

ENTANGLED LITERATURES AND CULTURES: SYSTEMS OF RELATIONS, INTERSECTIONS, RECIPROCITY





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The conference is organised  
by the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre  
of the Estonian Academy of Sciences  
in the framework of its institutional research project  
“Entangled Literatures: Discursive History of Literary Culture in Estonia”  
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## ENTANGLED LITERATURES AND CULTURES: SYSTEMS OF RELATIONS, INTERSECTIONS, RECIPROCITY

A conference hosted by the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre  
of the Estonian Academy of Sciences

25–26 May 2017, Tallinn, Estonia



Under and Tuglas Literature Centre  
Tallinn 2017

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*Jaan Undusk* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre)

9.30–11.00

**Theoretical Reflections on Entanglement***Martin Klöcker* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre):

The Model of Entanglement and Change in Literary History

*Kaisa Kaakinen* (University of Turku):

The Heterogeneous Historicity of Reading: Analysing Weak Analogies of Relation and Comparison in Twentieth-Century Literature

*Piret Peiker* (Tallinn University):

What Do We See Differently When We Adopt a Relational Perspective?

11.00–11.30 Coffee Break

11.30–13.00

**Entanglement and Migration***Diana Mistreanu* (University of Luxembourg / Université Paris-Est):

Russians Exiles in Interwar Paris – An Example of Cultural Cross-Fertilization?

*Jamie Korsmo* (Georgia State University / Paris-Saclay University):

Hemingway's Expats: The Impact of Place on Cultural Performance

*Margarita Smagina* (Ecole Normale Supérieure, Lyon):Entangled Cultures, Entangled Species: The Promise of "Alter-Globalization" in Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* and the Denial of Reciprocity in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*

13.00–14.00 Lunch

14.00–15.30

**Entanglements in the Baltics***Kairit Kaur* (University of Tartu / Tallinn University Library):*Totentanz* and Graveyard Poetry: How To Grasp the Baltic German Reception of English Literature and Culture*Ulrike Plath* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre / Tallinn University),*Linda Kaljundi* (Tallinn University):

Serfdom as Entanglement: Narratives of a Social Phenomenon in Literature and History Writing

*Epp Annus* (Estonian Literary Museum):

Modernity with a Smiley Face: Soviet Modernity, Soviet Coloniality

15.30–16.00 Coffee Break

16.00–17.30

**Keynote***Stefan Helgesson* (Stockholm University):

Entanglement, World Literature and World-Making

**Friday, 26 May 2017**

9.00–10.30

**Keynote***Kevin Platt* (University of Pennsylvania):

Wavelength, Exchange and the Temporality of the Aesthetic: On Liminality and Avantgardism

10.30–11.00 Coffee Break

11.00–12.30

**Contemporary Entanglements***Diana Hitzke* (Justus Liebig University Gießen):

Sorbian Literature as Entangled Literature: Cultural Criss-crossing from Ultra-minor Perspectives

*Edward Muston* (Beloit College):

Re-Entangling the Cisnational State: Vladimir Vertlib in Lithuania and Austria

*Eneken Laanes* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre / Tallinn University):

Against Hybridity

12.30–14.00 Lunch

14.00–15.00

#### **Modernist Entanglements**

*Mirjam Hinrikus* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre / Tallinn

University):

Nikolai Triik's "Martyr" (1913) and A. H. Tammsaare's *Judith* (1921)  
in the Context of "Estonian" Decadence

*Aare Pilv* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre):

Estonian Red Exile Literature: Entangled Alienation

15.00–15.30 Coffee Break

15.30–17.00

#### **Entanglements Between Cultural Fields**

*Rein Undusk* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre):

The Invention of Estonia: Lennart Meri's *Silverwhite*

*Ildikó Sirató* (Hungarian National Széchényi Library, Budapest /

University of Pannonia, Veszprém):

Understanding Without Borders: Central-European Features of  
Estonian and Contemporary Finnish Plays

*Piret Kruuspere* (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre):

Entangled Dramatic Art and Entangled Memory: Examples from  
Estonian Plays and Stage

## ENTANGLED LITERATURES AND CULTURES: SYSTEMS OF RELATIONS, INTERSECTIONS, RECIPROCITY

Tallinn, Estonia 25–26 May 2017, Tallinn

The study of cultures inevitably involves comparison and influence, for every culture has developed in a process of exchange with other cultures. Though this is widely acknowledged, enquiry into cultures has long suffered from “methodological nationalism” (Ulrich Beck), positing nations as the only natural units for the comparative study of cultures. The cultures of the Baltic region present a case in point. The Baltics have been an intense battlefield for various political and economic forces and have been part of a number of different states over almost a millennium. The literary culture of the region began to take shape in the context of the local German rule from the beginning of the 13th century onward, and it was largely multilingual up to the end of the 19th century, with Latin, German, Swedish, Estonian, Latvian and Russian all used. The national movements of the 19th century split the multi-layered literary field into separate literatures centred on national languages. In the 20th century, the national literatures of the region developed in lively interaction with various European literatures, and after World War II they came under the restrictive regulations of Soviet ideology. At the same time, however, the study of the national literatures of the Baltics completely erased the entangled history of literary culture from the individual canons.

