

ESF Exploratory Workshop on
**European Perspectives
on the Black Atlantic**

Huelva, Spain, 26 - 29 September 2007

Convened by:

Pilar Cuder-Domínguez and Bénédicte Ledent

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Département de langues et littératures germaniques, Université de Liège

Co-sponsored by:





European Perspectives on the Black Atlantic

EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION
EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP

University of Huelva
27-28 September 2007



Universidad
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SETTING SCIENCE AGENDAS FOR EUROPE

ABSTRACTS

Black People in England and Wales, 1660-1807: Fact and Fiction

Kathleen Chater
Independent Scholar

The assumption has been that most black people in Britain during the long eighteenth century were enslaved, discriminated against and oppressed but detailed research on the lives of ordinary individuals reveals a different picture.

African Connections: The Uses and Abuses of the Black Atlantic Model

Laura Chrisman
University of Washington

Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* generated two divergent academic directions. One centres on intellectual and cultural traffic between Europe and the U.S.A., and tends to valorise transcultural or transracial 'hybridity'. The other, racially specific direction focuses on black countercultures of modernity as they circulate across nation-states divided by the Atlantic ocean. This talk concentrates on the latter, and considers the impact of Gilroy's Black Atlantic on African studies. Gilroy's publication has stimulated important research into the transnational flows between black diaspora and African communities, cultures and ideas. Such research has significantly expanded understanding by moving beyond the colonizer/colonized axis that has dominated 'postcolonial' accounts of modern African political cultures. But it has generally assumed a unidirectional flow of influence from the 'new world' diaspora to the 'old' continent, and perpetuated a view of the black diaspora as the apex of black modernity to which Africa aspires.

This talk critically evaluates both the uses and abuses of Gilroy's work in the arena of African studies. I focus on diaspora/black South African dynamics of the early 20th century. Rather than unearthing a one-way flow, I consider the possibility that these two racially-subordinated, resistant populations were involved in a mutually transformative relationship. As well as revising directional flow, this talk revises a number of other tenets that prevail in black Atlantic African studies. Thus I consider how black South Africans can both affirm and criticize black American thought, intimating alternative conceptions of political and cultural leadership for themselves and for the US diaspora. While Gilroy's work, and the studies that follow his, presuppose that nationalism and transnationalism are necessarily antagonistic impulses, I interrogate this assumption. The category of the nation, I suggest, demands to be recentred as the only effective means for interpreting the category and operations of transnationality. Likewise, the Gilroyesque notion that black nationalism and feminism are equally antagonistic impulses comes in for reconsideration here.

Gilroy's study has generated forms of culturalism or aestheticism that are at odds with his own arguments. I consider ways in which this black South African/black American archive can be seen to resist reduction to aestheticist analysis. Finally, I reconsider the popular view of black Atlantic, transnational articulations as inevitably emancipatory or progressive; there is nothing intrinsically liberatory, I want to suggest, about black transnational dynamics, which on the contrary have at times been utilized as an instrument of racist and imperialist control. In considering the political meanings of black Atlantic movements, I suggest, the particular circumstances and contents of individual cases need to be taken into account.

The Francophone Black Atlantic

Elisa Diallo
University of Leiden

This paper considers a very pragmatic dimension of the idea of the “Black Atlantic” as developed by Paul Gilroy: the recent and growing enthusiasm of francophone African writers for the United States of America. For many of these writers, the recognition of Paris is not the ultimate goal anymore; New York or Los Angeles are the ‘places to be’, the places where they want to be read and discussed. Interestingly, this development contributes in its turn to significant transformations of the intellectual, academic and literary worlds of Paris. I will discuss this matter through the example of the Guinean writer Tierno Monémbo (1947), whose work constitutes the object of my PhD dissertation.

Monémbo’s fifth novel, *Pelourinho* (1995), marks out a turning point in his writing, when his gaze crosses the Atlantic and he starts searching for inspiration in the Americas. In *Pelourinho* an African writer, Escritore, undertakes a journey to Brazil in order to retrieve – and narrate – the memory of his ancestors taken from the African coast and shipped away to the other side of the Atlantic. His travel in itself is a statement: it suggests that it is time to build a future based on something new, something else than the memory of colonialism. It is time to let go of the worldview where Europe, France in particular, occupies the centre. By coming to Brazil, Escritore shows the way for a new journey, and proposes new connections.

Outside the fictive world of literature also, it seems as if more and more francophone African writers are following this ‘new’ path: the journey away from Africa – which, sadly, African intellectuals and artists still massively undertake – doesn’t lead them automatically to France anymore, but more and more to the United States. Tierno Monémbo is one of them: his interest for America – North and Latin – has only been growing since the mid-1990s. This has to do with at least two things: first, the dynamism of francophone studies in Anglo-American universities, and, contrastively, the marginal place this field of studies (still) occupies within French universities. But this academic situation is itself inscribed in a broader context: that of contemporary global mass migration movements, of the growing reluctance of Europe to absorb this migration flows, and of the capacity of the United States to do so.

However, the active exchange movements between Africa and America, thanks to the increasing interest in francophone literatures within American universities, have an impact on the French intellectual climate. One observes a true triangular circulation of ideas between Africa, America and France, precisely because more and more francophone African writers have a foot in those three locations.

In this paper I will thus focus on this new ‘francophone Black Atlantic’. I will first shed some light on its practical dimensions, before discussing the theoretical implications of this new phenomenon.

Teaching the Black Atlantic in Spain: Institutionalization and European Convergence

Mar Gallego
University of Huelva

Within the context of the objectives selected for panel 3 “Teaching the Black Atlantic: European Perspectives,” I intend to focus my contribution on the presentation of current undergraduate and graduate programmes on the African diaspora in Spain as compared to other European or North American institutions. The general aim of my presentation is to evaluate the degree of institutionalization of African diaspora studies in Spanish curricular plans, as well as the impact of these studies in the ongoing process of convergence in European universities and in the configuration of multiethnic Europe.

We can affirm that an area in which the reception of the African diaspora is increasingly visible and important is in curricular plans. A brief survey of both undergraduate and graduate curricular plans from Spanish Universities consolidates this statement. As an example of this, more and more subjects dealing with African diaspora literatures have been part of doctoral

programmes offered by Spanish universities dating back to the end of 80s and beginning of the 90s. But a more relevant feature is that many courses are devoted to the study of African and African diaspora literatures and cultures at the undergraduate level in the last ten years: among them, La Laguna, UNED, Salamanca, Complutense, Sevilla, Huelva, León, Alicante, Autónoma Barcelona, Cádiz, Coruña, Universidad de Barcelona and Oviedo, both in English and French languages. In some cases, the courses are specific but in others, the study of these literatures and cultures are inserted within more general courses on ethnic or postcolonial literatures, or in comparative literature courses (or American literature courses in the case of African American literature). However, there is almost no specific course on the African diaspora writings in Spanish except in León, which is an area that definitively needs to be explored in much more detail.

I am also interested in innovative classroom practices and teaching methodologies, so I will focus on those subjects that particularly stress a different way to approach the teaching of the Black Atlantic in Spain in relation to other European or North American practices, among them the comparison with the current debate about multiethnic Spain, the insistence on gender perspectives or the inclusion of texts from the Black Atlantic in more general subjects and in other curricular plans from other fields.

All in all, we can then affirm that African diasporic studies are doing well in Spain regarding curricular plans in relation to other European countries and are quite relevant for the future of English studies due to their strong interdisciplinary approach but we need to insist on more institutionalization and visibility, which will be necessary to be taken into account in the current process of European convergence.

The "Barque Ouverte" (Glissant) or *The Black Atlantic* as Caribbean Interface; Some Considerations on Submarine Unity that Desperately Needs to Surface

Kathleen Gyssels
University of Antwerp

In this paper, I will demonstrate how Gilroy's essay echoes in various ways seminal essays by Caribbean and African American writers and intellectuals.¹ More specifically, Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse* is echoed very often in Gilroy's *BA: Le discours antillais*, originally published in 1981 in French, translated partially by Michael Dash in 1989, as the *Selected Essays* in the CARAF series, has been consulted by Gilroy. He starts with an "exergue" from the Caribbean discourse (p 1), questions the translation of the *Selected Essays* for Glissant's borrowing from Deleuze's "rhizome"(p31)², and the importance of music as an important form of communication (p75).

In the first part of my paper, I will examine parallel waves between both essays and recommend the practice of translation as a mediation in the construction of a "Caribbean community", both in terms of transnational identities and of a truly profound dialogue between writers and critics engaged with Caribbeanness. Indeed, the linguistic riff is still the most efficient frontier between intellectuals, authors, critics and readers in the African diaspora, and particularly in the Caribbean.

