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Amst 51.1 (2006)

Multilingualism and American Studies

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HARALD ZAPF

"Ethnicity and Performance: Bilingualism in Spanglish Verse Culture"

ABSTRACT: This article is about contemporary Spanglish verse culture and one of its paradigmatic sites: the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. During the historical period that is covered here—1975 to 1994—ethnic nationalism became less important at the Cafe, and transethnic performance poetry rose to its peak. Nuyorican poetry is mainly a poetry of the self, where poetic voice is a complex issue connected with performance, ethnicity, and vocal/lingual diversity. All in all, it can be said that there was a shift of emphasis from monovocalism to multivocalism, from bilingualism to monolingualism, and from bilingualism as an ethnic feature to bilingualism as a matter of performance and genuinely free choice.

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TERUKO KUMEI

"'A Record of Life and a Poem of Sentiments': Japanese Immigrant Senryu, 1929-1945"

ABSTRACT: Japanese immigrants in the United States recorded their daily life and feelings in *senryu* poems of 17 syllables. This essay discusses the translation problems, a brief history of immigrant *senryu*, and examples of the poems to show how the immigrants personalized their life in the United States in the 1930s and during the Second World War.

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LUTZ H. GÖRGENS

"Humboldt's Example"

ABSTRACT: The bicentennial of Humboldt's visit to America has

inspired a reappraisal of his multilinguistic example. Although research on Humboldt has been global and multilingual, it has remained linguistically and regionally fragmented. Humboldt's scientific achievements greatly impressed prominent contemporary U.S. citizens and influenced both science and education in nineteenth-century America. His multilingualism, however, was hardly echoed by American contemporaries. Although Humboldt was considered "almost an American," he criticized the lack of interest in the humanities, particularly history, linguistics, and ethnic studies in the U.S. Even before Humboldt's American journey, contemporary mapping and cartography provided examples of multilingualism. His own legacy of multilingual geography was passed on to nineteenth-century German geographers in America such as Prince Maximilian von Wied and J.G. Kohl. Beyond geography, Humboldt's example has been followed by some outstanding American libraries and writers such as Longfellow. Today, American multilingualism may be further encouraged by Humboldt's example.

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LORIE A. VANCHENA

### "Reimagining Reinhold Solger's *Anton in America*"

ABSTRACT: Reinhold Solger's *Anton in Amerika: Novelle aus dem deutsch-amerikanischen Leben* (Anton in America: A Novel from German-American Life), first published in 1862, recounts the American adventures of Antonio Wohlfahrt, the purported son of Anton Wohlfahrt in Gustav Freytag's novel *Soll und Haben* (1855). This article presents the annotated English translation of the introduction and first two chapters of Solger's novel as well as commentary; the translation, an excerpt from a forthcoming English edition of the novel, aims to make Solger's literary work more accessible to the growing number of scholars interested in nineteenth-century German-American literature and multilingual writing in the United States. The novel reveals much about the process of how an immigrant writer took up German ideas and values and adapted them to an American context, thus producing a literary work that could comment upon German, American, and German-American life. *Anton in America* also reflects the acculturation process and the role played by Americans and their culture in the development of German-American ethnic identity.

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HOLGER KERSTEN

### "America's Multilingualism and the Problem of the Literary Representation of 'Pidgin English'"

ABSTRACT: The occurrence of nonstandard language in works of imaginative literature has traditionally provoked questions about its meaning, especially when such 'deviant' forms of English are recognizable as representations of 'ethnic speech.' As is perhaps most obvious in the history of the minstrel tradition in American culture, a nonstandard language often conjures up assumptions of racial inferiority. While it is beyond doubt that the reproduction of African American speech contributed significantly

to the emergence and reinforcement of negative stereotypes, the work of Michael North, Eric Lott, and others has shown that it would be a misconception to regard all ethnicized forms of nonstandard language as instances of racism. By focusing on Charles G. Leland's *Pidgin-English Sing-Song* (1876), a book which attempted to render a linguistic form extensively used in the seaport towns of China and among Chinese Americans, the present article shows the complexity of a publication which unites linguistic research data, folklore texts, and literary material covering a surprisingly wide thematic range. By doing so, it proposes the idea that an unprejudiced approach to a hybrid language can open possibilities for a new reading of previously ostracized materials and thus broaden the debate on multilingualism in American literature in the context of linguistic diversity.