In recent decades, an interest in cultural transfer has invigorated research into conceptual models that would do justice to the criss-cross patterns of culture. The study of cultural transfer offers a welcome alternative to the nation-centred exploration of cultural influence and exchange by acknowledging *métissage* (cultural intermingling, or mixed identity) as an essential feature in the development of national cultures. This has proven to be crucial in rethinking the question of cultural influence in so far as it draws attention to the processes of re-appropriation and re-writing of transferred cultural models and hence to the originality of the “copy” in a receiving socio-historical configuration.

However, the study of cultural transfer still fails to do justice to the entangled nature of cultures: on one side there is the general system of relations between different, national, cultural spaces and on the other side is the reciprocity of unequal exchange in multi-ethnic and multicultural contexts that have a common, or partly overlapping, cultural heritage.

The conference invites its participants to develop a conceptual framework for studying literatures and cultures as entangled by exploring various cultural contexts where cultural entanglements have been an essential feature, but which cannot be studied productively by, for example, post-colonial approaches. Some questions which may prove relevant in this regard are:

- What are the advantages of approaching cultures as entangled rather than through comparativism and the study of cultural transfer?
- What previously overshadowed phenomena can be illuminated by this approach?
- How can justice best be done to the reciprocity of cultural exchange?
- How can the unequal exchange between cultures that may result from unequal political and economic legacies but does not neatly overlap with it be studied?

The conference will explore these questions by focusing on the literary cultures of different regions of the world understood in the broadest of terms. Contributions that examine entanglements in history, theatre, visual arts and other fields of culture are welcome.

## Entanglement, World Literature and World-Making

**Stefan Helgesson** (Stockholm University)

Entanglement has no beginning and no end: it is always in medias res. It can, however, be theorised in terms of vectors. In this lecture, I will argue that there is an outward and an inward movement in entanglement that together give shape to literatures and literary works. If much world literature scholarship has focused on outward circulation and international canonisation, an equally significant dimension of world literature concerns the harnessing of external literary resources for local ends. The adjustment that the inward movement requires of world literature theory is – perhaps – enabled by the term “world-making”, which can be developed by way of Hannah Arendt and Pheng Cheah, among others. A possible advantage of a world-making focus is that it keeps entanglement in view and avoids the identity closure of nationalism. A possible disadvantage is that it deflects attention from the structural and political preconditions of literary production. By considering some literary examples from Africa and Latin America, my lecture will put both of these claims to the test.

## Wavelength, Exchange and the Temporality of the Aesthetic: On Liminality and Avantgardism

**Kevin Platt** (University of Pennsylvania)

What happens when poetry is broadcast by radio across state borders, or across a crowded room? Russophone Latvian Literature of the Twenty-First Century balances across multiple borders — between Latvian and Russian languages and literary scenes, between the legacies of Soviet social life and contemporary European realities, between the institutional and literary circuits of Russia, Latvia and Europe, and between forms of media. This lecture will be devoted to discussion of the Riga-based Orbita Group, as well as some other, less prominent figures in Russophone Latvian cultural life, and to the processes of translation and broadcast that bring their work to diverse audiences across the globe. The Orbita Group, in particular, has over the past decade or so experimented with the apparatus and the metaphor of the radio. As analysis of both their radio-practices and writings demonstrates, it is the geographical position and mobility of this literary activity that undergirds its innovative significance to multiple “broadcast audiences”. In sum, my lecture will explain how liminal spatiality relates to avant-garde temporality, and how peripherality and distance can place one, paradoxically, at the centre of the literary system.

## Modernity with a Smiley Face: Soviet Modernity, Soviet Coloniality

**Epp Annus** (Estonian Literary Museum)

This presentation investigates the interconnected cluster of Soviet modernity and Soviet coloniality. Soviet discourses of modernity supported an effort to enforce value-systems that were progressive by the standards of its ideological system. The geopolitical perspective helps to outline the particularity of a colonial orientation: one part of colonialism is the effort to 'civilize' a different culture in a different geographical area, which comes with privileges awarded to the 'civilizing' nationality, while those local traditions that might hamper the exercise of colonial rule are discounted. I describe a Soviet modernity that is both an imperial and subaltern modernity, and I articulate the entangled relationship between Soviet and Western modernities.