In the second part of my paper, I'll deal with the French(-Caribbean) reception of *The Black Atlantic*: In sharp contrast with Gilroy's huge impact among the Anglophone Caribbean world, - roughly every Ph.D, article re questions such as exile, sequels of colonialism and slavery, diaspora and displacement have it in their bibliography, *The Black Atlantic* has been

¹ Gilroy pays tribute to artists and writers such as Toni Morrison, whose beautiful final "prayer" "not to pass on" the story of slavery in the Americas is inspiring him to the point of making it the title of his final chapter. In *The Black Atlantic*, a second African American who conducts Gilroy's critical examination of modernity is W.E.B. DuBois whose *Souls of the Black Folk* introduced the fundamental concept of double consciousness. Independent from each other, separated by language and generation, Glissant and Gilroy trace in similar vein the manifold heritages of Africa in the New World through arts such as music and sculpture, and both examine the creolization of languages, religions, and customs.

² On the changes involved by translating Glissant from French to English, see Theo D'Haen. "Deleuze, Guattari, Glissant and Post-'American' Narratives." *Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 13 (1997): 387-99.

discovered belatedly in the francophone world. Translated into French in 2003³, the book has not been reviewed that much. Moreover some French (Caribbean) scholars blame Gilroy for a certain “narrowness”. More precisely, in *La diaspora noire des Amériques* (Paris: Presses CNRS, 2004), for instance, Christine Chivallon thinks that Gilroy does not take into account the heterogeneity of the African diaspora when he compares the Black and Jewish diasporas⁴ in a similar vein as Glissant did in *Caribbean discourse*. What I try to demonstrate through this “French resistance” is a regrettable “segregation” that painfully goes on in this 21st century of literary criticism on cultures and literatures from the African diaspora. Instead of a search for unity, one seems to prefer to maintain the “diversity” in the respective language zones. Partially proof of that is that authors dealt with by Gilroy are not commonly investigated in the Francophone zone, either⁵.

In conclusion, there is still a long way to cross before the Caribbean becomes that wholeness in literature and literary criticism that music has permitted to realize (certainly *reggae*). In the same way as *zouk* (Martinique), *Konpas* (Haiti), *tamboe* (Curaçao) and *son* (Cuba) have succeeded to be identified as World music and at the same time typical Caribbean, we should build out *Une nouvelle région du monde* (Glissant, 2006) by trying, through « exploratory workshops » like this one, to cover this “new region” as no longer a “submarine unity”. Bringing out the common grounds between Wilson Harris and Edouard Glissant, Dionne Brand and Patrick Chamoiseau, Caryl Phillips and Edwidge Danticat, Albert Helman and Léon Damas will allow us to measure the Caribbeanness, to memorize and commemorate in a truly new wave, across land and language borders⁶. Let us shortcut and apprehend the Caribbean’s wholeness because that’s what shows from the interweaving of *The Black Atlantic* and *Caribbean discourse*.

AfroEuropeans: Black Cultures and Identities in Europe

Marta Sofía López
University of León

My presentation will focus on the research project “AfroEuropeans: Black Cultures and Identities in Europe.” With the visual support of our web page, I will introduce the history of the project, which emerged out of the many different activities the individual members of the team had been carrying out on the fields of African and Caribbean Studies, and of our awareness that Europe is becoming a central site of black literary, artistic and theoretical production. For a number of years, most of us had known each other and collaborated closely in different activities, such as doctoral courses, conferences, summer schools, publications and so on, but now we wanted to formalize this connection and start working as an organized research group. I will briefly introduce in the course of my presentation the cv’s and research interests of the people involved in the project.

Our first concern was with the definition of “black” in our title: Is it to be understood as a racial or as a geographical concept? Would we include the North of Africa into our research interests? Is the notion of blackness homogeneous in different European contexts (Great Britain, France, Spain, Germany...)? Is it necessary for an artist to define him or herself as part of a black diasporan movement for their works to be considered “AfroEuropean”? What do we exactly mean by “AfroEuropean”? Any person of black descent living in Europe? People actually born in Europe? Most of these remain for us open questions, which have received provisional answers as we have had to make decisions concerning practical matters: authors to be listed in

³ With “Kargo” (Paris) in a translation which is not always very successful in my eyes, by J P Henquel.

⁴ I quote from her Conclusion, where she translates (without indicating it) the author’s original: “Gilroy [finit] par évacuer ce qui fait toute la spécificité du monde noir des Amériques, à savoir sa diversité. Etrange contradiction pour un auteur qui entend familiariser ses lecteurs avec l’hybridité interculturelle. Pourtant, ce n’est ni plus ni moins ce qu’accomplit le sociologue en s’arrêtant exclusivement sur les axes communs aux Juifs et aux Noirs que sont l’exil, la souffrance et la reprise des thèmes bibliques de l’Exode par le peuple noir qui sert souvent (...) aux discours nationalistes d’inspiration messianique.” (Chivallon 2004 : 33-34)

⁵ Baldwin for instance, in spite of his long term residence in the South of France does not receive a lot of critical attention. When he does, it is regrettable to see how much he has been misunderstood.

⁶ The Bicentennial year of the Abolition of slavery in the British West Indies has almost no echoes in France, in the same way as the French Caribbean celebrated the 150th year of abolition (1848-1989) without sharing it “outré-manche”).

the bibliographies we are compiling, topics to be covered by our e-journal, people to be invited to our conferences and seminars...

Up to this point, our main achievements are the following:

- The construction (and constant re-construction) of the web page <http://afroeuropa.unileon.es/>, which includes a presentation of the project, bibliography on theoretical approaches and black writers in Spanish, English, French and Italian and links to different institutions, research groups, documents, journals and so on related to the main subject of our project.
- The foundation of an e-journal, *Afroeuropa: Revista de Estudios Afroeuropeos*; *Journal of Afro-European Studies*; *Journal des Études Afroeuropéens* (<http://journal.afroeuropa.eu/>), based on the software provided by Open Journal Systems. Two numbers have been published in 2007 and a new one is under construction.
- The organization of an International Conference, which took place in León in October 2006, and was attended by a small but really substantial group of researchers and artists coming from different European, African and American countries.
- The oncoming volume containing some of the papers and lectures presented at the conference, to be published at the end of this year by Cambridge Scholars Press.

Meanwhile, we have established links with other research groups in Europe, including the “Group of Postcolonial Studies” at the Open University and “The Black Body Project,” directed by Joan Anim-Addo at Goldsmiths College. We also got in touch with the “Black European Studies” project based in Germany, although this contact has not rendered any fruits. Individually, we have established links with researchers based in Portugal and Germany, who will hopefully join our team in the future, thus expanding the linguistic and geographical span of our research.

Our main aim in the near future is to try and elaborate some sort of comparative framework which would allow us and other researchers to find commonalities and differences between different black artists and thinkers throughout Europe. Linguistic barriers are preventing the development of black comparative studies at a European level, and it is our conviction that these barriers should be overcome if we want to understand in its full implications the notion of an Afro-European identity (more properly, Afro-European identities) and their projection into the world of culture.

Taking Shortcuts: Literary Perspectives of the ‘Black Atlantic’

John McLeod
University of Leeds

Paul Gilroy’s valuable and influential concept of the ‘black Atlantic’ has always been troubled by a tension at its core. As I see it, this tension is created by the prescriptive and evaluative impulses which do not reside together harmoniously. On the one hand, Gilroy’s determined critique of sedentary and illiberal models of race, ethnicity, modernity and (especially) nation has underwritten his conceptualisation of the itinerant, haphazard, revisionary and protean character of cultural innovation which constantly re-signs its itself as ‘black’. Such a desire to conceptualise and prescribe a theoretically acceptable model of black culture has, on the other hand, created an *evaluative* problem: namely, how does one prize those forms of anti-racial and anti-colonial dissidence (past and present) which have been created precisely out of an encounter with the possibilities of advocating a race or nation? For Gilroy, restricted by his political investment in conceptual innovation, Pan-Africanism and those nationalist movements which work with the key concepts of modernity can only ever be (in his phrase) ‘shortcuts to solidarity’. And as proved by Gilroy’s later works such as *Between Camps* and *After Empire*, the promotion of a distinctly diasporic conceptual vocabulary and

political consciousness seems increasingly the only way to challenge the remoulding of racism after 9/11, and in an increasingly diasporic and racist Europe. Beyond the double consciousness of the black Atlantic, it seems, resides only failure, prejudice, shortcut, and fear.

Yet recent literary endeavours have offered other, more situated and sensitive ways of evaluating those folks who are drawn to such 'shortcuts to solidarity' – race, ethnicity, nation – as the vital means of survival and transformation. Does the use of a conceptually 'suspect' resource *inevitably* condemn its user to complicity with modernity and its fatal illiberalism? Might there be ways of engaging beyond the black Atlantic with those who demand a narrative of racial or national exclusivity which nonetheless draws upon the improvisational parameters of a postnational optic? Is solidarity always a shortcut? In opening up these questions I turn to Jackie Kay's challenging 1997 novel *Trumpet*, which tells the story of the fictional jazz musician Joss Moody who spends most of his life passing as man (Joss is biologically female), and the reaction of his adopted son Coleman to the discovery of his father's secret. In many ways the novel appears at first sight as exemplary of the cultural renegotiations of the black Atlantic across race, nation, ocean, and gender. Yet the novel also turns to race and nation – being Scottish, being black – in *reconstellating* the necessity and significance of solidarity and its shortcuts. As I shall argue, Kay's metaphorical use of adoption offers an intellectually rich way of going 'beyond the black Atlantic' in its exploration of the mutually inclusive impulses of filiation and affiliation which cannot be so readily dissolved via the protocols of cultural theory. In so doing, we might turn to her literary endeavours as a way of reappraising – perhaps even finessing – the conceptual gains which Gilroy's work has so richly, if problematically, developed.

