David Damrosch, Harvard University

“The Politics of Global English: From Kipling to Kim Jong-Il”

This talk will discuss fears of English as a kind of invasive linguistic species, and the creative responses by writers who have used the resources of global English to remake the world. It will turn from Kipling’s complexly cosmopolitan imperialism to recent work by the Tibetan postmodernist Jamyang Norbu and the Korean-American internet artists "Young Hae-Chang Heavy Industries."

David Damrosch is Professor and Chair of the Department of Comparative Literature at Harvard University and the Director of the Institute for World Literature. A past president of the American Comparative Literature Association, he has written widely on comparative and world literature. His books include What Is World Literature? (2003), The Buried Book: The Loss and Rediscovery of the Great Epic of Gilgamesh (2007), and How to Read World Literature (2009). He is the founding general editor of the six-volume Longman Anthology of World Literature (2004), editor of Teaching World Literature (2009), co-editor of The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature (2009), and co-editor of a recent collection, Xin Fang Xiang: Bi Jiao Wen Xue Yu Shi Jie Wen Xue Du Ben [New Directions: A Reader of Comparative and World Literature] (Peking U. P., 2010).
Robert Dixon, University of Sydney

“Scenes of Reading: Is Australian Literature a World Literature?”

Recent accounts of world literature define it either as a discipline concerned with the ‘effective life’ of a text ‘whenever, and wherever, it is actively present within a literary system beyond that of its original culture’, or as a field of practice, ‘a mode of circulation and of reading’, ‘a traffic in ideas between peoples’ (Damrosch). These definitions present a range of methodological challenges for Australian literature as a disciplinary field, which until recently has been constituted as a ‘national’ literature. Transnational literary studies are now throwing into relief the provincialising force of local and/or nationally-bounded knowledges. Indeed the relationships between local and transnational literary space are demanding new reading practices, and creating new ‘scenes of reading’. These have variously been described using metaphors like ‘mutual elliptical refraction’ (Damrosch, Giles), or looking far afield through the wrong end of the telescope (Harootunian).

In this paper I explore the possibilities of a transnational reading practice for Australian literature by examining a number of ‘scenes of reading’, especially in a genre that might be called the reading diary. I will examine the reading practices of some of Australia’s most cosmopolitan readers and writers both before and after the formation of the nation as an imagined community. What scope or potential might transnational reading practices offer Australian literature? Can reading Australian literature as a world literature enable us to trace threads of connection beyond the local and the national into transnational space and ‘deep time’ (Dimock)? Is Australian literature a minority or provincial literature embedded uncertainly in international literary space (Casanova)? Do threads of citation and allusion extending beyond the space of the nation hold out the possibility of a global civil society, via ‘the playing field called “literary culture” brought into being ... by the act of reading’ (Dimock)? Or are they all too often snagged by specialist knowledge and localized epistemologies?

Robert Dixon is Professor of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney. He has published extensively on Australian literary and cultural studies, colonialism and its cultures, postcolonial studies, and Australian art history, photography and early cinema. His recent books include the edited volumes The Diaries of Frank Hurley 1912-1941, Reading Across the Pacific: Australia-United States Intellectual Histories, Resourceful Reading: A New Empiricism in the Digital Age, and Impact of the Modern: Vernacular Modernities in Australia 1870s to 1960s. His book Photography, Early Cinema and Colonial Modernity: Frank Hurley's Synchronized Lecture Entertainments, is appearing in 2011.
Paul Giles, University of Sydney

“Opening the World of American Literature: Adams and Twain”

This paper will consider ways in which the nationalist paradigm of American literature, as it was consolidated institutionally in the early-twentieth century, served effectively to obscure the engagement of American literature and culture with various transnational spheres. In particular, this paper will consider the writings of two canonical American authors, Henry Adams and Mark Twain, who have long been positioned as representative of national values—pastoral regeneration, industrialization, modernity, and so on. By showing how both Adams and Twain were engaging in the 1890s with antipodean politics and culture across Pacific space, this paper will suggest ways in which a crucial colonial dimension has historically been occluded from U.S. literary formations. By restoring this transpacific interaction and relating it to the uncomfortable engagements of both these authors with the legacies of the British empire, it will be possible to use a global theoretical matrix to recover some of the buried cultural history and transnational tensions associated with American literature in its classic nineteenth-century manifestations.