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FRANK MEHRING

### "Deutsch, Dutch, Double Dutch: Authentic and Artificial German-American Dialects"

ABSTRACT: In the wake of the German Revolution of 1848, a massive number of immigrants poured into the United States. They brought with them not only a vision of a free democratic society beyond the Atlantic but also their traditions and dialects. Newcomers and nativists alike produced a rich body of literature celebrating linguistic diversity in the United States through a creative use of language. Among those who wanted to incorporate authentic dialect speech patterns in their poetry were the Pennsylvania Germans. They boasted proudly an American history of about three centuries going back to Francis Daniel Pastorius's arrival in Pennsylvania in 1683. Nineteenth-century Pennsylvania German poetry competed with popular poetry labeled 'Dutch' dialect, which used an artificial *lingua franca* to mock certain characteristics of German immigrant culture. Aspects of inferiority, crudeness, or primitivity were not only detected in sentimental efforts of preserving German traditions but also in the immigrants' lack of command of the dominant language. This article addresses continuities and changes regarding the perception of German immigrants through the use of dialect by comparing Henry Lee Fisher's writings to those of Charles Follen Adams. The analysis reveals surprising patterns in the process of creating, recreating, and preserving dialect features. The boundaries between authentic and artificial languages, between the real and the fake become blurry. Beyond aspects of oral recitation and the faithful transcription of interlinguistic speech patterns, visual illustrations of dialect poetry need also to be taken into consideration as crucial elements in both documenting and stigmatizing immigrant traditions.

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GERT NIEERS

### "Fünf Gedichte"

## Amst 51.2 (2006)

CLAUS BERNET

### "Jerusalemvorstellungen in radikalpietistischen und radikalpuritanischen Siedlungen Nordamerikas"

**ABSTRACT:** The New Jerusalem was the utopian hope for many immigrants to America during the early modern period. Here people literally expected to realize a biblical vision. The utopian expectation of the New Jerusalem can be clearly exemplified by radical Pietist and Puritan communities. Most of their settlements were in Pennsylvania, a center of new social experiments and chiliastic hopes. The Quakers and two of their breakaway groups, the Shakers and the Universal Friends, as well as settlers at Ephrata and Harmony, were all influenced by the idea of establishing a new society based on the description in Revelations. The biblical model served to motivate the founding and sustaining of settlements under difficult circumstances in what was perceived as the American wilderness. Pioneers and settlers of the first generation used biblical idealizations to counter the daily hardships of erecting a new home. Later, as affluence and prosperity grew, the notion of the Heavenly Jerusalem gradually disappeared or was simply spiritualized.

ULF SCHULENBERG

### "Books, Rocks, and Sentimental Education—Self-Culture and the Desire for the Really Real in Henry David Thoreau"

**ABSTRACT:** Ralph Waldo Emerson's emphasis on the importance of contingency, experiment, inconsistency, change, and transition ought to be seen in connection with his demonstration that the concept of truth is directly linked to terms such as transitoriness, volatility, and expediency. Thus, it seems legitimate to advance the argument that Emerson is an important precursor of pragmatism. As far as Henry David Thoreau's thinking is concerned, this kind of pragmatist genealogy appears somewhat blurred. Although Thoreau pluralizes the notion of truth, he also seems to hold that a radical rejection of a foundationalist epistemology would be incompatible with the goals he pursues. This article seeks to elucidate a central tension in Thoreau's texts between, on the one hand, books (that is, self-culture, self-fashioning, poetry, redescription, and the idea of a literary or poeticized culture) and, on the other, rocks (that is, firm grounds, Truth, the really real, solidity, reliability, purity, and the idea of a foundationalist or metaphysical culture). The first part discusses Thoreau's notion of self-culture and his concept of truth by comparing them to Richard Rorty's idea of a pragmatist literary culture. The second

part analyzes Thoreau's idea of reform and his emphasis on the necessity of firm moral principles.