Teaching Caribbean and Black Atlantic Studies in France

Judith Misrahi-Barak

Paul Valéry University, Montpellier III

After a very brief description of the situation in the past few decades, I will speak about the way it has been evolving, and the directions that are being taken, in order to achieve a description of how things stand at present. France, or rather the French universities, have taken a long time to introduce postcolonial studies in their syllabi. The process has been gradual since the late 1970s, and not all the areas of postcolonial studies have been favoured at the same time, and one can wonder about the deeper reasons why such or such area has been favoured at such or such a time. African studies, Australian and New Zealand studies, Canadian studies, Caribbean and Black Atlantic studies, and more recently South Asian studies — it seems that not all of them are taught and studied on an equal footing. Does it really depend on individuals only, can one speak of a deliberate policy of certain university departments? To what extent is the amount of funds extended by the countries involved play a role (it is quite obvious in the case of Canada for instance)? What is the status of Caribbean and Black Atlantic studies in a country which is still painfully divided into English and American studies, and where what is still called Commonwealth studies gets the smallest share?

My presentation will be organised around the inquiry I have been making over the past few weeks among colleagues teaching Caribbean and / or Black Atlantic Studies within the French universities. I have been taking as a basis the colleagues who belong to the SAES (Société des Anglicistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur) and the AFEA (Association Française d'Etudes Américaines). It will be interesting to try and establish some sort of geography of Caribbean and Black Atlantic studies in France — which are the universities where students are exposed to the field. It will also be interesting to highlight who are the Caribbean and Black Atlantic authors who are actually taught by the colleagues lucky enough to be in a university department that allows them to do so.

Because teaching and research necessarily have some commonalities, I will also try to tackle the very political issue of the discrepancy between the interest for Caribbean and Black Atlantic studies among students, and a certain resistance among the higher levels of academia, and particularly within the National Council of the Universities, where less than twenty-five

lecturers and professors decide who is going to be allowed to be director of studies at doctoral level for instance. In recent years, few people have been deemed worthy of being able to be director of studies in the postcolonial area, and even fewer in Caribbean studies, which always seem to be associated with another field (American studies, or even Canadian studies) but never developed as a field in itself.

Carnival and Homecoming in Robert Antoni's *Carnival*

Imen Najar
University of Liège

My paper is concerned with possible connections between the Caribbean carnival - more precisely the Trinidadian carnival - and the origins of what one might call the West Indian tragedy. In other words, my presentation tries to examine the Trinidadian spectacle as a by-product of the Black Atlantic and the need of its victims to create or re-create cultural practices within the context of displacement. Carnival becomes in this respect a link and a "theatricalized performance of heritage"⁷ to quote Barbara Kirshenblatt.

Carnival in the Caribbean seems to have several origins. Some researchers maintain that French settlers brought this tradition to the West Indies. Others claim that it came from Africa and cite some carnival characters, for example the moko jumbie as a proof of its African roots. Obviously, there are diverse traditions and cultures, by no way exclusive, which have come together to produce what is referred to now as the Trinidadian Carnival. My main interest in this respect is that whatever their origins, these Caribbean festivities present us with what many critics refer to as a safety space, where the survivors of the Black Atlantic brought to the West Indies as cargo, could be protected even if momentarily "from: race, hate, heart-of-darkness, (and) the legacy of the violent past"⁸ Jeremy Taylor writes.

In the West Indies, carnival performance dates back to the 1700s. It was dominated by the white elite. African and non-white people of different origins were forbidden by law to participate in street festivities. It is only with the emancipation of the slaves in 1838 that the opportunity was offered to former captives to take over carnival and embrace it as a symbol of their newly found freedom. It was a new way for West Indians of African origin to bond and recreate home. It was also an opportunity to transcend their situation, even for a short period of time, by developing a classless, genderless, and colour-blind celebration. By "playing mas", they and their descent could create a communal activity and claim it as theirs. They could defy their past slavery and assert belonging.

These themes of belonging and cultural affiliation are part of Robert Antoni's main concerns in *Carnival*. The Trinidadian writer celebrates in his fourth novel published in 2005, the redeeming power of festivities. Although his twentieth century West Indian characters live in New York, London, Nice and "the island" and are by no way captives or newly freed slaves, they all turn to carnival, just as the survivors of slavery did in the West Indies, with the hope of creating a home and the process of homing becomes carnival bound. I will try to examine Antoni's characters, their interaction with space, and the notion of carnival-homecoming to show that the Trinidadian writer goes beyond "the overintegrated conceptions of culture which present immutable, ethnic differences as an absolute break in the histories and experiences of 'black' and 'white' people."⁹ I will also be concerned with the intertextual feature of Antoni's work. The novel is in fact, among other things, a carnivalizing of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*.

⁷ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 8.

⁸ Jeremy Taylor, *The Caribbean Review of Books* (November 2005), 8.

⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 2.

The Padua Sea Changes Project: Black Bodies, Practices, and Discourses around the Atlantic

Annalisa Oboe
University of Padua

The powerful sea-changes image that labels the Padua research project speaks of our will to investigate the metamorphoses (historical, intellectual, artistic, literary...) that take place where/when the cultures along the Atlantic rim meet, clash or blend with each other. The research considers the uprooting and re-routing of the 'translated' cultures of the modern world from the perspective of scholars speaking from a border area of past and present migrations like the Veneto, but who move freely between the waters of Braudel's Mediterranean world and those of the unruly Atlantic. Committed to a transnational and cross-cultural vision, the project is in fact the expression of an international community of intellectuals that gathered for the first time at the University of Padua in October 2004, to engage in a complex and polysemic dialogue on questions of identity, human and cosmopolitical rights, social memory and global/local tensions in a circumatlantic perspective.

Growing out of an awareness that there is no single 'Atlantic' culture and that the ocean has, in fact, given way to a network of discrete but related, and inherently polymorphous, socio-political contact zones, the circumatlantic perspective may generate any number of productive lines of inquiry. It certainly converses with the expanding plethora of descriptive/interpretive terms that in recent years have sought to name the sites of interaction between nations, cultures, and regions: terms such as creolization, transculturation, hybridity, border, travel, migrancy, and diaspora. All of these point to a domain of shared and discrepant meanings, neighboring maps and tangential histories, that we have taken on and discussed while working our way into a comparative, intercultural study focusing on Euro-African-American connections.

In the Sea Changes project, which is indebted to Paul Gilroy's conceptualization of the Black Atlantic of the African slave trade and diaspora as a "counterculture of modernity," the Atlantic is a heuristic tool, a space for scholarly discovery which starts from the basic assumption that the sea as culture does not exist without the people that inhabit its shores. In other words, the Atlantic becomes a discursive space of interesting new perspectives just because it is crisscrossed and traveled in ways that speak of hybridizing exchanges among the cultures that define its borders, or of modes in which the cultures of Europe, Africa and the Americas respond to one another, collide or converge. This viewpoint has the advantage of allowing the tensions between the local/national and the global/transnational to come into sharper focus. In fact, it turns the circumatlantic zone into a signifier not simply (or not so much) of transnationality and movement, but particularly of the cultural, political, and literary need to define the local, a distinctive community or an individual identity, in historical contexts of displacement or of globalizing tensions. It can give voice to identitarian battles predicated on race, class and gender, to struggles for political and human rights, and to the fights for cosmopolitical citizenship that break out on the boundaries between transnational movements and nation-states – this in the belief that global phenomena cannot be studied apart from the politics of location they disrupt and are contested by.

The field radically advocates a liberating interplay of disciplines, an exploding of various parochialisms, so that scholars in the literatures and the arts of Europe, Africa and the Americas may dialogue not only with each other but also with practitioners of diaspora and Black Atlantic studies, international relations, history, cinema and media studies. The connecting platform may indeed appear to be problematic, but a subtextual unity is certainly made visible by this disembedding process, as a set of shared subtexts clearly informs our work – first and foremost, a politics of knowledge involving a postcolonial stance and a cultural studies and new historical approach.

The actual research carried out by the participants in the project engages mainly with the Black Anglophone cultures of Africa, Europe and the Americas, but a dialogue has also started with the Francophone and particularly Lusophone Black Atlantic, and a new route that connects the Black Atlantic and the 'Black' Mediterranean is also being investigated, which focuses on the recent production of black Italophone writers.

Who Are You Calling A Foreigner?

