditions within the curriculum of present-day South African universities. In this paper, we will explore the (conditions of) possibilities of fruitful dialogue(s) between European and African philosophical perspectives.

On the face of it, the prospects for such a dialogue are limited. European philosophy, especially in the (early) modern age and the Enlightenment, has arguably been steeped in racism and is perhaps even complicit in colonial and imperialist practices by providing legitimacy to Empire and Western hegemony. Additionally, it could be argued that its characteristic individualism forecloses the possibility of entering into a dialogue with African philosophies, which are typically more communitarian in orientation. Yet, in recent scholarship we see numerous attempts at bringing about mutual understanding (and exploring the conditions thereof), and at negotiating the differences between European and African philosophical traditions. In fact, most post-colonial African philosophers have been schooled in the tradition of Western philosophy and wield the conceptual toolkit offered by (post-)Enlightenment philosophies to precisely critique that very same tradition. A genealogy of these traditions of thought uncovers a fundamental entanglement that has its origin at the very moment of Western philosophy's Greek inception, when African discoveries reached Classical Greece across Mediterranean shores by way of Thales, Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and others who travelled to Kemet (modern-day Egypt) to study.

In this paper, we shall explore these issues by drawing on the work of two 20th-century European philosophers, Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah Arendt. Both are deeply embedded in the European philosophical tradition, yet simultaneously challenge the very grounds of European metaphysics as it has developed from the ancient Greeks (Plato, Aristotle), through the Middle Ages (Augustine, Aquinas), up to the Modern Age and the Enlightenment (Descartes, Locke, Kant, Hegel).

As European Jews, both born in 1906 (Arendt in Germany and Levinas in Lithuania), anti-Semitism and the Holocaust decisively shaped their respective ethical and political thought. Acknowledging the facticity of evil, violence and oppression as ever-present human capacities, they both think through the conditions of non-violent relations to the Other/others (alterity, plurality) and responsibility. Though both Arendt and Levinas can hardly be said to be free from racial prejudice, their work has frequently been aligned with critical postcolonial thought.

From this perspective, then, we seek to critically interrogate our own hermeneutic horizon as we find our minds conditioned (perhaps 'colonized') by Western systems of thought, yet our feet firmly planted on African soil – a conflicted and entangled facticity where the former oppressor is slow to let go of his/her master narrative, and the formerly oppressed is slow to let go of the discourse of victimization and resentment. As Achille Mbembe would argue in Foucaultian vein, there is no turning away from the difficult work of freedom: "it is very risky work because it involves a transformative relation with our past as a condition sine qua non of our control over our own future."

Panel d:

room ES 227

Transeuropean and diasporic encounters

Chair: t.b.c.

Jean d'Amour Banyanga (Åbo University Turku):

"Social suffering and healing among Rwandans' diaspora in Finland and Belgium"

Rwandan people encountered genocide in 1994, which caused a lot of bloodshed among men, women and children. The genocide led to the exile of many Rwandan people and the constitution of diasporic communities in Africa, Europe, Australia and North America. Many Rwandan people who reside both in Finland and Belgium after surviving the 1994 genocide and its aftermath went through such tragedy that they suffer from the social wounds that ethnic violence and genocide have left them with. The researcher aims to study, on one hand, social suffering experienced and expressed by the survivors of the Rwandan genocide who nowadays reside in the diaspora both in Finland and Belgium, and on the other hand, how the communities try to endure and heal suffering by rebuilding social cohesion and trust, with the help of traditional communal healing mechanisms and through Western justice.

The researcher, being a Rwandan and speaking the local languages (Kinyarwanda and French) will have a clear understanding of different cultural and social meanings. In addition, the researcher has Tutsi and Hutu roots; therefore he has access to both Rwandan ethnic groups. The Rwandan people who reside in Finland are a relatively small community; therefore it is important to collect data in a large community because Belgium was a Rwandan colonizer and has received many Rwandan refugees.

Serena Scarabello (U Padova):

“Social mobility and the elaboration of Africanness among the youth of the African-Italian elite”

A youthful African-Italian elite is gaining a new public visibility in the artistic, entrepreneurial, professional and political field in Italy. What we understand by ‘elite’ in this research project is not a social group that is economically or politically superior, or more privileged, than others. Rather, it is mostly composed by youth with great aspirations who activate a process of social mobility, improving their skills through education. Moreover, their biographical and professional pathways seems to be very hard due to processes of distinction that they undergo both in Italian society and in the African Diaspora. Hence, indeed considered neither ‘authentically’ Italian nor ‘authentically’ African, they must negotiate their social position and challenge the requests of authenticity posed to them. Based on empirical data, collected through qualitative in-depth interviews with descendants of African migrants living in different regions of Italy, this contribution underlines the strict interconnection between professional aspirations and the elaboration of Africanness. This dimension emerges here as one of the social actors’ multiple identities, socially redefined and strategically used by the participants of this research project in daily life.