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ANNE DVINGE

### "Complex Fate—Complex Vision: The Vernacular and Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Juneteenth*"

**ABSTRACT:** For Ralph Ellison the vernacular was a form and a resource for the writer, an interface through which the writer could illuminate aspects of reality. With this essay I intend to add to the debate on the vernacular and orality in literature by exploring how Ellison in *Juneteenth* brings the vernacular and the dialogic into play in order to illuminate matters of culture and identity. Previous investigations of the use of the vernacular in literature tend to overlook the complexity in the relationship between orality and literacy. My analysis aims to establish that a level of dialogization is added to any text engaging the vernacular. Ellison employs the vernacular in *Juneteenth* in such a manner, and the vernacular comes to represent identity and culture acquired under influence of historic circumstances and social practices.

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MEL VAN ELTEREN

### Forum: "Imperial Gestures in Portrayals of U.S. Culture as a 'Universal Culture'"

**ABSTRACT:** This article questions the taken-for-granted idea among a diversity of observers and ideologues that the current United States is the site par excellence where all cultures and cultural markets of the world are represented, which converge toward a universal, cosmopolitan culture. It exposes the imperial strategies implied in the given depictions of American culture as a universalistic culture that allegedly contains the essence of a global culture encompassing all cultural varieties of humankind. These conflation of the two cultures are all based on the idea that America's 'unique universality' creates and represents all that the rest of the world wants, which must be rejected in light of the insights presented here. America's distinctive culture is less cosmopolitan, let alone 'universal' than suggested, while from a social-emancipatory perspective American society is lacking as an exemplary model to the rest of the world in terms of political and economic democracy, the defense and maintenance of public spaces and goods, as well as social justice. America's 'soft power' is still exerting its influence among many people across the globe. But certain conditions and developments in recent years weaken this form of power in relation to various groups across the spectrum of world views.

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KARSTEN FITZ and  
INGRID GESSNER

### "Publications in American Studies from German-Speaking Countries, 2005"

Amst 51.3 (2006)

Asian American Studies in Europe

**MITA BANERJEE, CARMEN BIRKLE, and WILFRIED  
RAUSSERT - Guest Editors**MITA BANERJEE, CARMEN  
BIRKLE, and WILFRIED  
RAUSSERT

"Introduction"

CARMEN BIRKLE

"Orientalisms in *Fin-de-Siècle* America"

ABSTRACT: In times of increasing migration to European countries, it is of particular interest to the European American Studies scholar to analyze mechanisms of Othering which are poignantly manifest in the history of Asian Americans in the U.S. Orientalism, as Edward Said has argued, as a Western term used to construct the East from a Western perspective and turn it into the Other, is one technology of Othering. Fictional texts about the Orient at the *fin de siècle* were frequently romances focusing on male-female love relationships, on one level, and on ethnic, gender, and national stereotypes, on another. Anti-Chinese immigration laws at the turn of the century testify to a nationwide white nativist fear of racial pollution through miscegenation and fear of increasing unemployment because of the "yellow peril," while Japan and the Japanese were exoticized and represented the attractive side of the Orient. Fictionalizing the Orient was a means of maintaining control over the Other. The Anglo-Saxon John Luther Long, the Chinese American Winnifred Eaton passing for Japanese as Onoto Watanna, and her sister Edith Eaton using the Chinese pseudonym Sui Sin Far speak through their characters and their respective Asian ethnicities to affirm the Orientalisms of their time, on the one hand, and to subtly criticize American society for its racism, sexism, and patriarchal ideologies, on the other. In their novels and short stories, the Chinese American sisters use a form of "double ventriloquism" (Cole) and create strong New (Chinese/Japanese/American) Women who represent an "Orientalism with a difference" (Ferens).