The second part of the presentation focuses on the functioning of modernity from the specific perspective of national discourses in a colonial situation. From the perspective of the Baltic nations, the Soviet annexation of formerly independent nation-states in 1940 and again in 1944 after the German occupation brought with it a rupture in political and socio-cultural developments. In Estonia and in Latvia, a massive influx of predominantly Russian settlers resulted in dramatic demographic changes. These changes generated a double dialectics of negation in national imaginaries, as first, the colonial split initiated a discourse of national nostalgia in which the past was remembered as beautiful since it was unattainable, and, second, the nostalgic lens further intensified the colonial conflict, as the contrast between the imaginary beauty of the past and the horror of the Stalinist era made the latter seem especially horrible. The colonial split separated the recent past into an imaginary sphere of authentic existence, something now violently displaced by the establishment of the new social order.

Colonial supervision by the central regime fluctuated from intensely oppressive to almost non-existent; it sometimes merged and sometimes clashed with different national discourses, thus initiating complex entangled ideological networks and complicated power struggles.

## Nikolai Triik's "Martyr" (1913) and A. H. Tammsaare's *Judith* (1921) in the Context of "Estonian" Decadence

**Mirjam Hinrikus** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre / Tallinn University)

Estonian decadence has not been discussed much at almost any time in the 20th century or the beginning of the 21st century. This is at least partly because of the "methodological nationalism" that is still quite vigorous in today's Estonian humanities. There are two recent signs of change: 2016 saw the publication of a new Estonian literary history, Tiit Hennoste's *Estonian Literary Avant-Garde in the Early 20th Century. Leaps Towards Modernism I* ("Eesti kirjanduslik avangard 20. sajandi algul. Hüpped modernismi poole I"), which dedicates quite a lot of pages to decadence; and the first exhibition on Estonian decadence in KUMU Art Museum of Estonia, which opens in September 2017 and is titled "Kurja lillede lapsed" (*Children of Fleurs du mal*). It is no exaggeration though to argue that in Estonia we are only starting to analyse examples of literature and art systematically through the lens of decadence or to study cases in which decadence mingles with naturalism. Examples of this may even seem to dominate, leading to the question of whether anything purely decadent exists in Nordic and Baltic countries.

This paper views the discourse of decadence as a dynamic element in the rhetoric and structure of many examples found in the different cultural media that emerged in Estonia shortly before, during, or shortly after World War I. I will talk about an intriguing painting by an artist of the Young-Estonia group, Nikolai Triik, titled "Martyr" (1913), and will link it to his "Metropolis" (1913) and A. H. Tammsaare's play *Judith* (1921). I will argue that "Martyr" is closely associated with the figure of the modern artist, which emerges in Estonian culture as it does in other European cultures more or less explicitly in relation to the representation of the metropolis. This artist, at least partly metropolitan, in turn holds a central place not only in Triik's painting but also in other examples of Estonian decadent art and literature. Moreover, it seems that Triik's "Martyr" as the figure of the modern artist can be viewed, like many other inter-texts of decadence, as a representation of Dionysian decadence and the decadent.

This in turn evokes Nietzschean ideas – not only his Dionysian exuberance but his ideas about the Superman as well. Both these references to Nietzschean decadence also appear powerfully in Tammsaare's *Judith*, his most decadent text (others being *The Fly* and *Shadings*), which seems to have been written in the framework of Nietzschean decadence. However, the paper deals not only with Nietzschean ideas but also with other intertexts of decadence in these different cultural media.

## Sorbian Literature as Entangled Literature: Cultural Criss-crossing from Ultra-minor Perspectives

**Diana Hitzke** (Justus Liebig University Gießen)

The case of Sorbian Literature, which is a minor and stateless literature, is a good example for developing a framework for the study of literatures and cultures as entangled. On the one hand it is seen as a duty of Sorbian Literature to be a part, if not the main instrument, of the Sorbian nation building process, as is expressed for example by Jakub Bart-Ćišinski within the *mlodoserbske hibanje* (the Young Sorbian movement). On the other hand Sorbian literature, even in its nationalized period, is influenced by other Slavic and non-Slavic literatures and is formed within the frame of the German, Polish and Czech educational institutions where Sorbian authors studied. I may use the term *ultra-minor* in this context to express the situation of a culture that is forced to refer constantly to other cultural and linguistic constellations because there is, for example, no way to enrol in any field of study at a university that covers Sorbian culture and is taught in the Sorbian language, except Sorbian studies. My paper aims to show how Sorbian Literature develops as an entangled literature – and in which contexts entanglement is appreciated and when it is rejected. It focuses on two writers who reflect this entanglement in their literature in a very productive way. The bilingual writer Jurij Brězan writes his novels in both German and Sorbian, and the poet Róża Domaścyna introduces new hybrid words into German and Sorbian and so plays an active part in the cross-cultural intermingling.