This paper focuses on the evolution of two specific business projects, related to hair care and fashion, showing how the research of a trans-African cultural heritage become strategic in the process of social mobility. Moreover, it highlights how these youths, using their cosmopolitan competences, locate themselves and their activities in a transnational social space and take advantage of the interactions between the African Diaspora and the African countries. Furthermore, since the social actors move in multiple social spaces – ethnic, national, transnational – racial identity becomes only one of the elements of their social life. Our working hypothesis is that, through the leverage of their social and cultural capital, the youth of the African-Italian elite semantically redefine their Africanness, turning it from a racial paradigm toward an Afropolitan consciousness.

William Barylo (EHESS Paris):

“Bushinengue of French Guiana:

Acculturation, resistances, alternatives and flowing identities in a colonial state”

The Bushinengue society is a striking example of a traditional population still facing, in the 21st century, the consequences of the settlement of a modern colonial system as French Guiana, once a colony, became a proper French district in the 1940s. Originally slaves who escaped from the plantations or fought for their freedom, those sometimes called ‘Maroons’ have built a realm rich in various mixed cultures on the banks of the Marwina (Maroni) river between French Guiana and Suriname. Having their own language, customs, arts, crafts, spiritualities and medicinal knowledge, Bushinengues are facing the decline of their cultures due to a French administration disconnected from the local context, imposing a particular curriculum on children omitting key parts of the Guianese history, fostering modern values of comfort and individualism, and dividing a multicultural society where severe forms of institutionalised racism are found. However, this project focuses on grassroots initiatives more like cores of traditional resistance which try to provide alternatives to bridge the gap between cultures. After depicting the historical, social and economic context of the Bushinengue populations of the Lower Marwina, this paper explores the work of Mama Bobi, a grassroots organization safekeeping and transmitting Bushinengue skills and knowledge through its training centre, and lobbying for a better adaptation of the French institutions to the local context, through the use of intercultural proximity mediators. Analysing the concerns and the human relations within the population from a gift perspective, and regarding cultures, identities and social circles as complex systems, this work gives insights into an original attempt to resist, if not counter, the colonial narrative.

Panel e:

room ES 24

Childhood, parenting, and empowerment

Chair: Ulrike Pirker (U Freiburg)

Christelle Gomis (EUI Florence):

“How do we shield our children from racism?”

Black British parents’ struggles for educational equality (1967–1990)”

In 1967, a group of Black British parents organized themselves to improve the experiences of their children in the English education system. Coming to England mainly from the Caribbean after 1945, these parents had their dreams of social ascension crushed when they learned that their children were systematically redirected into schools for the educationally subnormal. Their contestations crucially influenced the evolution of the British school system between 1967 and 1990. Relying on archives of voluntary organisations, on government reports, on educational texts, and on parents’ and pupils’ statements, I will chart different campaigns of contestations of the education system in different localities (London, Birmingham, Bradford and Leicester).

While the decolonization process rendered the presence of former colonial subjects in the British metropole precarious, Commonwealth citizens morphed into the stereotype of the immigrant outsider that threatened the newly established British welfare state. This pervasive stereotype affected how their children were educated. In reaction, they founded the Black Parents Movement in order to secure the equal treatment of their children. Their claims were enhanced by the formal worldwide moral condemnation of racial discrimination. They explicitly linked their struggles with the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

Their efforts to counter the effects of racism on their children involved a profound critique of the curriculum and the establishment of Black supplementary schools. But strategical divisions soon appeared: the protestations that rooted their claims in terms of parental choice and individual accountability had more success than the protestations against the British educational system based on anti-capitalist critiques. This victory might have strengthened the rhetoric of parental choice and accountability, core of market-driven policies of privatization deployed by the New Right. How did these divisions and strange alliances alter their anti-racist struggles?

Joseph McLaren (Hofstra U, New York)

“Family relations and the politics of childhood in Gabriel Gbadamosi’s *Vauxhall*”

Decades of West African migration to the UK and concomitant intermarriages have resulted in family structures that show the complexity of ethnic and racial parenting. Gabriel Gbadamosi’s novel *Vauxhall* (2013), told from the perspective of a child whose father is Nigerian and whose mother is Irish, exemplifies how racial understandings are constructed through seemingly innocent eyes that nevertheless discern the workings and tensions within families and working-class communities. Called a tenderly observed, fascinating portrait of a childhood in South London, the novel, set in Vauxhall, a working-class community known for its diverse population, develops a narrative voice that replicates the thought and emotional processes of childhood or youth consciousness. Gbadamosi sustains this level of narrative focus while revealing, through subtle allusions, the retentions of Yoruba-Nigerian cultural forms. Furthermore, the novel suggests that mixed-race marriages can be understood not only through the social sciences but through the imagination or the literary pen. The novel also challenges readers to comprehend adult relationships, the tensions that cause separation and renewal, as understandable and relevant to childhood sensibilities.