DEBORAH L. MADSEN

"The Oriental/Occidental Dynamic in Chinese American Life Writing: Pardee Lowe and Jade Snow Wong"

ABSTRACT: In this essay, I explore the uncertainties which stand in opposition to classic theories of American autobiography, yet are in agreement with the contemporary postmodern consensus that autobiographies, and ethnic autobiographies in particular,

are always characterized by a multiple subject. In specific formal ways these Chinese American autobiographies can be seen to be riven through with competing racialized discourses of self that cannot allow an image of coherent, universal subjectivity to dominate. These formal strategies are deployed in such a way, as I hope to show, that we are invited to reconceptualize Chinese American life writing as a hybrid literary form. Through the device of narrative point of view, competing discourses of Orientalism and Occidentalism set up a dynamic that cannot be adequately resolved by the text alone. The dyad Orientalism/Occidentalism has not been extensively engaged in literary terms, but in anthropological and sociological theory the concept of Occidentalism has proved fruitful for exposing and offering analysis assumptions about the West. These analysis assumptions inform studies of colonial contact and Western influence in village or tribal societies or the ways in which non-Western communities imagine themselves in contrast to stylized images of the West. This dyad provides the focus for my discussion of Pardee Lowe's *Father and Glorious Descendant* and Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

ROCÍO G. DAVIS

"National and Ethnic Affiliation in Internment Autobiographies of Childhood by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and George Takei"

ABSTRACT: The number of autobiographies written about the Japanese internment experience illustrate the imperative of life writing in its intersection with the politics of identity formation. This essay examines the artistic project of two Japanese American writers—Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973), George Takei's *To the Stars* (1994)—who deploy narratives of their childhood years in internment camps to represent their individual processes of self-identification and negotiation of cultural and/or national affiliation, offering important insights into this disruptive historical and cultural experience. Both texts reveal important parallels in connection with the changes in their families because of the war, their relationships with their fathers, and the central role of the experience internment in forging their sense of national and cultural identity. Specifically, Jeanne's negotiation with issues of invisibility contrasts with George's desire for public self-representation. The manner in which writers like Houston and Takei negotiate their positions as Japanese Americans during and after the Second World War obliges the reader to attend to crucial questions of self-representation, national affiliation, and citizenship.

RÜDIGER KUNOW

"Architect of the Cosmopolitan Dream: Salman Rushdie"

ABSTRACT: This paper entertains the possibility of an 'Americanization' of Salman Rushdie. Both in his fictional and his

critical writings Rushdie has turned to the United States as site of enunciation and site of cultural critique. As a regular commentator in the *New York Times* and a number of magazines, he has inserted himself, however provisionally and critically, into the multicultural mainstream of the United States. Such a move toward the U.S. has taken the trajectory of Rushdie, the voice from the margin, to a new domain. His subject position as individual and writer is no longer grounded in the postcolonial terrain organized around the center/margin-dichotomy; instead he has in significant and signifying ways written himself into the center. The consequences of this realignment are traced in readings of Rushdie's novels, from *Midnight's Children* via *Satanic Verses* to *Fury*.

CHRISTIANE SCHLOTE

### "Interpreters of Transnationalism: South Asian American Women Writers"

ABSTRACT: The emergence of so-called South Asian Americans as the third largest Asian American group in the U.S. has been accompanied by their increased cultural and academic visibility as well as a renewed Western interest in the consumption of 'Indo Chic.' Although highly stratified along cultural, class, and religious lines, the post-1965 generation of South Asian Americans has developed from one of the least-studied communities into a subfield within Asian American Studies in less than a decade. This essay attempts to trace the complex subject positions and institutional discourses behind this development with a particular focus on the experiences of South Asian American women. In its exploration of the transnational perspectives in the work of the South Asian American women writers Talat Abbasi, Meena Alexander, Anita Rau Badami, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ameena Meer, Tahira Naqvi, and Bapsi Sidhwa it emphasizes the need for an internationally comparative approach which critically addresses essentialized concepts of identity politics and pan-ethnic ideologies. It further stresses the constructed and context-specific nature of categories such as 'South Asian American' and the importance of the globalized material conditions they are situated in.