Paul Giles is Challis Professor of English Literature at the University of Sydney. He has also served as Director of the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University (2003-2008) and as President of the International American Studies Association (2005-2007). His most recent books are The Global Remapping of American Literature (Princeton, 2011); Transnationalism in Practice: Essays on American Studies, Literature, and Religion (Edinburgh, 2010); and Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature (Oxford, 2006). He is currently principal investigator on an Australian Research Council discovery project entitled “Antipodean America: Australasia, Colonialism, and the Constitution of U.S. Literature.”
Srinivas Aravamudan, Duke University

"How Enlightenment Orientalism Became World Literature"

The talk will explore the history of 17th and 18th century fictional Orientalism as a mostly forgotten precursor to the concept and problem of world literature. It will argue that the construct of world literature disavows this previous history, while depending on a hidden interface with that history.

Saikat Majumdar, Stanford University

“Prose of the World”

The oppressive banalization of everyday life in the margins of Empire is an experience of colonial modernity that is at the same time affectively immediate and theoretically elusive. The colonial periphery etches its self-image through a sense of its own banality against the magnetic epicenter of historical, social and cultural phenomena represented in the metropolitan center of Empire. A significant literary articulation of this hierarchical structure of colonial modernity is the way the banality of everyday life shapes the narrative instinct behind a tradition of fiction along the margins of the global British Empire.

This paper will provide a brief methodological overview of a larger project that reads a body of Anglophone fiction from Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and India, from the period of late-colonial modernism to the present. In such fictions, the banalization of a locally produced everyday comes to define a globally mappable narrative impulse that has mostly been understood in a linear continuity with the formal innovations of metropolitan modernism. The aesthetics of banality represents intimate, micropolitical consequences of colonialism, anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial identity formation, but at a distance from the public space where history is enacted as a grand spectacle of struggle and nation-building. The narrativization of the banal, in such locations, resonates with a pointed polemic about the limitations of fetishized narratives of a spectacular public sphere such as the protest novels and the national allegory, as for instance in debates about narrative form in late-apartheid South Africa and post-independence India. Bringing together a range of disciplinary conversations about the banal from anthropology, cultural studies, historiography and political theory, this paper seeks to understand the relevance of these conversations to the study of narrative fiction in a global context. This presentation abridges the introductory chapter of a monograph, Prose of the World, forthcoming from Columbia University Press.

Saikat Majumdar is Assistant Professor of English at Stanford University. His areas of interest include British, Irish and World Anglophone literature from the late nineteenth century to the present day, studies of postcolonialism and globalization, critical theory and creative writing. His book, Prose of the World (Columbia University Press, forthcoming), explores the aesthetic and political significance of the ordinary in colonial and postcolonial fiction from Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and India, ranging from the late-nineteenth century to the present. His work has been published in Modern Fiction Studies, James Joyce Quarterly, Novel: A Forum on Fiction, Genre, Studies in the Novel, The Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies, College English, and in other venues. He has been awarded an Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellowship, and grants from the Modernist Studies Association and the International James Joyce Foundation. He is also the author of a novel, Silverfish (HarperCollins India, 2007). He is also a member of the Committee in Charge for Stanford’s Program in Modern Thought and Literature and works actively with graduate students from that program. His current project is a transnational study of the literary public intellectual, a subject on which he co-chairs a Geballe Research Workshop at the Stanford Humanities Center along with Russell Berman from Comparative Literature.
Ned Curthoys, Australian National University

“The Holocaust and Global Memory in Contemporary Jewish Literature”

This paper discusses Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider’s influential book *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (2005) and its claim that Holocaust memory has become a paradigmatic touchstone of human rights because it has helped to “facilitate the formation of transnational memory cultures, which in turn have the potential to become the cultural foundation for global human-rights politics”. Levy and Sznaider’s focus on the collective memory of the Holocaust as of normative ethical significance in the era of human rights both complements but is also complicated by Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question* (2010), winner of the 2010 Man Booker Prize. *The Finkler Question* negotiates the sometimes uneasy relationship between the potent immediacy of Holocaust memory for the Jewish people and ideals of cosmopolitan universalism. This paper explores whether contemporary Jewish and Holocaust themed literature, including the novels of W.G. Sebald, share Sznaider and Levy’s normative confidence about the world forming effects of Holocaust memory.

Ned Curthoys is a Research Fellow in the School of Cultural Inquiry at the Australian National University. His research interests include world literature and anti-fascist politics, German-Jewish intellectual history, and the thought of Hannah Arendt.
Vilashini Cooppan, University of California, Santa Cruz

“Affecting History: Foundational Violence and the Work of World Literature”

Can there be history in affect? Is affect historical? While frequently cast as an ahistorical shock to the system, be it individual subject or political collectivity, affect also describes a larger network of feeling—embedded into the global form of the novel—whose flows can be read in conjunction with those of world historical events and their aftermath. By focusing on the conjuncture between world literature, postcolonial theory, affect studies, and memory studies, this paper defines a methodological starting point for a comparative literary history of modern regimes of racialized violence. The larger archive focuses on world literary texts linked not just by the network of circulation, translation, adaptation, and rewriting, and not just by the intersecting histories of slavery, indenture, empire, and decolonization in the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean worlds, but also by a shared political affect linked to the experience of coming after some shattering world historical event. I conjure this archive in the paper in order to focus on the following questions: How do the novelistic forms associated with this spatiotemporal locale shape a political feeling that is (like the network economy of world literature itself) striated, layered, multidimensional, and interconnected? How can we compare, without homogenizing, distinct literary cultures elaborated around memory, mourning, and the working through of some larger history of violence? And, finally, how might this larger horizon of world literature inquiry and its several categories for comparative analysis (affect, genre, history, memory, trauma, region) reshape the local engagements of how we read?

