

# Transformations Conference Report

7/8 July 2011

## Conference Participants

A total of fifty doctoral research students from the UK, Europe and overseas universities attended the conference. Twenty three of the participants were from the following schools at Cardiff University: ARCHI, ENCAP, EUROS, JOMEK, MUSIC, SHARE, SOCSI, SONMS, and WELSH. Other conference delegates attended from the following Universities; Ankara University (Turkey), Babes-Bolyai University (Romania), Bauhaus Universitat (Germany), Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies (Romania), Charles University (Prague), Oxford Brookes University, Coventry University, Goldsmiths University of London, Masaryk University (Czech Republic), Panteion University of Athens (Greece), Rhodes University (South Africa), Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (Spain), University College London, University of Aberdeen, University of Antwerp (Belgium), University of Cambridge, University of Creative Arts, University of Dammam (Saudi Arabia), University of Ibadan (Nigeria), University of London, University of Manchester, University of Newcastle, University of Silesia (Poland), University of Stellenbosch (South Africa), University of Sussex, University of Wales Institute Cardiff, University of Wroclaw (Poland), University of Exeter.

## Panel 1a: Society and the Politics of Transformation, Part 1

**Chair: Iain Mossman (EUROS)**

- Milada Burcikova 'Quests to Create a Difference: William Morris's Craft Revolt and Craftivism 2000'
- Bruna Chezzi 'Autobiography and the Bi-Cultural Memory: the Self Representation of Welsh Italians'

The first panel of the conference began with two intriguing papers which although contextually diverse, drew on similar theoretical paradigms, such as utopianism, in order to interrogate responses to social change. Milada Burcikova's paper, 'Quests to Create a Difference: William Morris's Craft revolt and Craftivism 2000', introduced her work on the contemporary craftism movement, including in her paper many wide ranging examples of how craftism has developed. Taking as a starting point the works of William Morris, she drew links between the historical and contemporary movements, highlighting the importance of the artistic practise in political and social activism. Bruna Chezzi's paper, 'Autobiography and the bi-cultural memory: the self representation of Welsh Italians', considered several texts by Welsh-Italian authors within a utopian paradigm, considering how their hybrid, nomadic identity fed into ideas around space, place and belonging. Both papers were informative and engaging, and generated lively discussion among the delegates about artistic practises and social movements.

## Panel 1b: Rethinking the Nation (state), Part 1

**Chair: Amal Hallak (ENCAP)**

- Dragana Lazarevic 'Artificiality of the Nation – When Changing the State Means Changing the Name'

- Michael Auwers 'Contributions to the Concept of Diplomatic Culture and it's Study: a Historian's Perspective'

Dragana Lazarevic discussed how the wars of Yugoslav succession in the last decade of the 20th century had as a consequence the creation of seven new, arguably independent, states with a burden of numerous unsolved problems such as the question of the origins of national identities, ethnic and historic boundaries, religious and language disputes and the outside pressure to suppress these problems. Dragana aimed to analyse the latest developments of the new nations in their academic attempts to legitimize the longevity of their historical existence. The tools used for the construction of their national identities are not new: there is a widespread re-writing of the historic narratives that coincide with re-construction of the political order under the open control of the International Community. Dragana concluded by stating the unfortunate consequence of a widening gap between the nations that grew from the same root and will impede the process of reconciliation that is expected from them.

Michael Auwers' paper offered a different perspective of rethinking the nation. Michael discussed how the perception of 'diplomatic culture' has not advanced since Hedley Bull introduced the concept in 1977. Diplomatic historians have largely ignored the debate in IR Theory that elaborated Bull's definition.

The rare conceptualization efforts in their works are hardly substantiated. Michael proposed that a theoretical framework for the study of the history of diplomatic culture can be understood as 'the structure of meaning through which diplomats develop ideas, perceive interests, and act on both'. Due to the passage from 'old' to 'new' diplomacy under the influence of political democratization, this was a fundamental transition phase in the history of diplomatic culture. The community of European diplomats preserved its aristocratic character, but the world around them was changing, as public opinion and new generations of politicians vigorously attacked the ways and methods of traditional diplomacy. Michael aimed to adopt a historical perspective combined with insights from IR Theory, sociology and anthropology with the early twentieth century as his study's chronological framework.