## The Heterogeneous Historicity of Reading: Analysing Weak Analogies of Relation and Comparison in Twentieth-Century Literature

**Kaisa Kaakinen** (University of Turku)

My talk focuses on the challenges posed to conceptual and methodological approaches to comparative literature by the increasing awareness that globalization has given of the heterogeneity of reading contexts. The expanding and diversifying contemporary readerships demand that comparative literature focus more attention on specific effects that occur when literary narratives meet readerships that do not share the same historical imagery. By discussing briefly the relationship between Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) and W. G. Sebald (1944–2001), two writers who emigrated to Britain from Central Europe and wrote transnational histories of imperialism at the opposite ends of the twentieth century, I will show how comparative literature could contextualize the works of these transnational authors in ways that go beyond the idea of a “punctual” relationship of a literary text to historical context and beyond positing one implied audience or a coherent horizon of expectation. My paper highlights how these authors’ poetic strategies, which rely on stylistic, informational, and sensory gaps of various sorts, mobilize the historical imagination of embodied and situated readers to match their specific projects of historical orientation. I demonstrate how understanding the complex historicity of the works of these authors requires an analysis that identifies various implied, unimplied and unwelcome reading positions, and differentiates between ways in which active and historically situated readers engage with gaps in literary texts. I will ultimately argue that capturing the manifestations of entangled histories of imperialism in works by these authors and in their reception can be approached through comparative methods that are based not on comparison of fixed national literatures and cultures, but on a comparison of incommensurable but still linked reading positions, which are incommensurable due to their differing positions in the hierarchical legacies of imperialism.

## *Totentanz* and Graveyard Poetry: How To Grasp the Baltic German Reception of English Literature and Culture

**Kairit Kaur** (University of Tartu / Tallinn University Library)

Writing my theses “Dichtende Frauen in Est-, Liv- und Kurland, 1654–1800. Von den ersten Gelegenheitsgedichten bis zu den ersten Gedichtbänden” (*Poetry writing women in Estonia, Livonia and Courland, 1654–1800. From the first occasional poems to the first poetry collections*, Tartu 2013), I encountered the interesting phenomenon of a Baltic German occasional poem published in Tallinn in 1759 that might have been inspired by the English graveyard poetry that was popular at the time in Western Europe and in Russia. There was, however, no research into the reception of English literature in 18th-century Estonia. When I started work as a specialist in old books at the Tallinn University Academic Library in 2013, I got the chance to catalogue subclass XII (poetry and drama) of the library of the Estonian Literary Society, a Baltic German learned society founded in 1842. In addition to Baltic German poetic and dramatic works it contains many works of mostly Western European literature, primarily German, but also French and English, and – to a lesser extent – Italian, Spanish and Scandinavian. As a researcher, my aim is to investigate how world literature came to Tallinn and Estonia, combining history of books and literary history. When and in what ways did English literature come to Estonia? What was read in original languages and what reached the Baltic German reader via German translation? Who possessed English literature and how did it shape the local literature? Which part of it reached later Estonian national literature and which did not, and why? In my presentation I would like to describe and discuss my first findings, taking subclass XII as the starting point.

## The Model of Entanglement and Change in Literary History

**Martin Klöker** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre)

In her essay “Überlegungen zu einer Literaturgeschichte als Verflechtungsgeschichte”, Annette Werberger recently made clear that models of entangled history (shared / entangled history, *histoire croisée*) are very well suited for writing a new literary history that satisfies current needs. As awareness of the impossibility of writing a one-dimensional national or linguistic literary history grows in parallel with globalization, the interweaving model is appropriate because it allows the national reference framework to be overcome and the focus instead to be on multipolar transnational relations.

Thus, the model points towards both the comparative approach and models of cultural transfer and cultural exchange, by incorporating and supplementing their results as partial aspects. As Werberger has shown, the effects of various impulses from the cultural sciences (with postcolonial studies), spatial research, and network research (with material culture) are added. The combination of the different aspects is, of course, more than just merely side-by-side additive, as it gains new insights through the multi-perspective demonstration of the relationships of different structures.

The interweaving model appears to be extremely helpful for the literary history of multilingual and multi-ethnic spaces, since it not only transcends national fixations with state, ethnic or linguistic definition, but also reveals the manifold entanglements through structures of relationships, interactions and more. Werberger has sketched the example of Galicia, but a transfer to the Baltics is not difficult.

The processes of change in literary history, from epochal structural change to everyday changes, characterize the shape of the literature as a whole and of the single text, and, as a rule, they appear differently when viewed from a global perspective rather than from a local one. Therefore, the suitability of the interlacing model for the description and analysis of such conversion processes is examined in the lecture. The question is what performance is to be expected and where the limits of an orientation to this model lie.