Vilashini Cooppan is Associate Professor of Literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where she teaches comparative, world, and postcolonial literature and theory. Her articles and essays have appeared in *Sympleke, Gramma, Comparative Literature Studies, Public Culture*, and numerous edited volumes, including the *MLA Guide to Teaching World Literature* and the *Routledge Companion to World Literature*. She is the author of *Worlds Within: National Narratives and Global Connections in Postcolonial Writing* (Stanford UP, 2009) and is working on a new book tentatively titled ‘Race,’ *Writing, and the Literary World System: The Novel in the Age of Modernity*. 
This paper is a reflection on what it means to talk about a ‘world’ in literature that is not simply co-extensive with our ever-expanding sense of connection with the rest of globe due to accelerated information flows; nor merely a category responding to the normative frame of a postcolonial consciousness that urges consideration of literatures from parts of the world not designated as the putative ‘West’. No doubt these are significant conditions of possibility for the re-emergence of ‘world literature’ as an idea suited to our globalized times. But to limit ourselves to thinking the world purely as ‘extension’ – territorial, infrastructural and cultural – often works to the detriment of a literary and humanistic understanding that is more attuned to the actual work of language, narrative, form and genre in creating these worlds. World literature seen in terms of pure extension is susceptible to neo-materialist, anti-aestheticist critiques of complicity with global imperial networks, more so when it circulates in world languages such as English. Drawing on my current work on the World Anglophone Novel post-1989, I suggest alternative ways of thinking the ‘world’ that help us read the contemporary novel not as a singular artifact that affirms the globalized world as fictive universality, but as a genre that opens up the world to the workings of a narrative grammar of the human that is both apposite for our global times and one that takes us back to the very origins of the English novel in the eighteenth century.

Debjani Ganguly is Head of the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University. She works in the areas of postcolonial literary and historical studies, and comparative/world literature in the era of globalization. Her other areas of research and publication include language worlds in South Asia, dalit life narratives, South Asian diasporic fiction, cultural histories of mixed race, and the globalization of Bollywood as creative industry. Her books include, 'Caste, Colonialism and Countermodernity', (Routledge, 2005), 'Edward Said: The Legacy of a Public Intellectual' (ed.), (Melbourne University Press, 2007), and 'Rethinking Gandhi and Nonviolent Relationality: Global Perspectives' (ed.), (Routledge, 2007). She is currently completing a monograph for Duke University Press entitled, 'World-Making: The Novel After 1989'.
Gillian Whitlock, University of Queensland

“Autobiographical Presence”

This paper will suggest how some of the key themes of the conference, such as globalization and transnationalism, translate into the field of life narrative now. Autobiographical narrative has been in transit into new forms, media, genres and locations in the recent past, and it requires new kinds of literacy from its readers, writers and critics. The question of what makes life narratives move across worlds with such speed and force will be a key issue here, engaging with the work of the emotions in the migration of autobiographical texts of all kinds.

Professor Gillian Whitlock is an ARC Professorial Fellow at the University of Queensland, where she is working on the archives of asylum seeker letters held in the Fryer Library. Her book Soft Weapons: Autobiography in Transit (Chicago 2007) is a study of the work of contemporary autobiography as it moves across cultures in conflict during the ‘war on terror’. She is currently working on a book project, ‘Postcolonialism and Life Narrative’.
Shameem Black, Australian National University

“World Reading as World Apology”

This paper seeks to show how the idea of world literature, so strikingly revived at the end of the twentieth century, is implicated within another late twentieth-century preoccupation: the rise of political apologies that respond to histories of oppression and violence. While such expressions of contrition are usually understood as national projects, this paper explores contemporary fictions that reveal the growing influence of globalization on the vexed search for reconciliation and atonement. In striking ways, this fiction has drawn upon the trope of world literature and world reading to mediate, enable, and sometimes even constitute a form of cosmopolitan apology that challenges nationalist ideas of political responsibility. In these visions, apologies not only cannot be separated from an ongoing engagement with a world beyond national borders; they cannot be separated from the intimacies of shared reading and writing. Cosmopolitan apology emerges through, and as, a form of world reading that attempts to imagine into being new forms of world community. These engagements suggest crucial ways in which world literature intervenes in political and ethical debates about social justice, and they prompt us to ask how these debates about justice recalibrate the idea of world literature.