Caryl Phillips
Yale University

Despite being a society that has been built upon the legacy of wave upon wave of migration, the notion of belonging – and a love of tradition - remains very powerful in Britain. The criteria for belonging are many and mutable, which makes it all the more difficult for those on the 'outside' to understand how they might belong to this nation that Daniel Defoe once described as 'mongrel.' At what point do I stop being a foreigner? Is my ability to participate connected with my religion, my ethnicity, my race – or all three factors? Perhaps the most difficult situation faces those who, having imagined themselves to have successfully crossed all the borders of exclusion, and to be participating on the inside, suddenly realize that they are still perceived of as outsiders. I will look at the dichotomy of belonging and exclusion in British life through an examination of the lives of three Britons who had every reason to think that they had, indeed, traversed the borders of exclusion. They soon came to understand that this may well not be the reality. Francis Barber, Doctor Johnson's servant, was born in Jamaica, and he occupied a central role in late eighteenth century literary and social life. Randolph Turpin, whose father was born in British Guiana, and who in the middle of the twentieth century, was a great British sporting hero who died the loneliest of deaths. And finally, I will look at David Oluwale, a young stowaway from Nigeria, whose tragic death in 1969 helped to turn the spotlight onto the myth of British fair play and justice. These 'foreigners' tell us something about notions of race and participation in British life over the course of more than two centuries.

The Black Atlantic Agenda and Artistic/Narrative Strategies in Caryl Phillips's *The Atlantic Sound* and Isaac Julien's *Paradise Omeros*

Ulrike Pirker
University of Freiburg

In his poem "The Sea Is History" Derek Walcott makes two important points: First, he gives expression to the unsettling insight that there are neither ruins nor monuments for the descendants of the black diaspora – the remains of this history of suffering are buried in the depth of an ocean that "kept turning blank pages / looking for History". The second point is the question of how to deal with that unwritten history, how to fill these blank pages. With lamentations? By means of supplementing the empty sheets with other, imported histories? Walcott's poem ends with the image of the sea's sound, "the sound / like a rumour without any echo / of history, really beginning" and can therefore be read as a challenge to deal with that history creatively, carve it out as something new. The sea is not the end of history, it is a new beginning, it is flexible and it has the capacity to embrace and to withdraw, it is unpredictable and omnipresent. Therefore an account of that sea, a history that *is* the sea, necessarily has to be complex and many-faceted.

Much has been done recently to excavate Atlantic-history – to accumulate knowledge about it, to establish archives and collections, to give the found material meaning and render it in coherent narratives. The fact that the Atlantic history and the black diaspora are not fixed to a certain geographical place are reflected in the international theoretical and artistic discourses around the theme. Today, the term "Black Atlantic" is often widely used as an umbrella term or label for black (diasporic) culture on both sides of the Atlantic. With the growing popularity new controversies have come up: Some artists embrace the label, but others decidedly reject it, finding that it narrows the scope of their artistic vision or even enforces "identity stereotypes". Paul Gilroy's definition of the Black Atlantic as a "transcultural, international formation with a rhizomorphic, fractal structure" (Gilroy 1993, 4) on the other hand has been criticised for being too evasive and abstract.

In my paper, I will attempt to defend Gilroy's definition by analysing works by two black (British) cultural practitioners, the novelist and documentary writer Caryl Phillips and the

visual artist Isaac Julien. I will concentrate on Phillips's factual account *The Atlantic Sound* (2000) and Julien's installation *Paradise Omeros* (2001). The fact that both cultural practitioners must have been engaged in the respective works at roughly the same time makes a simultaneous reading of both particularly interesting. The focus of my analysis lies on both practitioners' "Black Atlantic agenda", and their techniques of narrating the Black Atlantic.

Caryl Phillips is a writer who is comfortable in many genres. His non-fictional works include *The European Tribe* and *A New World Order*, both a mélange of essay collection, travelogue and personal reflections. *The Atlantic Sound* must equally be considered a mixture of genres – there is a traveller-observer-reflector figure that (not altogether unlike a film director) collects shots and impressions and then combines them in a commented narrative. The sites Phillips explores are programmatic in terms of both a literal and a more discursive Black Atlantic concept: Liverpool, the capital of the slave trade, Elmina/Ghana, one of the "processing sites" of "human cargo", and Charleston in the Deep South, one of the busiest slave-dealing places. The account ends with the description of a modern-day black diaspora, a black American community that has settled in the Negev desert in Israel. *The Atlantic Sound* is a challenge for "established" historiography and a critique of the symbolism attached to places and historical sites. Ultimately, it can be read as a critique of practices of spacial and symbolic domination.

Isaac Julien has entered the artistic scene in the film workshop movements of the 1980s and has worked as a filmmaker (as Phillips both in the documentary and the fictional mode) before turning to video installations. Isaac Julien's installation *Paradise Omeros* has been described as one of the highlights of the documenta 11 – it certainly caters to the aesthetic expectations of diverse audiences with its (moving) images that literally explode with colour and are projected on three large-format screens. However, the images and the narrative that guide the viewer on several journeys back and forth across the Atlantic, point to complex themes and highly political matters: For Julien the vital aspects of the Black Atlantic are the creation of spaces, the possibility of a new cartography and an alternative to nationalist identity concepts.

Both cultural practitioners, the (documentary) novelist Phillips and the video-artist Julien, share a high flexibility in their choice of genre or, in other words, a discomfort with a fixed genre and straightforward narratives. Both use the typically postmodernist play with genres, not in order to toy with their figures, themes their readers as super-imposed, authoritative "artist-creators", but in order to underline the complexity of their subject matters and to demonstrate that simple, straight-forward narratives can only fail in the light of that complexity. In their individual negotiations of the Black Atlantic both pay due respect to Walcott's sea and creatively embrace the challenge of the "blank pages" and the "beginning". The fact that both share a preoccupation with concepts of space (historical, geographical and symbolic) makes reading and viewing their work with Gilroy's thoughts in mind particularly rewarding.

Call Me By My Rightful Name: African Literature of the Trans-Atlantic Imagination

Wumi Raji

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This paper represents a reflection, from an African perspective, on the concept of the Black Atlantic as popularised by Paul Gilroy. Its focus decidedly is on works of African literature which reflect on the complex, multi-dimensional relationship between Africa and her diasporas; which, indeed, re-vision the experiences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its continuing ramifications on black people located in the Americas as well as the homeland. The first half of the tentative title of the paper is actually the full title of a recent novel by Isidore Okpewho. The work focuses on an African American's quest for self identity. Otis, the protagonist of the story has a habit of falling into fits, speaking a tongue nobody understands. Through the assistance of experts in linguistics, the language he speaks is eventually discovered to be the praise chant of a particular family among the Yorubas of South Western Nigeria. Our protagonist thus finds himself undertaking a return journey to the very place

where his ancestors were uprooted from, completing the rites which was interrupted when they were captured in a raid and transported by force across the Atlantic. Otis afterwards returns to the United States to join the frontline in the black nationalist agitation of the sixties

As should be clear by now, the subject of the presentation still bothers on the question of identity. It is the question that the African American protagonist in Okpewho's novel first had to tackle before stepping out to participate in the struggle for civil rights by black people in America in the sixties. My position however departs slightly from Paul Gilroy who utilizes the metaphor of perpetual voyage as he struggles to conceptualise black cultural identity. The image of the ship lies at the centre of Gilroy's argument; with black culture projected as a travelling culture and the ship conveying it as eternally on the sea, eternally criss – crossing the Atlantic, delivering its cargo in bits all over the place, with the consequence being the spread, like rhizomes, of black cultural identities.

To be sure, I do not myself subscribe to the view which projects identity as a fixed and rigid category, and which sees it as indifferent to the vicissitudes of life and circumstances. At the same time however, I have difficulty with a perspective which fails to reckon with the fact that even a ship has a point of origination, that as it sails from one place to another, it carries with it memories of its original point of departure.

My conception of identity then derives inspiration from such thinkers as Stuart Hall, Paulin Hountondji and Tejumola Olaniyan. In his article "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" Stuart Hall, for example, defines identity as a process both of "being" and "becoming". To him, identity issues from the past as much as it belongs to the future. It is not a fixed phenomenon, immutable to time, place and history. As he argues, cultural identities "come from somewhere, have histories." At the same time however, and "like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation."

Hall exemplifies his thesis with Black Caribbean identity insisting that its construction rests on two poles; the first being that of "similarity" and "continuity", and the second that of "difference" and "rupture." Because it ensures a relationship with the past, the pole of similarity and continuity constantly reminds a typical Caribbean of the manner of his/her arrival at his/her contemporary location. The second pole, on the other hand, emphasises the "broken" nature of this continuity. Even before their departures from Africa, differences existed among the slaves. They belonged to different cultures and societies, spoke different languages and practised different religions. They were also of different sexes and age grades. The moment they entered the Middle Passage however, these differences became blurred, and the links that the individual slaves had with their roots became ruthlessly severed.