## Hemingway's Expats: The Impact of Place on Cultural Performance

**Jamie Korsmo** (Georgia State University / Paris-Saclay University)

This paper will examine several key texts by the noted American author Ernest Hemingway, specifically those dealing with transnational themes, in order to identify how Hemingway constructed a representative American national identity that is illustrated in his characters through various modes of behaviour and cultural performance, which can include any variety of communicative actions such as verbal interactions or body language. I am interested in looking at how place affects performance and ultimately shapes identity, leading to the conclusion that even Hemingway's constructions are a performance of a place, whether consciously constructed or not. Once American writers had begun to make a name for themselves, expatriation became an important factor in American nationalism because Americans were travelling abroad, interacting with other cultures, and bringing these experiences home with them. And, of course, these interactions seeped into the literature of the time, most notably with Henry James' wealthy American expats, and continuing into the Lost Generation writing of authors like Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. This paper will investigate the cultural intersections that emerge as a result of transnational encounters in several of Hemingway's works, specifically *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Moveable Feast*, so as to interpret various cultural performances as they are made clear through repetition, and as they function to construct a kind of national/transnational American identity via his characters through these repeated performances. This project should shed some light on the importance of Europe in the formation of American identity and what kind of cultural legacy emerged from the interaction between the two regions. I am particularly interested in how Hemingway performs his place (by choosing it, by leaving it, by feeling bound to it, by bringing it with him, by incorporating it into his writing, etc.), what choices he makes in doing so, and how this reflects in the ways his characters perform their places.

## Entangled Dramatic Art and Entangled Memory: Examples from Estonian Plays and Stage

**Piret Kruuspere** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre)

Dramatic art and theatre can both be called entangled cultural phenomena by nature, as they actualize borders, intersections and transfers between text and performance. Thus historical and theoretical study of dramatic literature and theatrical art could focus on the combinations, variations and interwoven patterns of written or print culture and playing culture, a notion that has been proposed by Willmar Sauter.

I am interested in what is called Estonian memory theatre for how it treats and works through collective traumatic experiences of the national historical past. The corresponding examples include dramatic works by the playwrights Rein Saluri and Madis Kõiv, and by the stage director Merle Karusoo. The stage interpretations or readings of their texts will be taken from translations and productions abroad in Finland, Lithuania and Austria and those on the stage of local Russian drama theatre, and these will be compared. This will let me refer to how the texts act in different cultural contexts and let me experience the different reception of theatre artists and audiences.

There will also be an investigation of works by the Irish playwright Brian Friel on the Estonian stage. Asking why some cultures like Irish or Polish culture deal with recall of the past more profoundly and possess long-lasting social memory, Peter Burke has formulated a hypothesis about the ability of historical winners to forget, and the eagerness to remember of those who have experienced attempts from the outside to destroy their historical and cultural roots. I will ask how drama and theatre act within culture as the mood of both memory and the healing process, and how, for instance, Irish drama texts could be integrated into or compared to the discourse of Estonian memory theatre. Or perhaps this phenomenon could even be called a theatre of entangled memory? And how would it relate to the possible creation of an emotional or aesthetic community within the audience (Erika Fischer-Lichte)?

## Against Hybridity

**Eneken Laanes** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre / Tallinn University)

In reflecting on the condition of exile, Edward Said has argued that the minority position characteristic of it offers an ethical possibility of secular criticism that looks at the ideologies of hearth and home from the position of what these ideologies exclude and tries to replace the biological ties of filiation with affiliative social bonds. In his novels Russian Estonian writer Andrei Ivanov, one of the most talented and prolific contemporary author in Estonia, goes further and rejects the possibility of affiliation because of the ways in which affiliative communities try to reproduce filiation by restoring authority and start to functioning hegemonically in the same way filiative ones do. This paper explores how Ivanov makes reference to T. S. Eliot and Salman Rushdie to reject cultural models of hybridity and to develop his metaphors of broken lineages and impossible affiliations.

## Russians Exiles in Interwar Paris – An Example of Cultural Cross-Fertilization?

**Diana Mistreanu** (University of Luxembourg / Université Paris-Est)

The Bolshevik Revolution functioned as a catalyst that forced the Russian cultural elite into exile. Indeed, a considerable part of the country's intelligentsia and aristocracy sought refuge in Paris and became what Maria Rubins calls "the Russian Montparnasse" (2015), which was a numerically important and ideologically diverse, yet coherent, community of intellectuals and writers whose aim was to preserve and perpetuate pre-1917 Russian culture abroad during what they thought would be a short-term exile. However, because of émigré myth-making on the one hand, and Soviet ideological taboos on the other, the rapport between this community and its host country was largely neglected, as Leonid Livak highlights (2010). Therefore this paper has a double aim in its attempt to shed light upon what Livak considers to be a gap in Russian exile studies, and do justice to the reciprocity of Franco-Russian cultural exchange. In the first part, we will examine the historical, political and cultural context in which the interwar Russian Montparnasse crystallized. Focusing on its evolution in the broader national and international context, from the dawn of the Russian Revolution to its dissolution at the capitulation of France to Germany in 1940, we will analyse the self-image of the exiles, arguing that this self-image mediated their relation with their host country and their perception of it, and also resulted in misleading interpretations of their experience abroad. Though "the émigré intelligentsia left as much of a mark on the cultural life of its adoptive land as the French intelligentsia did on the creative activity of Russian exiles" (Livak, 2010), little academic attention has been paid to the impact the exiles had on French culture. Therefore the second part of our paper will discuss the results of ongoing research into the different methodological frames of analysis used for this cultural exchange, in order to find the most suitable conceptualizing model for the study of this particular intercultural interaction.