## **Panel 2a: Society and the Politics of Transformation, Part 2**

**Chair: Iain Mossman (EUROS)**

- Panagiotis Manolakos 'Attempts to an Economical and Social Transformation: Greek Modernisation Policies (1996-2010)
- Katarzyna Markiewicz 'Sharpening of the Tool'

This lively panel examined contrasting approaches to economic policy in Europe, firstly the case of Greek social and economic policies over the last 15 years and secondly in Polish banking policy over a similar period. The first paper was Panagiotis Manolakos' 'Attempts to an Economical and Social Transformation: Greek Modernisation Policies (1996-2010)', which outlined the successes and failure of Greek policies, particularly regarding integration into the Euro, and suggested the bearing that the policies have on Greece's current crises.

Katarzyna Markiewicz's paper, 'Sharpening of the Tool: Multidimensional Changes in Polish Banking Law', outlined the policies behind Poland's emergence into a market based economic system, and considered how these reforms have been continually transformed over the decades. Both papers were informative and often insightful but the highlight of the

panel was the debate during the questions, where both speakers vigorously defended their viewpoints in a number intellectually rich exchanges.

### **Panel 2b: Rethinking the Nation (state), Part 2**

**Chair: Dragana Lazarevic (SHARE)**

- Bozena Sojka-Koirala 'Self Identity and Othering: a Case of Cyprus'
- Steve Eaves 'The Potential Contributory Role of Critical Welsh Language Awareness Training in Transforming Civil Society and the Development of Post-colonial Identity in Wales'

The conference panels that that addressed problems of Nation and National Identity were extremely popular with impressive attendance of around 25 delegates. Questions of Self, Other, Immigration, Language and Civil Society were asked in a highly academic manner, without slipping into polemics. Bozena Sojka-Koirala's paper presented the case study of the representation of immigrants in Cyprus, as described in the English language editions of two of Cyprus' daily newspapers. Through the analysis of words used in describing immigrants, the old patterns of "othering" emerged in a highly stereotypical way. Similarly, Steve Eaves' paper presented the case-study of the preservation of the Welsh language and the obstacles that are met through this process. Both papers received well-deserved attention and initiated further discussion after the panel.

### **Panel 3a: Architecture and the Remodelling of Urban Environments**

**Chair: Dragana Lazarevic (SHARE)**

- Katerina Frankova 'Transforming Urban Public Spaces: Consulting with the Public Using Focus Groups and Walking Discussions'
- Katherine Knowles 'Transformation to a Sustainable Society: the Role of Grassroots Groups and the Urban Environment'
- Liza Wing Man Kam 'Architecture, Identity and Civic Awareness – Transformation and Disappearance of Urban Heritage in HK as a Post-colonial City'

Rarely does a conference panel comprising three different research objectives have such a natural flow. The extraordinary link between the papers through the notion of the urban spaces and their public perception(s) was best expressed through the conclusions given by the participants: the applied methods of research resulted in similar outcomes. From the point of view of its objectives, this panel was probably one of the best structured of all panels of the conference. However, its somewhat narrow focus meant it could not compete with the more general subjects of the other panels and as a result, attracted a more specialised audience. The response, however, was overwhelmingly positive and initiated further discussions after the panel ended.

### **Panel 3b: Religion and Social Change**

**Chair: Juan Wu (SHARE)**

- Abdulla Galadari 'Convergence of Christian and Islamic Theology'
- Jakub Wyborski 'Religious Conversion as a Kind of Radical Transformation: a Jamesian

View'

- Charlene Van Der Walt 'Keep Your Coins, I want Change....' Using the Intercultural Bible Reading Process as a Tool for Change: Discussion of a Qualitative Research Project'

The three papers in this panel dealt with transformations which are encountered within or across different religious traditions.

Abdullah Galadari compared several theological meta-concepts in Christianity and Islam. He maintained that the differences between the two religions, as observed from these meta-concepts, is due to certain misunderstandings within each faith and with each other's faith, and that once analysed, the differences become indifferences.