My reflection on black cultural identity in this presentation will emphasize the question of memories and continuities and, as well, those of differences and ruptures. Africa remains important to all black people (dis)located in different parts of the world in my view, but it is an Africa that is no longer the same as it was four hundred years before. Rather, it is an Africa that has become transformed in different ways, which has been translated into different languages but which nonetheless remains the point of origin, *not* in the literal – it ought to be emphasized – but *only* in the inspirational sense. I plan to illustrate my position with Isidore Okpewho's *Call me by my Rightful Name* and Bode Sowande's *Tornadoes full of Dreams*, two works of African literature which themselves are dedicated to the issue.

"Who are you people? Why haven't I seen you before?" European Cinematographic Representation of Black Atlantic Migrations

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The purpose of the present study is to analyse the various connections which can be observed in relation to the portrayal of African and Caribbean immigrants in Western filmic productions. *Las cartas de Alou* (1990, Montxo Armendáriz) and *Flores de Otro Mundo* (1999, Icíar Bollaín) -- set in Spain -- and *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002, Stephen Frears) -- set in the U.K. -- depict the reality of the 'Black Atlantic' migration in the last decades. In this light, the films

offer a political and social critique of the system and migration policies in both countries. These three works, first-hand testimonies on immigration, aim to speak not *for* the diasporas but from *within* them and to reveal the heterogeneity of Black communities.

The protagonists are African and Caribbean citizens in exile who flee their countries due to economic and political reasons. Eventually, they cross the frontiers of Europe searching for a better life and find themselves, on many occasions, trapped in a living hell. Due to their illegal situation immigrants cannot protest or claim any rights, on the contrary, they must accept all sorts of exploitation no matter how unfairly they're treated.

Las Cartas de Alou portrays the life of Alou, a Senegalese who crosses the Strait of Gibraltar in search of a promising future. The structure of the film follows Alou's journey from the southern coast of Almeria to Barcelona where he is caught by police officers and finally deported to Africa. On the other hand, *Flores de Otro Mundo* offers its viewers a female perspective on migration. Three women from different backgrounds--Dominican Republic, Cuba and Northern Spain- travel to a secluded small town where all men are single.

With *Dirty Pretty Things*, Stephen Frears returns to London's marginal communities (*My Beautiful Launderette*, 1985). The movie is a story about London immigrants, most of them illegal. Okwe, a renowned doctor in his native Nigeria, is a political exile who works at two jobs in London. He drives a minicab during the day and works as a night porter in a luxury hotel, where most of the action takes place. Accidentally, he finds himself immersed in a criminal network trading in human organs. Thus, Frears portrays the horrors of immigrants who trade their organs for money and a western passport.

What is significant about *Las Cartas de Alou* is the novelty of its theme, this is immigrants in Spain. Prior to Armendáriz's film, little attention had been paid to this topic within the Spanish film industry. However, such is not the case of Frear's production. With *Dirty Pretty Things*, we can definitely talk about an established filmic tradition of Black cinematographic productions in the U.K. Black British cinema has its origins in the Black politics of the sixties and seventies. These first productions were politically concerned and dealt with questions regarding marginalization and race relations.

More than a decade separates these productions. Needless to say, the situation has significantly changed in Spain as regards immigration laws and policies. But, in spite of their differences, Armendáriz, Bollaín and Frears tackle in their movies similar social issues; these range from crime, exploitation, economic survival, inhuman housing conditions to racial prejudices, society's abuse of immigrants, constant fear of immigration officers and deportation, intolerant and discriminatory attitudes, and so on.

Las Cartas de Alou, *Flores de Otro Mundo* and *Dirty Pretty Things* portray the marginal underclass of immigrant workers who live and survive in an alien and hostile society. Likewise, they denounce the treatment of illegal people in developed countries. The world of *illegals* is an invisible underworld. "White Englishman: 'Who are you people? Why haven't I seen you before?' Okwe: 'We are the people you don't see: We drive your cabs, we clean your rooms'" (*Dirty Pretty Things*). In this sense, Armendáriz, Bollaín and Frears' works bring into light the lives of African and Caribbean immigrants in Europe. Thus, through their films, they make visible the invisible ones.

Scottish Perspectives on the Black Atlantic

Lise Sorensen
University of Edinburgh

This paper will showcase the STAR project, situating it within the context of current UK research on the Black Atlantic and my own work in the area. The STAR project, based at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH), University of Edinburgh, explores Scotland's Transatlantic Relations, highlighting transatlantic theory in practice. The fortnightly seminars provide the basis for interdisciplinary exchange for colleagues from the Scottish universities and beyond. STAR's participants are from a wide range of fields such as Literatures, Languages and Cultures, History, Canadian Studies, and Geography. The project

has brought about the Edinburgh University Press publishing series in “Transatlantic Literatures”, edited by Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor, of which Daniel Williams’s *Ethnicity and Cultural Authority: From Arnold to Du Bois* (Edinburgh University Press, 2006) is the first publication. Moreover, STAR has generated the development of a Masters Programme in Transatlantic Literary Studies offered by the University of Edinburgh.

My doctoral project, “Exploring Whiteness across the Atlantic: Race and Sympathy in Scottish and American Literature”, has developed from my engagement with the STAR project and from the completion of the Masters programme ‘Nation, Writing, Culture’ offered by the University of Edinburgh as well. I explore the role of sympathy in discursive development of whiteness in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish and American sentimental literature, basing my approach on Gilroy’s notion of the Atlantic as a “complex unit of analysis”. My objective is to analyse how sympathy as part of a set of related practices can be said to define whiteness as a cultural discourse negotiated by transatlantic exchange. I examine transatlantic literature by writers such as Sarah Scott, Henry Mackenzie, Thomas Carlyle, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The recent publication *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (University of Iowa Press, 2006), edited by Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd, suggests the importance of new transatlantic paradigms for the study of literature – Stowe has been read mainly within a national framework.

For the purposes of this paper, I shall discuss Edinburgh lawyer Henry Mackenzie’s fictional works and Sarah Scott’s *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766) as early narratives of Atlantic slavery. There was little debate on slavery in the UK prior to 1780, and hence Mackenzie and Scott’s texts were pioneering as they introduced the theme of slavery in their works. In 1777, the year Mackenzie published his last novel *Julia de Roubigné*, dealing with West Indian slavery, Scotland was intimately confronted with the question of slavery when the appeal case of Joseph Knight vs. John Wedderburn took place in the Court of Session in Edinburgh. Joseph Knight, the Jamaican-born slave who had sued his master, won the case and gained his freedom. This case challenged legal, racial, and national constructs. The study of transatlantic influences and exchange, I hope to show, opens up novel lines of interpretation of discourses, especially those of race and nation.

Away from a Definition of African Literature(s)

Daria Tunca
University of Liège

When I set out to write a doctoral thesis on contemporary Nigerian literature a few years ago, I did not know that the result would turn out to be a study of what could be described, in somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion, as “Nigatlantic” writing. Indeed, the authors whose work I chose to examine – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ben Okri and the lesser known Gbenga Agbenugba – seem to have as many connections with Europe and/or the United States as with Nigeria, be it in terms of their biographical details, the thematic concerns informing their work, or the stylistic treatment of the subject matters they explore.

These writers and other authors of Nigerian descent living in the West, such as Segun Afolabi, Helen Oyeyemi, Uzodinma Iweala, Chris Abani and Chika Unigwe, have been grouped under the banners of “Nigerian” and “African” literature, but can alternatively be assigned the label “diasporic” (and, in the case of Okri, Agbenugba, Afolabi and Oyeyemi, be called “(Black) British”). This testifies to the fact that the epithet “Nigerian” and, more generally, the denomination “African”, have undergone a transformation in the last decades. Contemporary Africanness now partly embraces a dynamics of identity formation akin to that described by Paul Gilroy in his *Black Atlantic* (1993): it seems to involve a web of cultural influences shaped by the intertwining of African, European and American histories.

However, the difference between the recent forms of transatlantic Africanness and the process described by Gilroy is twofold. Firstly, it is no longer the common experience of slavery, but the broader phenomena of colonisation, twentieth- and twenty-first-century migration, that act as central paradigms (nevertheless, the links between the racism and cultural discrimination that have spread throughout Europe and America on the one hand, and the

continents' history of slavery highlighted in *The Black Atlantic* on the other, are by no means difficult to establish). Secondly, recent developments in African literature (such as the publication of the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's imaginative exploration of the Biafran war) suggest that the national model rejected by Gilroy cannot be done away with completely in the African context, at least when examining the literary production of writers from Nigeria.

Despite these divergences, the "inescapable hybridity and intermixture of ideas" induced by diasporic movements (Gilroy 1993: xi) are also found in present-day African fiction. As a result, definitions of the term "African literature" put forward since the 1960s seem too narrow to capture the complexity of contemporary African identities. Where, for example, does Nadine Gordimer's prerequisite of "Africa centred-consciousness" (*The Black Interpreters* [1973]: 5) leave an author such as Helen Oyeyemi, born in Nigeria and raised in Britain? Does Oyeyemi not have a right to lay claim to the African facet of her identity?