## Re-Entangling the Cisnational State: Vladimir Vertlib in Lithuania and Austria

**Edward Muston** (Beloit College)

As theories of transnationalism and investigations of transnational literature have flourished in German Studies in recent years, there has been a tendency to imagine a world or perhaps a Europe where fixed national borders disappear and national identities dissolve. Through increased European integration, and exposure to linguistic, ethnic, and cultural others, traditional forms of German and Austrian national identity were imagined as being on the path to obsolescence, as hybrid identities, dual citizenships, and plural cultures replace the community that was imagined as homogenous and as historically and geographically stable. Current events clearly show that not only are we a long way from leaving the nation behind completely, but conventional transnational thinking actually empowers its opposite. Indeed, new forms of reactionary, identitarian nationalism are ascendant rather than endangered in German-speaking countries, just as they are through much of Europe. In my paper, I explain my term cisnationalism as accounting for how these groups are enjoying such success by crafting a novel response to our thoroughly transnational world. I show how these groups consistently deploy nostalgic ideas of a homogenous nation united through shared history, language, and culture in order to advance an agenda of ethnopluralism. In an analysis of vignettes in Vladimir Vertlib's volume *Ich und die Eingeborenen* and of his novels *Zwischenstationen* and *Das besondere Gedächtnis der Rosa Masur*, I explore the way Vertlib portrays "foreign" cisnational structures as a way of drawing attention to the actual complexity of Austrian society, a reality so frequently denied. I argue that reactionary cisnationalism, as dangerous and dispiriting as it is, provides an essential antithesis to simple transnational or postnational structures, and is thus a necessary detour on the path to theories of entanglement.

## What Do We See Differently When We Adopt a Relational Perspective?

**Piret Peiker** (Tallinn University)

In one of his lectures, Foucault formulates his understanding of power relations as entangled and trans-actional in these words: “unless we are looking at it from a great height and from a very great distance, power is not something that is divided between those who have it and hold it exclusively, and those who do not have it and are subject to it . . . Power is exercised through networks, and individuals . . . are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always its relays” (“Society Must Be Defended”, 29).

The passage illustrates how the relational “lens”, which is not just for studying power, but can also work for identity, memory, art and more, shows the world in a different way to the substantialist lens when used for looking at historical phenomena. Choosing NOT to look “from a very great height and from a very great distance”, but from closer to the ground, we see (a) “smaller” actors and processes that were previously invisible; (b) no static structures, since they now all appear as processes, as a result of which they may also look less stable; and (c) compact entities like nations, events or even individual people that appear as arenas of a multitude of trans-actions in their own right.

Given their epistemological kinship, entangled history studies could fruitfully engage with many relationally inflected approaches, such as the Tartu-Moscow school, Cultural Studies, or Relational Sociology. I may propose a brief example of the potential of Relational Sociology, which can be used to discuss the canonical “Warwick debates” between the nationalism theorists Anthony Smith and Ernest Gellner, where they disagree over the patterns of nation formation, and I use the Estonians as the test case of the argument. The categories “self-action”, “inter-action” and “trans-action”, developed as a meta-methodological framework of analysis by Mustafa Emirbayer, François Dépelteau and Peeter Selg, let me compare Smith’s and Gellner’s interpretations of how the Estonian nation is formatted, alongside an interpretation that could result from a relational approach.

## Estonian Red Exile Literature: Entangled Alienation

**Aare Pilv** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre)

The time after World War I and the changes it brought was a period of fierce development of new avant-garde ideas in both politics and culture. For some time it seemed that a vast area full of new possibilities had been opened on the ruins of the old culture and society. One node of these searches was the circle of Estonian literary people who lived in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. They had their own literary life that had common features with both the avant-garde literature in Estonia and different streams in the young Soviet literature which was very heterogeneous in the beginning, before the dogma of Socialist Realism came to predominate. The fate of this circle was tragic because they could not participate in the literary life of Estonia, while in Russia they were bound within their language borders, and then a lot of them were subject to the repression in the 1930s, so that their influence on Estonian literature in Soviet times from the 1940s was also limited, though they were reintroduced into the literary canon in 1960s and 1970s, but by then it was already too late as they had become museum curiosities. So this was a laboratory which had several inputs, but proportionally small output in terms of cultural influences and exchanges, rendering it alien in many ways. At the same time the utopian and creative potency of this phenomenon cannot be denied.

The paper tries to outline the literature of Estonian Red exiles as a limited model of an internally entangled cultural phenomenon that externally was quite disentangled from possible counterparts and contexts.