Jakub Wyborski introduced William James's theory of religious conversion as a radical transformation. His paper included two parts: in the first part, he discussed phenomenological and psychological dimensions of Jamesian theory; in the second part, he explored philosophical implications of the theory, and its relations with other theories of conversion.

Based on data collected in one research project taking place in South Africa, Charlene Van Der Walt examined the question of how the intercultural reading of Biblical texts helped to transform the life experience of readers. She argued that the intercultural Bible reading group created a space that promoted human dignity and had the inherent capacity to facilitate social transformation.

Three major questions were raised in the final discussion, separately in response to each paper: 1) How to contextually make sense of 'differences' between Christian and Islamic traditions, instead of adjudicating them as 'misunderstandings'? 2) Many examples of conversion do not involve thorough replacement of old beliefs with new beliefs. How do we understand them? 3) Whether or how the choice of reading materials and the composition of participants could have affected the results of the research of intercultural Bible reading?

### **Panel 3c: Ritual and Performance**

**Chair: Matthew Machin (MUSIC)**

- Adeola Dewis 'Mas' Bodies'
- William Roberts 'Festival and Ritual in Cardiff Civic Centre'
- Michelle Whiting 'Space, Place and Site through Moving Image Installation Art Practice: Entering Elsewhere'

The first two papers in this panel addressed the topic of ritual and performance from two distinct, yet complementary perspectives. Firstly, Adeola Dewis's paper explored how self identity is transformed through an examination of a Trinidadian carnival play (Mas'). She argued that participants, through the performance of identity in the carnival, can invoke an alternative sense of self (an 'other' self) that may normally be suppressed. As such, she shows that ritual can provide people with an opportunity to perform differing conceptions of self identity that may not normally be possible or desirable.

Secondly, William Roberts's paper explored the relationship between the use of space and the performance of 'temporary' identities in different ritual or festive contexts. The space under examination was the Cardiff Civic Centre, and by drawing upon extensive ethnographic research he discussed how the space is used for various events (such as the St. David's Day Parade and Winter Wonderland). In this respect, William alluded to the ways in which spaces can be claimed, defined and contested by different groups and according to different identities.

Although this panel was missing a third speaker, the two papers generated a great deal of response and debate which filled the time that was left over. As a result, this was a lively and insightful panel that raised pertinent issues regarding transformations in identity and identity performance, and the use of space.

#### **Panel 4a: Experience and the Body, Part 1**

**Chair: Juan Wu (SHARE)**

- Jacob Johanssen 'The Future is Now: the Transformation to the Self through Therapy Culture'
- Christina Lovey 'Place, Transition and Transformation – a Pilgrimage into the Liminal'
- Michaela Pnacekova 'Transforming Bodies and Identities'

The five papers in these two panels (4a and 5a) addressed various changes and/or challenges underwent by individuals in their physical, psychological, emotional, ontological experiences, as well as their reactions towards, or possible solutions to, such changes.

Jacob Johanssen introduced his on-going research on the therapy culture. He addressed that the therapy culture fundamentally relates to the transformation of the self, from admitting one's bad addictions to taking actions to conquer it. He concluded that to overcome one's those addictions depends on two factors, i.e., action and will.

Christina Lovey's paper discussed the filmic representations of liminal experience, especially focusing on questions of how, and in what ways, the work of mourning can, as a kind of liminal experience, be undertaken or realized through performative processes.

Michaela Pnacekova's paper examined the concept of identity transformations through various forms of gender performance (via language, acts and the body). She particularly discussed two such forms, pandrogyny and transgenderism, and proposed to reconsider the role of cosmetic surgery in co-constructing these two forms.