Based on such examples, I will argue that the notions of "Nigerian" and "African" literature have indeed evolved in recent years. But, as the title of my paper indicates, I will not proceed towards a prescriptive redefinition of these concepts. Rather, I will attempt to re-examine certain aspects of the issue of labelling itself. Taking my cue from developments in the field of cognitive linguistics since the 1970s, especially the theories of categorisation put forward by Eleanor Rosch and developed by George Lakoff, I will maintain that some of the problems that have plagued the critical debate around what constitutes African literature can be traced back to the clash between the Aristotelian system of categorisation (whereby an element falls into a category based on a set of criteria shared by all members of this category) and the more flexible prototype theory (according to which certain entities constitute more representative examples of particular categories than others).

This discussion will not solve the disputes around the labels commonly used in research on African literatures, but rather highlight why the issue is, ultimately, an unsolvable – yet potentially thought-provoking – one. As cognitive linguists suggest, there are no absolute objective truths, so any system of categorisation is bound to remain unsatisfactory in certain respects; yet, since categorisation is basic to human thought, labels cannot be dispensed with in a discipline such as literary criticism. I hope that my presentation will encourage workshop participants to offer theoretical insights on the question and work towards practical measures to circumvent the problem of labelling in the fields of African and Black Atlantic studies.

The Physics of Blackness: Postwar Diasporas and the Problem of the Middle Passage

Michelle Wright

University of Minnesota

In 1992, Paul Gilroy reinvigorated interest in African Diaspora studies with his volume, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. In it, Gilroy articulated a new way to understand black collective identity outside of the African continent. Tracing the exchange of ideas, music, language and politics between the African Americans, Black Britons and the Anglophone Caribbean, (i.e., the "Black Atlantic"), Gilroy argued that the shared experience of slavery and the ambivalent effects of Western modernity on those enslaved constituted the foundation for what might best be understood as the state-less nation of the "Black Atlantic".

Like all revolutionary works, *The Black Atlantic* generated as many questions as answers. Scholars such as Natasha Barnes and Simon Gikandi questioned the effects of asserting slavery as that which linked black populations in the West, not the least because it encourages a view of blacks as the passive recipients of Western civilization. Barnes, Gikandi and others pointed to both the small but nonetheless existing number of western blacks who had never been enslaved, the radically different forms of slavery found in the Atlantic, and the existence of chattel slavery in both West and East African kingdoms (thus subverting the traditional comprehension of chattel slavery as exceptional to white Western cultures) to question the accuracy of slavery as common denominator to the black experience in the West. Other scholars pointed to Gilroy's focus on the Anglophone Black Atlantic, asking why Lusophone and Hispanophone members of the Black Atlantic should be excluded, as well as Gilroy's heavy

reliance on writings by African American men in his theorization of a Black Atlantic intellectual tradition and culture. In other words, Gilroy's Black Atlantic, which he visualized as a "single, complex unit" seemed to be capable of articulation only through the ideas and thoughts of heterosexual African American men.

My first book *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* both works within and breaks from Gilroy. *Becoming Black* rejects the category of slavery as the common denominator for all types of Black Atlantic identities. Building on Gilroy's and Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s idea of the "Black Other" that arrives with the Enlightenment, *Becoming Black* traced the ways in which black writers in the U.S, Europe, the Caribbean and Africa have responded to these various racist polemics on their inferiority. This pattern of response, I argued, provided us with an intellectual history of the black Subject (i.e., the self-conscious, rational human being) in the West.

My current book project *Race Wars: Battles for the Black Conscience*, focuses on the intellectual history of black collective identity in the "Black Atlantic", looking at the ways in which "blackness" as a collective identity, has been imagined since the time of the Middle Passage. At Huelva, I intend to present on how issues of gender, sexuality, economics and politics have necessarily led to different and differing construction of a collective Black Atlantic identity. More specifically, I will focus on the way in which World War II operates differently in African American, Black British, Black French and Afro-German epistemologies. I will argue that although World War II had a profound effect on all Black Atlantic communities, the various ways in which individual scholars and writers in those communities seek to construct Black Atlantic identities—especially in relation to white Western constructs of the Second World War—produces very different frames for the conflict.

Drawing a line between Europe and the Other

Gary Younge
The Guardian

The manner in which the European press reported the muslim reaction to the Danish cartoons of Mohammed in February 2006 laid bare both what has changed and what remains the same in Europe's racial dynamics.

The first is that the mythology of a European culture that is monolithic, fixed, superior and besieged by dark-skinned, inferior, savage foreign Others remains central to the continent's sense of itself.

The second is that the "Others" perceived to represent the primary threat to this "embattled" culture has changed over the past decade. Media reports of the Danish cartoons revealed how the emphasis of European exclusion has shifted from race to religion and colour to creed.

The enemy of Europe's racial and cultural exclusivity had changed from Black Atlantic to the Maghreb and Arab world. But the need to defend that exclusivity has remained just as strong and the consequences for those of African descent, regardless of their religion, remain just as severe.

"This is a far bigger story than just the question of 12 cartoons in a small Danish newspaper," said Fleming Rose, the culture editor of Jylland's-Posten which published the cartoons at the time. "This is about the question of integration and how compatible is the religion of Islam with a modern secular society."

In at least one respect Rose was right. It was a far bigger story than just the cartoons. The entire episode revealed both the extent of the onslaught against "multiculturalism" from the mainstream Western media (many of whom reprinted the cartoons in solidarity with Jylland's Posten) and the level of sophistry and hypocrisy of those who sought to defend the paper's actions would reach.

In April 2003 Danish illustrator Christoffer Zieler submitted a series of unsolicited cartoons to the same paper offering a light hearted take on the resurrection of Christ. Zieler

received an email from the paper's Sunday editor, Jens Kaiser, saying: "I don't think Jyllands-Posten's readers will enjoy the drawings. As a matter of fact, I think they will provoke an outcry. Therefore I will not use them."

The year before Le Monde was found guilty of "racist defamation" against Israel and the Jewish people. Madonna's book *Sex* was only unbanned in Ireland two years earlier. And even as the debate raged David Irving sat in jail in Austria charged with Holocaust denial over a speech he made 17 years ago, Islamist cleric, Abu Hamza was convicted in London for incitement to murder and racial hatred and Louis Farrakhan remained banned from the UK because his arrival "would not be conducive to the public good".

The issue of whether the paper was right to print the cartoons (it was not) had been morphed into whether it had the right to print them (of course it did). The issue of whether there is a line beyond which those who practice freedom of speech must tread carefully and with responsibility (of course there is) had been morphed into whether the religious sensibilities of an overwhelmingly non-white population deserved any consideration in relation to this arbitrary line (of course they should).

The upshot was a portrayal of an apparently barbaric and fundamentalist community antagonistic to democratic ideals which was accused that had singled itself out for special consideration and which had in turn been singled out for special admonishment. The result was a setback not just to that community but to any non-white community incapable of proving its loyalty and gratitude to a set of codes and values extolled yet not observed by mainstream Europe.

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Kathleen Chater is an independent scholar, genealogist and writer. She gained a doctorate in 2007 for work on black people in England during the period of the British Slave Trade, 1660-1807. Books she has written include *Family History Made Easy* (Southwater, 2004), and *Tracing Your Family Tree* (Lorenz, 2003).

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She is professor at the University of Liege (Belgium), where she teaches English and Caribbean Literature. Her current research interests are contemporary Caribbean fiction, Black British writing and the African presence in Europe. She is the author of *Caryl Phillips* (Manchester UP: 2002) and has edited several volumes of essays, among which *Bridges Across Chasms: Towards a Transcultural Future in Caribbean Literature* (L3, 2004) and 'Familial and Other Conversations', a special issue on Caryl Phillips, *Moving Worlds* 7.1 (2007).

López Rodríguez, Marta Sofía

Senior Lecturer, University of León

EDUCATION.

Estudios Superiores: Universidades de León y Oviedo.

Años: 1984-1986 y 1986-1990 respectivamente.

Título: Licenciada en Filología Inglesa. Septiembre, 1990.

PUBLICATIONS.