## Serfdom as Entanglement: Narratives of a Social Phenomenon in Literature and History Writing

**Ulrike Plath** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre / Tallinn University)

**Linda Kaljundi** (Tallinn University)

The early stages of Estonian national history written at the turn of the twentieth century were demarcated by representations of serfdom-related violence, with both historiographical and fictive and folklore texts abounding with stories and metaphors about the bloody repression of the Estonian peasantry, and of the no less bloody revenge and revolts the peasants staged against their Baltic German lords.

Although this victimising discourse capitalizes on the historical guilt of the Baltic German elites by following the Enlightenment critique of conquest, slavery and nobility, the representations by Estonian nationalists of colonial humiliation and violence nevertheless link very closely with the more conservative strands of Baltic German history writing.

In our paper, we argue that the representation of serfdom and violence offers a fine and significant example of how the Baltic German and the Estonian histories are tightly entangled with one another, not only through the social realities of the past, but also by the close entanglement of the two, seemingly very antagonistic, historiographical traditions.

Concentrating on Baltic German and Estonian history writing, both professional and non-professional, and also on fiction, we analyse the conceptualisation of serfdom and violence in the Baltics, and the relations between the two national versions of the region's history. In this way we try to answer the following questions:

What are the variances and similarities between the Baltic German and Estonian discourse of serfdom and violence (their story-worlds, terminologies, understanding of agency, justice, etc.)? How were these stories and metaphors of serfdom and violence used to construct modern narratives and identities in these two traditions? Which factors made the question of violence and serfdom so prominent in these texts: to what extent was it based on the socio-cultural context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; how much was it shaped by the earlier representations of violence to be found in the Baltic cultural memory;

how did these two traditions mediate the global discourse on slavery; in what ways did the discourses of slavery and violence reflect the relations between the Baltic German nationalism, the young Estonian national movement, and the growing Russian nationalism and imperialism? And, lastly, how many examples can we find from the history writing of the period or other media of cultural memory of efforts to construct the Baltic history without bloodshed, violence or cruelty?

## Understanding Without Borders: Central-European Features of Estonian and Contemporary Finnish Plays

**Ildikó Sirató** (Hungarian National Széchényi Library, Budapest / University of Pannonia, Veszprém)

I consider different angles and questions posed by some contemporary Estonian and even Finnish (!) dramatic texts, which were surprisingly easily to understand for other cultures, and could also be perceived by them. And not only in their own local region, but in geographical Central Europe, too.

The paper conducts an experiment to find the main causes of this type of entanglement between the three very different literary and theatrical cultures of Estonia, Finland and Hungary. There are some historical parallels, but clearly there are more differences, and there is a range of contemporary plays to consider, to say nothing of bilateral or trilateral theatrical joint productions, too. Examples could be taken from play *Goodbye Vienna* by Undusk and from *Eesti matus* by Kivirähk, or from the *Suomen hevonen*-trilogy by Peltola, or even the *Kokkola*-tetralogy by Klemola, and of course from some Hungarian equivalents like *Parti Nagy: Ibusár*, *Egressy: Portugál*, or others.

The conclusions could possibly lead us towards an understanding of some Central-European features in Baltic cultures, where there are German influences from the late 1700s that last at least until 1939, and equally the unifying effect of the newest European cultural area, which is supported by accessible transport and the transfer of stylistic models through forums of mass communication or literary and theatrical festivities and international events. We could consider this a new era of multicultural, though usually non-verbal, communication between former "national" cultures and the possible birth of a new type of European, or Central-European, entangled culture.

## Entangled Cultures, Entangled Species: The Promise of "Alter-Globalization" in Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* and the Denial of Reciprocity in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*

**Margarita Smagina** (Ecole normale supérieure, Lyon)

This paper will focus on two novels that represent human and more-than-human "naturecultures" – a term borrowed from Donna Haraway, referring to states which are complexly intertwined and interdependent. I will argue that the authors employ different themes and tonalities to build and explore this aesthetic network of connectedness. In *A Tale for the Time Being*, Ruth Ozeki restores and re-evaluates multiple connections between characters that inhabit different cultural and historical contexts. In this way, the writer shows her belief in the promise of a more ecologically sound, inclusive and less hierarchical process of bringing cultures and natures closer in infinite "mortal world-making entanglements", something that Paul B. Preciado called "autre-mondialisation", or "alter-globalization". Following on from Haraway and Preciado, Ozeki sees alter-globalization as a phenomenon that necessitates an acknowledgement of the reciprocal exchanges at work between various actors. Yamashita, on the other hand, creates a very different, darker kind of ecological "tale", which depicts utter ecological and cultural destruction as a consequence of the inability to acknowledge the interdependence of all living entities. My own argument seeks to build on this, suggesting that both Ozeki and Yamashita powerfully demonstrate that "culture" is always a site of entanglement and a cohabitation. The authors' urgent message is that whether we acknowledge or deny interconnectedness will define the feasibility and sustainability of our cultural and political projects, and possibly even our survival as a species.