MITA BANERJEE

### "Vikrams of Change: The Suspended Transnational Presence of the Indian on *Friends*"

ABSTRACT: This paper proposes to read an episode of the popular U.S. sitcom *Friends* against the grain by deconstructing the "Indian" who does not appear on the show but is instead being impersonated by a Jewish American character who is part of the sitcom's core cast. This impersonation, it will be proposed, can be traced back to the theatrical tradition of blackface minstrelsy. Ethnic impersonation thus continues to be a key ritual in the consolidation of a given community's Americanness. It is also predicated on a complex politics of cultural exchange.

The confirmation of one ethnic group's Americanness is achieved at the expense of the exclusion of another. At the same time, popular culture can be seen as a containment of national anxieties about the influx of Asian immigrants.

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KIRSTEN TWELBECK

"Beyond a Postmodern Denial of Reference: Forms of Resistance in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*"

ABSTRACT: In her discussion of Jessica Hagedorn's first novel, *Dogeaters*, Caroline S. Hau criticizes the celebrated Filipina American writer for employing a postmodern version of the "Other," or an "Other Othered as exotica" (125). According to Hau and other Filipino critics, this staged orientalism works hand in hand with a capitalist system which supports this kind of representation through writers' grants. By undermining the "hermeneutics of truth," Hau argues, *Dogeaters* avoids an open discussion of Philippine American relations (121). The "jungle chronicle" takes the place of a historical analysis (cf. Hau 116, 119). The following essay provides a more optimistic perspective by reading Hagedorn's project as a confrontation with her own "demons of identity" (Bonetti) and as an exploration into the possibilities for political agency that goes beyond a postmodernist critique of representation. An examination of *Dogeaters*, and in particular the different uses of the movie metaphor within the novel, reveals that cultural performativity is not the ultimate solution for Hagedorn. Instead, as evident in the "Joey" episode, Hagedorn attempts to distinguish between "American" and "native" perspectives on the social and political realities in the Philippines. The changes in narrative voice signal clearly both the author's acknowledgement of her own cultural limitations and the narrative's refusal to "colonize" the possibilities of Filipino resistance.

Amst 51.4 (2006)

"Nachruf auf Professor Dr. Hans-Joachim Lang"

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FRANK SCHUMACHER

"'Marked Severities': The Debate over Torture during America's Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1902"

ABSTRACT: This essay examines the American debate over torture by U.S. soldiers during the Philippine-American War. The bitter home-front controversy about the violation of the laws of war during the military conquest of the Philippine Islands began

in 1900 and reached its climax during a congressional investigation in the spring of 1902. Prompted by the investigative work of a small group of journalists, military dissenters, and empire critics, the hearings revealed that U.S. troops had systematically employed so-called 'water cure' torture as an interrogation technique during counterinsurgency operations against the Filipino independence movement. Although prohibited by the army's field regulations, the torture of prisoners and suspected guerillas was widespread and fostered by deep-seated racism, the escalatory nature of warfare, the deregulation of control over military operations, and a strong sense of frustration and alienation experienced by American soldiers during the campaign. Although the disclosure of the torture cases prompted a national outcry and substantial military dissent, perpetrators were rarely prosecuted and often received only symbolic sentencing. The war critics ultimately failed to sustain the debate's anti-imperial momentum and public outrage was soon contained by a mixture of patriotic nationalism, emotional fatigue, and the belief in the nation's exceptional moral superiority.

ERNST-PETER SCHNECK

### "Vom Askari zum New Negro: Alain Locke und Walter von Ruckteschell"

**ABSTRACT:** In his search for a new aesthetic paradigm for the representation of African Americans in American art and culture, the African American philosopher Alain Locke praised the exemplary sensibility and strength of the portrait art of Winold Reiss and Walter von Ruckteschell, two German artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. While Reiss has become a rather well-researched figure in the scholarship focusing on the Harlem Renaissance and its particular visual aesthetics, Ruckteschell has been almost completely ignored—even though it was a drawing by the latter that Locke placed rather prominently in the original edition of the *New Negro* anthology in the magazine *Graphic Survey* (1925) as an ideal representation of "Young Africa." Locke's idealistic appropriation, if unwittingly also rather effectively, concealed the racist implications and obvious colonial context of the original drawing which von Ruckteschell made in 1918 for a commemorative sampler of artwork in honor of one of the most rigorous of German colonialists, General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. In the context of the *New Negro*, however, Ruckteschell's drawing turns from an idealization of German colonial ideology into an ideal representation of a 'new African American' informed by Locke's pan-Africanist nationalism. The paper will discuss this peculiar instance of transatlantic and cross-cultural iconographic transfer and the irritating persistence of colonial vision it suggests.