- «Las palabras y la historia: la revisión post-moderna». En Abad García, P., Barrio Marco, J. M., y Ruiz Ruiz, J. M., (eds.) (1998) *Estudios Literarios en Lengua Inglesa del siglo XX* (4). Valladolid: Servicio de Apoyo a la Enseñanza. Universidad de Valladolid, pp. 187-194.
 - «Ben Okri: Politics in the World of Spirits». En Galván, F. y Bengoechea, M. (eds.) (1999) *On Writing (and) Race in Contemporary Britain*. Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, pp. 101-106.
 - «Eros pre-umbilical, mente pre-clásica: lecturas feministas de Safo». En Carrera, I., Cid, R. M^a y Pedregal, A. (eds.) (1999). *Cambiando el Conocimiento. Universidad, Sociedad y Feminismo*. Oviedo: KRK, pp. 151-158.
 - «Historiographic Metafiction and Resistance Postmodernism». En Todd, R. & Flora, L. (eds.) (1999) *Theme Parks, rainforests and sprouting wastelands. European essays on theory and performance in contemporary British fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 215-26.
 - «An Approach to Post-colonial Literature in Spanish: Donato Ndongo's *Las tinieblas de tu memoria negra*». En Bringas López, Ana y Martín Lucas, Belén (eds.) *Reading Multiculturalism: Contemporary Postcolonial Literatures..* Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, pp. 13-18.
 - «Safo siglo XX: o el cuerpo (casi) lesbiano» en Isabel Carrera (coord.) *Mujeres históricas, mujeres narradas*. Oviedo: KRK, pp. 227-249.
- Marta Sofía López (ed.) *I Jornadas de Estudios Africanos I*. León: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León, pp. 45-55.
- «I've been speaking through so many lifetimes: Jeanette Winterson's Sappho». En Mercedes Bengoechea y Marisol Morales (eds.) *(Trans)formaciones de la sexualidad y el género*. Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, pp.133-145.
 - «En el nombre de la madre y de la hija». En A. I. Blanco, B. Domenech, M. S. López y R. Marcos (eds.) *Nuevas visiones de la maternidad*. Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León, pp. 73-88.
 - «Literatura africana femenina: una perspectiva mujerista». *Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios Africanos*, vol. 3. Universidad de Murcia, pp. 137-198.
 - «Narrativa subsahariana en lengua inglesa: Tendencias actuales». En Díaz Carbona. Inmaculada y Aragón Varo, Asunción, eds. (2005) *Otras mujeres, otras literaturas*. Madrid: Ediciones Zanzíbar.
 - «Multiculturalismo: Una mirada retrospectiva». En Broncazo Rodríguez, M. e Imelda Martín Junquera, eds. (2006) *Sociedades Multiculturales: Discurso artístico e identidad*. Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León.

McLeod, John

Reader in Postcolonial and Diaspora Literatures, School of English, University of Leeds

QUALIFICATIONS: PhD: *Rewriting History: Postmodern and Postcolonial Negotiations in the fiction of J. G. Farrell, Timothy Mo, Kazuo Ishiguro and Salman Rushdie* (awarded November 1995, University of Leeds); MA in English Literature (with Distinction), 1991, University of Leeds; BA (Hons) in English, First Class, 1990, University of Leeds

PUBLICATIONS:

Books

J. G. Farrell (Plymouth: Northcote House, 2007), pp. 130.

Postcolonial London: Rewriting the metropolis (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 210.

Beginning Postcolonialism (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 274.

[Korean translation published 2003 by Hanul Publishing Company by arrangement with Manchester University Press.]

Edited Books

Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) – forthcoming October 2007.

The Revisions of Englishness, ed. by David Rogers and John McLeod (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, December 2004), pp. 194 — includes my introduction, 'Measuring Englishness'.

Edited Journals

'Festschrift for Shirley Chew', special issue of *Kunapipi: Journal of Post-Colonial Writing*, XXV (1), 2003 (edited with Catherine Batt and Elleke Boehmer).

'Post-Colonial London', special issue of *Kunapipi: Journal of Post-Colonial Writing*, XX1 (2), 1999.

Misrahi-Barak, Judith

Maître de Conférence, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III

Judith Misrahi-Barak read English at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Fontenay-aux-Roses and the University of Paris III. She passed the Agrégation in 1985 ; presented her Doctorate on the Writing of Childhood in Caribbean Literature, in 1996. She taught at the University of Aix-en-Provence and is now teaching at Montpellier III.

Has published a variety of articles on Caribbean writers and the Caribbean diaspora in *Commonwealth*, *Alizés*, *Annales du Monde Anglophone*, *Journal of the Short-Story in English...* Has contributed a chapter in *La Ville plurielle dans la fiction antillaise anglophone* (Presses Universitaires de Toulouse-Le-Mirail, 2000). Has published an interview with Cyril Dabydeen in *Commonwealth*.

She is an active member of the Cerpac (Research Centre on the Commonwealth) where she organised 2 conferences : 'V. S. Naipaul : a World in Tension' (November 2002) ; 'Revisiting Slave Narratives' (April 2003, with Fred D'Aguiar and Caryl Phillips as keynote speakers) ; and co-organised the latest one on 'Transport(s) in the British Empire and Commonwealth' (November 2005). She is responsible for 'Les Carnets du Cerpac' where the proceedings have been published. She has just launched a second volume of Revisiting Slave Narratives as a follow up to the first one. She is co-organising the next conference for the Cerpac on « Postcolonial Ghosts » (November 2007).

<http://recherche.univ-montp3.fr/cerpac>

Najar, Imen

English Department, University of Liège

EDUCATION

2003 "Licence" (4-year degree) in Germanic languages and literatures (English-German), University of Liège, Belgium.

2004 Master's degree in English Studies, University of Liège, Belgium.

PUBLICATIONS

- Articles

* "Intertextuality: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* & Caryl phillips' *crossing the river*", in *Présence africaine en Europe / African Presence in Europe*, ed. by Bénédicte Ledent and Kathleen Gyssels (Paris: L'Harmattan, forthcoming).

* "Phillips's 'Heartland' and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*", in *Présence africaine en Europe / African Presence in Europe*, ed. by Bénédicte Ledent and Daria Tunca (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, forthcoming).

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Currently writing a doctoral thesis entitled "Carnival & Carnavalesque Language in Caribbean literature", supervised by Prof. Bénédicte Ledent, University of Liège, Belgium.

Oboe, Annalisa

Professor of English, Università degli Studi di Padova

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, English and Postcolonial Literature, University of Venice – Cà Foscari, Italy, June 1992.

First degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures (*summa cum laude*), University of Verona, Italy, June 1985.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Black Atlantic Studies

Anglophone literatures and cultures

British colonial and contemporary literature

South African Literature

Australian Indigenous culture

Historical fiction and historiographic metafiction

Nationalism, globalisation

Questions of subjectivity and identity formation

PUBLICATIONS include:

Oboe, A. & A. Scacchi, eds. *Global Movements, Local Modernities: Recharting the Black Atlantic*. New York: Routledge, 2007 (provisional title, forthcoming).

Oboe, A. (ed. & intr.), *Approaching SeaChanges. Metamorphoses and Migrations across the Atlantic*, Padova, Unipress, 2005.

Oboe, A. (ed. & intr.), *Parole parlate. Comunicazione orale fra tradizione e modernità*. Bologna: afriche e orienti, 4, 2005.

Oboe, A. (ed. & intr.), *Mongrel Signatures. Reflections on the Work of Mudrooroo*, Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, Cross/Cultures 64, 2003.

Oboe, A., *Fiction, History and Nation in South Africa*, Venezia, Supernova, 1994.

Italian edition of Athol Fugard's Port Elizabeth plays, *Trilogia della famiglia*, Venezia: Supernova, 1999.

Italian edition of Olive Schreiner's short stories, *1899*, Milano: Feltrinelli, 1991.

Articles, translations and reviews on colonial and postcolonial writers have appeared in journals and collections of critical essays.

Phillips, Caryl

Yale University, U.S.

Based in New York, he is one of the major writers of his generation. Throughout his work, both fiction and non-fiction, he has tried to show the complex network of links that bind Africa, Europe and the Americas and how these affect identity in the 21st century. Works like *Higher Ground* (1989), *Crossing the River* (1993), *The Nature of Blood* (1997), *The Atlantic Sound* (2000) and his latest novel *Foreigners: Three English Lives* (2007) perfectly demonstrate this cross-cultural philosophy.

Born in the Caribbean, of African descent, and raised in Europe, thus 'shaped' by the Black Atlantic, Caryl Phillips has claimed the Atlantic as his home, albeit a moving and fluctuating one which is in line with his essential multiculturalism. In addition to being a creative writer, Phillips is also a respected critic and academic who has worked for years at building bridges between Africa, Europe, and the New World.

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Pirker, Ulrike

University of Freiburg

Eva Ulrike Pirker was born and grew up in Tübingen, South Germany in 1974. She read Latin, Philosophy, New English Literatures and American Studies at Tübingen University and San Diego State University. She wrote a diploma thesis on "Memory in Caryl Phillips's novels of the 1990s: *Cambridge*, *Crossing the River* and *The Nature of Blood*". After working as a freelance researcher and author for a culture agency ("kulturwerkstatt tübingen") between 1997 and 2003, she moved to Freiburg in order to begin work on her doctoral thesis on current discourses around a black British history. She has spent four weeks in London on a research

scholarship granted by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in the context of her doctoral research. In 2004 and 2005 she worked as a research assistant for a poetry project (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) at the University of Freiburg (Chair Prof. Dr. Barbara Korte), and since 2005 she holds a research position in the field of Black British Cultural Studies.

- Select PUBLICATIONS:

"Britain." Lars Eckstein, ed. *English Literatures across the Globe: A Companion*. Stuttgart: Schönigh 2007.

Britain Rewritten: Stories of a Multi-Ethnic Nation. (ed. with Barbara Korte). Stuttgart: Reclam (forthcoming 2007).