#### **Panel 4b: Recasting Social Space through Music**

**Chair: Joe O'Connell (MUSIC)**

- Matthew Machin 'From Folk, to Art, to Global: Transformations of the Flamenco Guitar'
- Joanne Coates 'Digital 'Transformations and the Music Industry: Exploring Cardiff's Independent Music Scene'
- Charlie Bramley 'The Social, Ethical, and Transformative Energy of Trans-Mutational Improvisation'

These three papers dealt with the theme of 'transformation' with regard to 'popular' musical subject matter, with each dealing with issues of performance and the tension between 'authenticity' and commercialism. Matthew Machin began the session with an examination of changes in performance style during four periods of the flamenco guitar's history. Beginning as a member of a traditionally working class ensemble, whose performances usually took place in private settings, the guitar was taken out of this context and pushed centre-stage at the beginning of the 20th century; performing flamenco-inspired music in a quasi-'art music' setting. In turn, the instrument became the main signifier of flamenco culture within the 'world music' industry, as performers became more virtuosic and fused flamenco material with those of other international styles. The fluidity of transformation was demonstrated by Machin in his exemplifying of the current trend to perform in the 'rough' style of its origins; the guitar has come 'full circle'. It is worth noting, however, that the changing style of guitar performance has been undertaken as a means to 'popularize' the instrument at every stage – demonstrating this tension between authenticity and commercialism.

Joanne Coates' paper also referred to musical performance within an economic framework, by dealing widely with transformations in the consumption of recorded music. Coates argued that as the mp3 format has overtaken 'physical' (CD, vinyl) forms as the most popular mode of music listening, the attempted suppression of 'file-sharing' which the format encourages is unsustainable. This assertion is based upon field work undertaken within the Cardiff live circuit, within which most acts are without a recording contract. As such, she found that they use internet file sharing (alongside 'physical' sharing via the distribution of free CDs at performances) as a means to release their recordings and promote their live performances. They make no profit from their recorded music (which is largely 'set to tape' for free through home recording), but make a small income through performing and merchandise, such as t-shirts. Coates found that this small level of financial success was 'enough' for most performers, who had no pretensions to acquiring a traditional 'record deal' within an industry struggling to maintain a profitable existence.

Charlie Bramley took the focus deliberately away from the music industries, and instead discussed his research on 'Trans-Mutational-Improvisation' – or inclusive improvisation – which allows those with no musical experience to engage in performance. Bramley argued that this transforms music from a 'privileged and exclusive' art form into one within which anybody can engage. Traditional musical performance is unlike other art forms in that it has inherent boundaries and restrictions: notation, rhythm, harmony etc. For Bramley, these boundaries must be lifted so that performers can approach an instrument with no knowledge of its processes, and be able to pick it up and make 'music' with no pre-conceived ideas of what music 'is', thereby democratising musical performance.

All three papers provoked plenty of questions from the audience, with regard to issues of intellectual property, politics, the 'boundaries' of folk performance and local music scenes – as well as a provocative question from the key note speaker with regard to the 'contradictory' natures of the three papers, particularly directed towards Bramley: using 'traditional' methods to discuss the breaking of tradition.

## **Panel 4c: The Changing Roles of Women**

**Chair: Liezel Longboan (JOMECE)**

- Roderick Galam 'Histories and Dreams: Filipino Seamen's Wives, Migration and Transformation'
- Kim Barker 'Sustaining Transformation: Challenges for Participatory Action Research'
- Raluca Caplescu 'Transformations in the Reproductive Behaviour in Romania'

Roderick Galam was unable to present his paper because of unforeseen circumstances. Despite his absence, Kim Barker and Raluca Caplescu provided fresh insights on the situation of women in South Africa and Romania.

Kim discussed the strengths and limitations of participatory action research (PAR) in a project which aimed to allow women to be involved in leadership positions in a local church. The project was initiated by the all-male leadership of a conservative Baptist Church in South Africa. A facilitated joint retreat enabled both women and men to take up alternative subject positions, and helped them to reflect on discourses which had served to maintain the patriarchal status quo. However, the male leaders gradually withdrew their support for women to take on bigger roles within the church. Kim's discussion revealed that the women were transformed in the process yet PAR as a 'transformative' method, need to be implemented over the long term in order to be effective.

Raluca looked at the changing reproductive behaviour among women in Romania using quantitative methods. From having three to four children, Romanian women now have an average of two children, which can be attributed to the fall of the socialist regime, and the passage of laws supporting contraception and abortion.

While both speakers looked at women's issues in specific contexts, their different methodological approaches generated a lively discussion among the audience.