Shameem Black is a Research Fellow at the School of Cultural Inquiry at the Australian National University. Her research interests include contemporary fiction and theories of globalization, transitional justice, and humanitarianism. Her book on the ethics of representation in contemporary literature, *Fiction Across Borders*, appeared from Columbia University Press in 2010. Her work on literature, cosmopolitanism, and globalization has appeared in *Public Culture, Social Text, Modern Fiction Studies*, and other journals.
Vijay Mishra, Murdoch University

“Scribes, Scholars and ‘Enarratio’: Salman Rushdie and Postcolonial Annotations”

Joyce Cary’s *Mister Johnson* (1939) carried no glossary; nor did, fifteen years before, E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924), although by the time we come to the Abinger Forster (1978), Oliver Stallybrass’ edition is heavily annotated with a strong bias in favour of Forster’s autograph (‘Did you ever hear that useful Urdu proverb’ is ‘corrected’ to ‘Did you ever learn...’ on autograph evidence alone when in fact a little earlier Professor Godbole had asked, ‘Have you ever heard that useful proverb?’) The reliance on the manuscript evidence undervalues social practice because in oral cultures proverbs are heard not ‘learned.’ Stallybrass’ editing stands as a monument to the redefinition of Forster’s work as a modern classic. This transition from no-annotation to scholarly editing is rarely seen in postcolonial texts. When African writers were published in the Heinemann African Writers series their works came with slender high school-oriented glossaries (partly because they were not the products of a Forster or a Cary). When, later, a work such as Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* gained respectability it came with a copious gloss and sundry material on African anthropology and the like, but not a scholarly collation of manuscript evidence or variant readings. There may have been reasons for this, many linked to the instrumental version of creativity which was given to colonial subjects. The editing practice here, therefore, differed from Stallybrass’s edition of *A Passage to India* where an editorial apparatus is used which has a long western history going back to the scholia tradition in the West. There are a number of incidental and substantive questions which may be raised here in the context of literary globalism. What protocols governed the nature of glossary and editing practices when it came to non-European texts? Why did postcolonial writers themselves append glossaries to their works? What form does aesthetic recognition take, especially after Charles Taylor who, in one reading of his foundational essay on multiculturalism, had said that only complex cultures are worthy of recognition? Do presence of glossaries imply a lesser culture and hence, implicitly, carry value judgments about the worthiness of that culture and its capacity to being recognized?

What we need in our editing of postcolonial texts is a ‘multicultural comparativism’ which would honour the principles outlined by Charles Chauncey Shackford in the first known lecture on comparative literature delivered at Cornell University in 1871. In this lecture he spoke about bringing together the ‘literary productions of all ages and peoples’ which can then be ‘classed, can be brought into comparison and contrast, can be taken out of their isolation as belonging to one nation, one separate era, and be brought under divisions as the embodiment of the same aesthetic principles, the universal laws of mental, social and moral development: the same in India and in England.’ Almost a century and half on, Gayatri Spivak (2010) makes the same case when she speaks about the love of one’s mother tongue, the importance of a second language as a ‘censor’ to the mother tongue and the ‘de-transcendentalizing’ of nationalism so that one can think about the nation without its dominant linguistic registers, without its insistence, after Derrida, on the ‘monolingualism of the other’ (the way in which glossaries of postcolonial texts constructed this ‘monolingualism’). The literary imagination in a global age should ‘de-transcendentalize’ scholarship too and bring the classical scholia, or commentaries, and scholiasts, or commentators, to bear on postcolonial texts.
In this presentation I bring that tradition to bear on the works of Salman Rushdie who, with the exception of 17 translations of names in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) and a bibliography in *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008) provides no apparatus to help the reader. I do so with examples of postcolonial annotations of Rushdie with the aim of going beyond the Eurocentric underpinnings of comparative literature which was not Shackford’s idea of the discipline and which is not Spivak’s either. In reading Rushdie with scribes, scholars and their ‘ennarratio’ over our shoulder, how can we re-energize that tradition, how can we compose commentaries, as ‘ennaratio,’ a parallel expository narrative, which would challenge unicultural aesthetic singularity and blast open (after Benjamin) a presumed western hierarchy of textual production and reception.

Vijay Mishra is Professor of English Literature & Australian Professorial Fellow at Murdoch University. He has published extensively on Indian literature and culture, postcolonial studies, and diasporic culture. His books include *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary, Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire, Devotional Poetics and the Indian Sublime, The Gothic Sublime,* and *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind.*