## Enlightened Entanglement: A Worn-Out Project to be Renewed?

**Jaan Undusk** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre)

The first significant idea as regards Estonian national literature at the beginning of the 19th century was that this literature – as a future project – would be written in German. The author of this project, Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (1798–1850), an Estonian by birth and a lecturer in Estonian at the University of Tartu (1842–1850), was also the President of the renowned German learned society – the Learned Estonian Society – in Tartu (1843–1850) and a highly regarded practising physician both in German and Estonian circles. He was an admirer of the Estonian language and an opponent of the political strivings of the local conservative Germans. He wrote eight Estonian national myths in German which he claimed were exact translations of Estonian originals (no such originals are known to us, although the motifs are familiar from Estonian folklore) and which are now considered to be the cornerstone of Estonian national literature; the Estonian national epic obviously had to be in German as well.

This was a markedly “entangled” Enlightenment project based on the idea that language has nothing to do with the inner essential qualities of the nation. Every natural language is a more or less incomplete reflection of some ideal (divine) sign system, and a clever nation makes the better choice. Estonian was a small, dying language; German was a larger and more cultivated tongue with a promising future. To an Enlightenment thinker, the choice between them was clear.

The project was a failure because of the strengthening of Romanticist positions, according to which every mother tongue reflected the inner structure of the nation. In this context, Estonian literature in German represented a contradiction, or a cultural bastard (the positive value of a hybrid was not recognized). At the same time, Faehlmann’s project marked the beginning of a process which resulted in a well developed national literary culture.

## The Invention of Estonia: Lennart Meri’s *Silverwhite*

**Rein Undusk** (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre)

I would like to hazard a guess that the word “entangled”, which has been accorded a special accent in the title of the present conference, is purported to convey two sorts of message. First, it is envisaged as a kind of counter argument to nation-based literary and cultural investigation, and “entangled” is possibly set to contest a strictly national perspective of research, considering it far too limited and insufficient for grasping the temporal processes in culture at large. Second, I believe that “entangled” is intended to take a stake in literature as a synchronically intermingled element of culture, that is, “entangled” solicits us to read literature in its relationship to the entire discursive reality of a given cultural period.

French culture, which was one of the first to bring its national literature into full blossom in the modern age, underwent a typically modern experience in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the course of the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*, when it became clear for the writer of the French classical period that poetry and knowledge belong, in the modern partition of cognition, in fundamentally different compartments, even if their aims are not entirely antagonistic. However, this evolving dissension in modernity between literature in the form of belles-lettres and the scientific domain should not conceal the entanglement of the two at a deeper structural level of culture. Even if the aesthetic realm is *prima facie* operating according to its own specific rules, the integrity of the entire social discourse could always be attested to from a certain properly constructed viewpoint.

Lennart Meri’s *Silverwhite* (1976), which has been called a travelogue cum history book, on the surface offers itself as a scientific essay on the remotest past of Estonia, from the arrival of Baltic Finns from Siberia on the shores of the Baltic Sea in around 1000 BCE. The author’s argumentation prevails on a spectacularly rational basis and makes use of numerous references to historical and scientific texts, filling a list of ten pages at the end of the book. Naturally, the publication of the book was followed by

loud repercussions from historians and ethnographers, some of whom were rather disapproving of it. However, on closer inspection, Meri's text reveals its poetical substratum not only in that the text has successfully survived its criticism, but primarily because the whole brilliantly rational argumentation is underpinned from the start of the book by Meri's personal signature. *Meri* ('sea'), one of the oldest words of the Estonian language, as the author remarks on page four, is assigned a principal part in Meri's story of Estonia. It is the dynamic centre and the communicative principle of the plot. At the same time, Meri's text poses a real difficulty for literary critics because it lacks any stamps of fictionality, the fundamental characteristic of modern belles-lettres. On the contrary, the supposed poetry of the text is exclusively contained in the bold linkage of diverse historical, ethnographic, etymological and similar material, forming at times real cascades but being presented so convincingly that no reader who is not a specialist in the field can doubt the truthfulness of Meri's "poetry" about Estonia. In introducing one of his most striking claims, the idea that the *ultima Thule* mentioned by Pytheas of Massalia in his *On the Ocean* in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE should be located on the Estonian island Saaremaa, Meri states that previous geographers had been unable to identify the place precisely because they had so little grasp of the role of poetry in the course of history. This is not an arrogant overturning of values by the author, but rather it points to the collocation of different argumentative patterns in the text called history. In my concept, Lennart Meri's book bears splendid witness to how different types of text, linked to and usually read according to their generic rules, become entangled in culture and the human mind. In addition, Meri proves well that the concept of the nation, although narrow from a certain vantage point, can, if positioned rightly, be spacious enough to hold a universe.