"Final Passages? Representations of Black British History in Caryl Phillips's Novel and Its Television-Adaptation." Frank Schulze-Engler, ed. [Proceedings from the ASNEL-conference 2004.] Amsterdam: Rodopi, Forthcoming.

Raji, Wumi

Assoc. Prof, Department of Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria.

EDUCATION

University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Ph.D. in English 1995

MA in English 1990

University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

BA English/Linguistics, Second Class Honours (Upper Division) 1987

PUBLICATIONS:

A: BOOKS (ACADEMIC & GENERAL READERSHIP: EDITED)

1. Omotoye Olorode, Wumi Raji, Jiti Ogunye and Tunde Oladunjoye (eds.) (1998) *Ken Saro - Wiwa and the Crisis of the Nigerian State*. Lagos: CDHR, 419pp.

(CREATIVE WRITING)

2. Wumi Raji. (2002) *Rolling Dreams: Poems*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.

3. David Cook, Olu Obafemi and Wumi Raji (eds.) (1991) *Rising Voices: an Anthology of New Nigerian Poetry*. Lagos: Kraft Books. 129pp.

B: SELECTED (JOURNAL ARTICLES & CHAPTERS IN BOOKS) PUBLISHED

(2001). "History and Postcolonial Identity in George Lamming's *Season of Adventure*." *Understanding Post-colonial Identities: Ireland, Africa and the Pacific*. Ed. Dele Layiwola Ibadan: Sefer, pp. 159 – 168.

(2002) "Walking Inside Africa: Bayreuth African Studies Series". *Palavers of African Literature: Essays in Honour of Bernth Lindfors*, Vol. I Ed. Toyin Falola & Barbara Harlow. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp.257-285.

(2004) "Ken Saro-Wiwa's Four Farcical Plays and the Postcolonial Imagination". *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Human Rights in a 'Post - Colonial' World*". Ed. Peter H. Marsden & Geoffrey V. Davies. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, pp.81-91

(2002). "Style and Postcolonial Representation in the Plays of Niyi Osundare". *The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare*. Ed. AbdulRasheed Na'Allah Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp.527-535

(2004) "Transformed Identities: Cultural Transgression and Postcolonial Transformation in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's *I Will Marry When I Want*." *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, 11, pp.25-39

(2005) "Africanizing Antigone: Postcolonial Discourse and Strategies of Re-visioning a Western Classic." *Research in African Literatures* 36.4 Winter 2005, pp.135-154

(2005). "Looking Back/Looking Forward: Identity and Memory in African Fictions of Exile." In Arndt, Susan and Marek Spitzock von Brisinski (eds.) *Africa, Colonialism and (Post)Colonialism, Racism, Migration and Diaspora*. Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies Series. Pp. 279-293

(2006) "Opera Wonyosi: Strategies of a Postcolonial Response to a Western Operatic Drama." Boeker, Uwe, Ines Detmers & Anna-Christina Giovanopoulos (eds.) *John Gay's The Beggar's Opera: Adaptations and Re-Writings*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi. Pp. 243-271.

Santos Moya, Esperanza

University of Huelva

EDUCATION

B.A. in English, U of Huelva 2002

M.A. in English, U of Huelva 2003

Ph.D. (current work under the supervision of Dr. Pilar Cuder-Dominguez)

PAPERS PRESENTED:

- "Anita and Me. Adolescencia e Identidad Multicultural". III Internacional Congress. Gender, Citizenship and Globalization. University of Huelva, May 2005.
- "Translating the Postcolonial Self. Leila Aboulela's The Translator". Symposium on Self and Identity in Translation. University of East Anglia, Norwich. England. February 2006.
- "La mujer de color y su presencia en la literatura inglesa contemporánea". VIII Curso de Introducción a los Estudios de la Mujer. Modelos de Mujer: Jornadas sobre Iconografía Femenina. March 2006. University of Huelva.
- "Indian Diasporic Culture in the UK". I Ciclo de Cine Indio. University of Cordova, 11th May 2006.
- Participation in a pedagogical project entitled "Innovación en la enseñanza del inglés para adultos: creación de material didáctico y mejora en las técnicas de enseñanza". University of Huelva, 2005-2006.
- "Bollywood in the U.K. South Asian Diasporic Cinema". First International Conference: India in the World. University of Cordova, 8 March 2007.

Sorensen, Lise

University of Edinburgh

EDUCATION

Sept 2005 - Present

PhD in English Literature, University of Edinburgh

Supervisors: Professor Susan Manning (English Literature) and Dr Andrew Taylor (English Literature)

Project: 'Exploring Whiteness across the Atlantic: Race and Sympathy in Scottish and American Literature'

Oct 2003 – Sept 2004

Master of Science with Distinction in Nation, Writing, Culture (English Literature), University of Edinburgh

Project: 'Deconstructing Pictures in Black and White in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*'

Sept 2000 – May 2002

Bachelor Degree with Honours in English Literature, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

GPA: 4.07

Sept 1997 – May 1999

International Cultural Studies Programme (a two-year undergraduate programme that qualifies as the first two years of a BA degree), University of Roskilde, Denmark

2007

PRESENTATIONS given at:

- Scottish Association for the Study of America (SASA) Conference: 'American Savages and Men of Real Sensibility: Race and Sentimentalism in Sarah Scott's *The History of Sir George Ellison* and Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of the World*'

Tunca, Daria

English Department, University of Liège

EDUCATION

2001

"Licence" (4-year degree) in Germanic languages and literatures (English-German), University of Liège, Belgium.

2003

Master's degree in English Studies, University of Liège, Belgium.

PUBLICATIONS

- Articles

* "Ben Okri's *The Landscapes Within and Dangerous Love: Vision and Revision*", BELL New Series 2: The Language / Literature Interface (2004), pp. 85-101.

* "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie en Chika Unigwe: stemmen die aandacht verdienen", trans. from the English by Lode Demetter, *Rekto:verso: Tweemaandelijks Tijdschrift voor Kunstcritiek* 16, March-April 2006, pp. 18-19.

* "Paying Attention to Language, Replicas and the Role of the Artist in Janet Frame's *Living in the Maniototo*", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 42.1, May 2006, pp. 32-43.

* "Of French Fries and Cookies: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Diasporic Fiction", in *Présence africaine en Europe / African Presence in Europe*, ed. by Bénédicte Ledent and Kathleen Gyssels (Paris: L'Harmattan, forthcoming).

* "Linguistic Counterpoint in Gbenga Agbenugba's *Another Lonely Londoner*", *Matatu: Journal for African Culture and Society*, forthcoming.

* "Nigeria is Bus is Stage: The Bus Metaphor in Contemporary Nigerian Fiction", *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, forthcoming.

- Review

* Review of Chris Abani's *Graceland* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, *Wasafiri* 45 (Summer 2005), pp. 81-83.

- Edition

* With Bénédicte Ledent, volume of essays provisionally entitled *Caryl Phillips: 25 Years of Writing* (Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, forthcoming).

- Bibliography

* An online bibliography of works by and about Ben Okri, which can be found at the following URL: <http://www.ulg.ac.be/facphl/uer/d-german/L3/boindex.html>

Wright, Michelle

Associate Professor of English, University of Minnesota

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Comparative Literature, University of Michigan, 1997.

B.A. Comparative Literature, Oberlin College, 1992.

PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE:

Books/Special Issue of Journals (Single and Co-Authored):

Blackness and Sexualities. FORECAAST volume no. 16 (Forum for European Contributions in African American Studies). Edited by Michelle M Wright and Antje Schuhmann. Lit Verlag Berlin, Impressum/Kontakt). April 2007.

Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora, Duke University Press, 2004.

Domain Errors! Cyberfeminist Practices, anthology edited with Faith Wilding, Associate Professor, Art Institute of Chicago, and Maria Fernandez, Assistant Professor, Cornell University. Autonomedia Press, 2003.

Reading the Black German Experience, edited with Tina M. Campt, Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Duke University. A special issue of *Callaloo: Journal of African American and African Literature*. Volume 26, Number 2, 2003.

Younge, Gary

Journalist, THE GUARDIAN, LONDON, UK

Previous positions:

- Feature writer.
- New York correspondent
- 1995-1997 Home News reporter
- 1994-1995 Assistant Foreign Editor

EDUCATION:

- Post-Graduate Diploma in Newspaper Journalism, City University London, 1993
- B.A. in French and Russian (Translating & Interpreting), Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh, 1992
- Heathcote school Stevenage, 1986

PRIZES AND AWARDS:

- Doctor of Letters, Honorary degree, Heriot Watt university for contributions to journalism, 2007
- Doctor Letters, Honorary degree, South Bank university for contributions to journalism, 2007
- Alfred Knobler Fellowship, The Nation, 2006, 2007
- Best Newspaper Print Journalist, Ethnic Minority Media Awards, 2001, 2002, 2003
- Media Personality of the Year (GG2 Leadership and Diversity Awards), 2002
- Publishing: Carlton Television multicultural award, 2002
- Nominated for Foreign Correspondent of the Year by the Foreign Correspondent's Association, 2000
- Lawrence Stern Fellowship, Washington Post, 1996