## **Panel 5a: Experience and the Body, Part 2**

**Chair: Juan Wu (SHARE)**

- Jessica Baillie 'A Transformation of Body and Self: Emergent Findings from an Ethnography of Dialysis in the Home'
- Antonio Carvalho 'Transforming the Politics of Experience: the Case of Vipassana Meditation'

Jessica Baillie introduced her ethnographic study of the peritoneal dialysis, a daily treatment of kidney failure performed by patients in their own homes. She discussed how this medical treatment has brought noticeable impacts on the individuals, their family relationships and home environment.

Antonio Carvalho's paper examined how the vipassana meditation as a kind of body experience, transforms one's conception of the self, particularly on psychological, ontological and ethical dimensions. He also introduced his own experience of attending meditation retreats and his feelings about such experience.

## **Panel 5b: Narrating the Nation, Part 1**

**Chair: Matthew Machin (MUSIC)**

- Tanya Zaharchenko 'While the Ox is Still Alive: Post-Soviet Transformations in a Ukrainian Novel'
- Jade Munslow Ong 'Human Dogs and New Laws in JM Coetzee's Disgrace and JP Stassen's Deogratias'

In this two part panel, four speakers explored the ways in which the nation is 'narrated', represented and transformed in both literary fiction and film. In part one, Tanya Zaharchenko examined the novel Voroshilovgrad in the context of post-USSR Ukraine. By analysing symbolism and events in the novel, she argued that the transformations of national and individual identity during this period can be better understood. Jade Munslow Ong's paper considered two novels and the ways in which they treat the human-to-dog transformation in the social and political contexts of Rwanda and South Africa. Here, Jacques Derrida formed the theoretical backdrop for a reassessment of conventional theories regarding the animal metaphor; rather than signifying the degradation of humans, Jade argued that human-to-dog transformations can be understood as an invocation of power and the ability to change social positions.

## **Panel 5c: The Changing Face of Philosophy, Part 1**

**Chair: Amal Hallak (ENCAP)**

- Muyesser Ozlem Basak 'Heidegger's Other Beginning as Self-Unfolding Generation'
- Delia Manzanero 'Transformations of the Old Ideas of Europe'

Muyesser Ozlem Basak explored Heidegger's conception of the transformation inherent to Being (and everything that belongs with Being) as the self-unfolding generation of 'the entirely other as the other of itself'. She attempted to trace the complex movements in his Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning) (1936-38) with a particular emphasis on the theme of beginning. In the course of the history of 'metaphysics'- the Western philosophical / theological tradition as Heidegger defines it, the whole human knowing and effort comes to be alienated from a proper comportment to beings. Heidegger challenges the determination of truths in Western thought that is inherently based on the mastery of beings in their presentness. 'In Contributions, Heidegger explicates the precepts of the 'crossing' to the 'other beginning' of Western thought as the being underway of the 'overcoming of all metaphysics'. Such 'crossing' is to be undertaken in a 'time-space' of its own, and involves the exposition and interplay of history of philosophy in relation to the enactment of an entirely different thinking. Heidegger's confrontation with the history of philosophy is an endeavour to open up for thought and knowing beyond 'metaphysics'.

Delia Manzanero aimed to provide a new analysis in the light of Krausist philosophy in the complex task of attempting to determine the content generally attributed to the European cultural identity in the current context of the globalisation and multiculturalism that define our time. To achieve this, Delia introduced briefly the Krausist philosophy of law, which is now widely spread in Europe and Latin America and has its well known source in the German philosopher Krause (1781 - 1832). Given the strong European influence on the

origin of Krausism, with the introduction in Spain of the modernising influences of Europe through the travels of Julian Sanz del Rio to Germany, Delia thought it interesting to address a certain thesis proliferated in Spanish Krausism in the early twenty century on the understanding of this philosophy as a European movement with pretensions to universality, in order to see its projection on global education and the legal recognition of human rights. By virtue of Krausist universal vocation, Delia saw it possible to overcome the elitist view of European culture based on the exclusion of the “other” and on the claim of affirmation against difference, and recognise legal principles of universal value as reflected in the titles of the Constitution of the European Union and non-discrimination policies and respect for other cultures and traditions of other peoples of Europe.