In addition, the novel also allows for interpretations of community relationships in a working-class environment where the boundaries are set by the limits of childhood wandering and border crossings. Gbadamosi uses certain geographic markers, such as the locations resulting from World-War-II devastation, and the Thames, to show how environment can shape childhood conceptions of space and the historical past. This shaping of childhood imagination is also achieved through the development of the main characters relationship to school, the process of education, and the authority of teachers. In this way, the novel moves between the social sphere, the physical urban environment, institutions such as the school, and especially the kinds of family associations that are part of childhood politics. Here, childhood politics refers to the power relations between siblings, and the position of the youngest voice in relation to an elder brother or sister. Gbadamosi’s novel shapes this notion of politics through such scenes as the social gathering of the extended family.

Sabrina Brancato (U Bayreuth):

“Race and adoption: Parenting as micro-activism (or, the white parent’s responsibility)”

I used to be a scholar. Then I became a full-time mother.

I used to deal with race at the theoretical level (as a white scholar in Black Studies). Then race became an issue of practical concerns (as a white mother of two Black children). The point of conjunction of these two apparently separate spheres (being a scholar and being a mother) is an engagement in the practice of ego-criticism. As a scholar, I was concerned with my position of privilege as a white person investigating Blackness. As a mother, I am concerned with my position as a white parent, not equipped by experience with the necessary baggage to empower Black children. Therefore, on a daily basis, I find myself putting together an empowerment kit for my children to thrive.

Based on my early experience as a mother and my personal reflections on mixed-race families, my talk will present a few bullet points aimed at providing inputs for white adults to accompany and support Black European children in their growth. While generally concerned with young children raised in a predominantly white context, some of my reflections apply especially to Germany. The key question is how to empower white-socialized Black children into becoming self-confident adults. I propose seeing responsible parenting as a form of micro-activism, starting from within the family to impact on a larger context (neighbourhood, school, family networks, etc.). My considerations rest on the conviction that white parents, and any white adult involved in the education and growth of Black children, should actively engage both in Critical Whiteness and Black Consciousness.

14:00–15.30

room ES 131

Fishbowl discussion:

“African European Studies: Aims, scope and disciplinarity”

What is ‘African European Studies’ supposed to mean? What are its research aims, scope, uses, and limitations? Which methodologies are being/should be used? Which discipline(s) does/should it connect with? This fishbowl discussion aims to discuss these foundational questions in an open forum.

Specific aspects of the discussion can, for instance, include the following:

- Does ‘African European’ refer to one or several socio-cultural formations? If so, to which one(s)? Demographic? Political? Aesthetic? Consumerist? What are the implications of the term?
- Where can it be located: In Africa, Europe, or both? What is the ‘Africa’ in ‘African European,’ and what is the ‘Europe’ in ‘African European’? How are the two connected? If the term evokes a multiplicity of locations, how do these different locations – and their different languages – shape the way we understand ‘African European’? Do we also need to look beyond these locations, e.g. to global political alliances, global popular culture, cyberspace?
- Who gets to define ‘the African European’? How, and for which purposes? How are power imbalances and conflicting political agendas played out here?
- Inasmuch as ‘African European Studies’ is a distinct academic research field, what is its methodology and scope? How does it connect with various relevant academic disciplines? How does the term ‘African European’ interact with ‘Afropolitanism’, ‘Afrofuturism’, ‘cosmopolitanism’, ‘postcolonialism’, and ‘diaspora’?
- If ‘African European’ questions go beyond academic inquiry, what exactly is their relationship to activism, politics, and everyday life?
- Are there concrete examples where the concept ‘African European’ can be particularly meaningful or problematic? E.g. for the understanding of certain activist projects, films, literary texts, musical works?

The fishbowl format:

The panel of active speakers will consist of five people at any one time. Three of these are permanently on the panel, for the entire length of the discussion. These three speakers will also have prepared brief opening statements (5–10 minutes) to start the discussion.

The three permanent speakers are: **Elisa J. White** (UC Davis)
Natasha A. Kelly (U Münster)

Matti Traußneck (U Marburg)

The other two places on the panel will be filled with members of the audience who participate spontaneously, if and whenever they like, and join as active speakers for part of the time; they will then be replaced by other audience members on a rotating basis. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Chair: Larry Greene (Seton Hall U)

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