



Ideas of the South

This event is part of the **Other Worlds: Forms of World Literature ARC Discovery Project** (<http://www.formsofworldliterature.com/>). It builds upon a workshop that took place in Adelaide earlier this year, considering the idea of 'the south' in literature, and how this idea might function. Three speakers will offer papers considering this question in an effort to better identify what is at stake in these questions.

'Against Network Thinking' – Ben Etherington

This presentation will critically consider the project to uncover/recover/discover so-called 'South-South' networks of literary and political exchange which recently has become popular. I will argue that this project is underwritten by the same methodological disposition that has driven what we might call 'North-North' literary scholarship to focus on transnational cosmopolitan literary networks. Not only does network thinking leave out determinedly local and localizing projects, but it is often incapable of seeing the implicit solidarities between those projects. Such solidarities cannot be identified by attending only to the empirically verifiable networks that may or may not connect these habitats of literary production. Rather, we need to employ a speculative mode of world literary interpretation. I will conclude by discussing the meridian lines (in Paul Celan's sense) that run through disparate literary practices.

'Writing Southern Worlds' – Meg Samuelson

What substance can we give to the idea of the south? One of the defining features of the geographic south is the greater proportion of ocean to land. This paper will float the idea of the 'blue southern hemisphere' and reflect on southness as a littoral condition. With some reference to the writing of JM Coetzee, it will seek to articulate a 'southern world' that is distinct from both the 'world' of 'world literature' and the postcolonial 'south', but which is also not antithetical to either.

'An Idea of the South' – Anthony Uhlmann

This paper responds to the question as to how we might conceptualise an idea of the south. Is it possible for such an idea to be robust and 'universal' in cultural terms? If so, how might such an idea look? How might it be defined? What work would it be expected to do? This paper will look at the problem in cartographical terms. It will consider the idea of potential and idea of relational particularity. The work is speculative and 'in progress' and contributes to thinking around the issues at stake in 'Other Worlds: Forms of World Literature'

BEN ETHERINGTON is a Research Lecturer in English at the Western Sydney University. His work focuses on the relationship between literature and decolonization. His book, *Literary Primitivism* (Stanford UP, 2017), argues that primitivism was a vexed utopian project taken up most vigorously by colonized artists, and his current project traces the emergence of a creole poetics in the

Caribbean from the end of slavery through to its flourishing at the time of political independence. He is the editor, with Jarad Zimble of the *Cambridge Companion to World Literature*.

MEG SAMUELSON joined the Department of English & Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide as a lecturer in 2017, after having held positions as an associate professor at the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University in South Africa. She has published widely in South African and southern African literary and cultural studies. Her current research and teaching interests include Anthropocene thought, coastal and maritime literary and cultural studies, critical theory and literary debates, Indian Ocean studies, the southern hemisphere, world literatures and women's writing. She works primarily on literary texts, but also has projects that focus on photography and film, and other cultural forms.

ANTHONY UHLMANN has been Director of the Writing and Society Research Centre since 2012. He is the author of two monographs on Samuel Beckett: *Beckett and Poststructuralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). He also co-edited *Arnold Geulincx's Ethics with Samuel Beckett's Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) and *Beckett in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). He was the editor of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* from 2007 until 2013. His most recent book is *Thinking in Literature: Joyce, Woolf, Nabokov* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011). His work focuses on the exchanges that take place between literature and philosophy and the way in which literature itself is a kind of thinking about the world.

DATE: Friday 23 March

TIME: 1pm – 3pm

LOCATION: Female Orphan School, conference room 1 (EZ.G.23), Parramatta South Campus, Western Sydney University

All welcome. RSVP/info writing@westernsydney.edu.au

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