### **Panel 6a: Media Transformations**

**Chair: Leizel Longboan (JOMECE)**

- Aysel Demir ‘The Transformations of Democracy and Media’
- Jonathan Bishop ‘Participation Transformation in Online Communities – From Lurker to Poster’

The two speakers presented different challenges facing the media: the first, at the national level, and the second, at the virtual level. Aysel’s paper provided a broad discussion of the media system in Turkey and how the media’s role is being undermined by the interest of media owners and political pressure groups. Jonathan explored the idea of a ‘participation continuum’ in order to encourage lurkers in online communities to become more active participants. While he did not discuss the role of moderators in the engaging lurkers to post, he presented a model that could help moderators and programmers in transforming participation among lurkers in online communities.

Despite the diverse topics presented by the speakers, their presentations showed how a negative or a positive transformation within the media can affect the public sphere within a democratic society.

### **Panel 6b: Narrating the Nation, Part 2**

**Chair: Matthew Machin (MUSIC)**

- Lisa Socrates ‘Time and Space in Post-1974 Greek-Cypriot Cinema: Cinematic Transformation of ‘Nation’, Identity and Community’
- Jessica George ‘A Kind o’ Relation’: Race, Immigration and the Hereditary Taint in HP Lovecraft’s The Shadow over Innsmouth’

In part two of this panel, Lisa Socrates moved away from literary analyses to explore the ways in which cinema articulated a distinct rise in national identity in Cyprus (after 1974) amongst the Greek-Cypriot community. By drawing upon Benedict Anderson’s analysis of nationalism and ‘public time’, she argued that film can destabilise public time and thus contributes to the complex negotiation of political identities in contemporary Cypriot society.

In the final paper, Jessica George discussed the novel *The Shadow over Innsmouth* by the American 'weird fiction' author, H.P. Lovecraft. Through an examination of particular literary devices and themes, she explored how issues of immigration, racism and the eugenics movement manifest themselves in Lovecraft's novel. As such, her paper used literature as a vehicle through which to explore shifting conceptions of the self and other in nineteenth and early-twentieth century America.

### **Panel 6c: The Changing Face of Philosophy, Part 2**

**Chair: Amal Hallak (ENCAP)**

- Cristina Milos 'Narrative and Mythic Experience in the Modernist Autobiographical Novel'
- Livia Apostol 'A Theoretical Review on Attitude Change towards Animals and their Treatment'

Cristina Milos discussed the mechanism of the narrative discourse of the modernist autobiographical novel which is able to impose an ontological signification to the narrative as to disclose the identity based on the new theories of neuropsychology which relates the religious experiences with the brain's functions and narrative. Even if the poetics of the modernist novel are deeply grounded in the phenomenological system of psychology starting E. Mach and W. James, and descending from the tradition of English empiricism of Locke and D. Hume, and also from the philosophy of H. Bergson, Husserl and J-P. Sartre, the vanishing time of the perceptive subject reclaimed by these systems can be transformed in fixity, in space, generating a particular kind of mythic experience. Cristina demonstrated that the principle of order and identity sense transformation is given by the narrative discourse elements in connection with the mental field Focusing on the novels like D. J. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*, V. Woolf, *The Waves*, J. Joyce, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Livia Apostol discussed how in the last decades, social psychologists took a special interest in the study of attitudes towards animals (AA), mainly because of the increasingly obvious transformations that occurred, at a societal level, in the relations between humans and other species. With the emerging and growing social movement of animal protection, welfare and conservation, researchers tried to determine the factors contributing to these complex and often conflicting relationships. AA are fundamental to this issue because they are known to significantly influence behaviour, and because controlling the factors responsible for their modification can improve educational programs and the efficacy of different persuasive methods. Livia revised the literature on people's AA to include empirical and descriptive studies, in the attempt at finding the most appropriate theoretical framework for the study of AA modification. She concluded that studies involving animal protection campaigns aiming at transforming people's AA should consider the cognitive theories of persuasion. Messages presented in such campaigns have to be attentively framed and well targeted in order to influence attitudes and determine behavioural change. Applying the cognitive model of persuasion to the specific variables responsible for AA change could increase knowledge on the process of attitude modification.