THOMAS CLAVIEZ

### "Enigmatic Circles: Approaching the Ethics of Myth through N. Scott Momaday"

ABSTRACT: From a Western perspective, a mythic worldview has traditionally been considered not only as "unscientific" and less effective than a scientific approach; it has also usually been judged morally questionable, if not "immoral." The essay addresses the ethics of myth through a reading of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, and tries to unwrap the differences and misunderstandings that have barred an ethical approach to myth. In doing so, it argues for the acknowledgment of the openness of a work of literature that should not be reduced to an ethnic-political reading informed by identity politics.

SIMON SCHLEUSENER

"'The Ward is a Factory': Macht und Normalisierung in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*"

ABSTRACT: The following essay examines Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) by making use of Michel Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power. Besides a number of differences in the two authors' approaches toward sexuality and resistance, one finds some striking resemblances in Kesey's literary work and Foucault's theoretical analysis concerning the subjects of power and normalization, madness and society, punishment and surveillance. Taking into account that *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* appeared only one year after Foucault's first important work, *Madness and Civilization*,—and deals with quite similar topics—it can be argued that both authors participated in a transnational discourse critical of normalization, which, during the second half of the twentieth century, became a major challenge to traditional forms of class analysis. After an historical account of these theoretical transformations, the essay explores *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and the writings of Foucault in order to highlight the analogies and differences between the two authors' thoughts on power and normalization. Finally, the essay confronts Foucault's (and Kesey's) model of "disciplinary society" with Gilles Deleuze's concept of "control society." Thus, rather than being merely concerned with literary analysis, the essay also intends to present a Cultural-Studies-based discussion of power and normalization in the light of recent historical and theoretical developments.

DAVID INGRAM

"'The clutter of the unkempt forest': John Cage, Music and American Environmental Thought"

ABSTRACT: John Cage's artistic development showed an increasingly explicit awareness of environmental issues and of their relationship to his music. In breaking away from the linear, teleological structures of Western classical music, which emphasized a sense of forward movement culminating in a single climax, he criticized the destructiveness of a Western society committed to Faustian notions of historical progress. Cage was influenced by the idea that music in Indian cultures served 'to

quiet the mind and thus make it susceptible to divine influences.' Also central to his naturalistic aesthetics was the Indian art critic Ananda Coomaraswamy, who wrote that the intention of Indian art was 'to imitate Nature in her manner of operation.' In his 1960s writings, Cage became interested in the work of R. Buckminster Fuller on how contemporary electronic technologies were producing opportunities for a new 'post-scarcity' society which would be less ecologically damaging than in the past. By the 1970s, Cage came to apply such explicitly ecological ideas to his processes of musical composition. In pieces such as "Inlets" and "Child of Tree," music became for him a model of benign ecological relations between human beings and the natural world.

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MARC PRIEWE

"Making a Home away from Home: Traveling Diasporas in María Escandón's *Esperanza's Box of Saints*"

ABSTRACT: The novel *Esperanza's Box of Saints* (1999) exemplifies the representation and production of transcultural practices in the border zone between Southern California and Northern Mexico. It fictionalizes human and cultural mobility in "transnational social spaces" by employing themes and motifs often associated with diasporic narratives: travel, transculturation, memory, home. This essay analyzes the narrative construction of real and imagined diasporas that span across two nation-states, physically and culturally. Escandón's text can be read as a departure from earlier Chicana feminist and Mexican immigrant novels because it suggests alternative cultural formations, for women and men, in transnational circuits between Mexico and the United States.

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