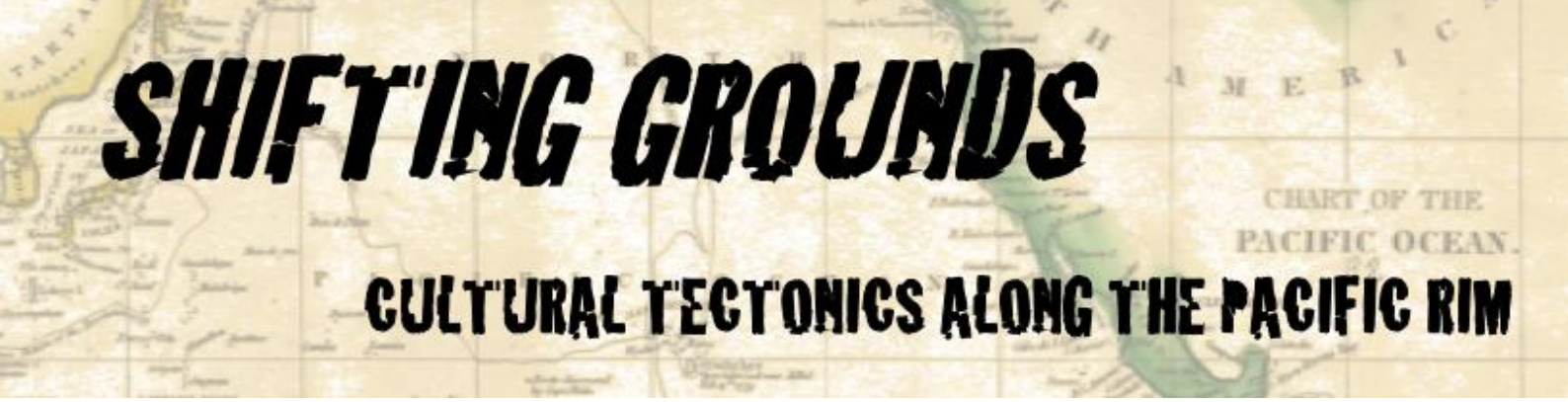

Book of Abstracts

Karin Beeler
University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George

Representing the Pacific: Adaptation in Ang Lee's Film *Life of Pi*

Yann Martel's internationally best-selling Canadian novel *Life of Pi* (2001) is the unusual story of a young man stranded on a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Ang Lee's Academy Award-winning film adaptation *Life of Pi* (2012) has proven even more spectacular in its cinematic display of how a human being and an animal survive and adapt over the course of a 227 day journey. Martel, the author of the novel, indicates that he always saw *Life of Pi* as inherently "cinematic" while writing the book and "hoped that a film would be able to capture that aspect" (Ashley Lee). While Lee's film addresses the themes of adaptation, cross species, and cross cultural encounters that are present in the novel's narrative, it also refashions some of these elements through the techniques and technology of film production.

Both the novel and the film use the Pacific Ocean and the cultural contexts of Pacific Rim nations (e.g. Canada, Mexico, Japan) as a space where Canadian, French, Indian, and Japanese and other cultures meet or collide. The Pacific Ocean serves as a primary setting for Lee's mise en scène in his film adaptation; the Pacific offers an unsteady place or shifting territory for a coming-of-age story where human and animal worlds collide. Pi's name (a short form of his French-based name Piscine) and his emigration from India to Canada reflect a water environment and the process of cultural adaptation linked to this image.

Ang Lee's film not only engages with the topics of adaptation and preservation in its cinematic narrative but the discourse surrounding the film's production also highlights the technical and cross-cultural aspects of the Taiwanese born American filmmaker's process of adapting a novel to film. Lee's *Life of Pi* relies heavily on CGI and 3D technology to present Pacific encounters in a fantastic space while still relying on cultural, historical, and geographical contexts that contribute to the cross-cultural and cross-species meeting ground in less than felicitous circumstances.

Film adaptations involve spatial reconfigurations based on the remediation involved in the shift from a novel to the world of film, but as Linda Hutcheon points out, depending on the adaptation there may also be transcultural shifts. Ang Lee has engaged with the content of a Canadian novel that is set in the Pacific; however the production of Lee's film involves the digital transformation of the Pacific, where "much of the story action takes place" (Truman). The film's images of the Pacific are also created from "a 6.4 million-litre, purpose-built tank in Taiwan (a Pacific Rim nation) (Greg Truman, "Taming a Literary Beast").

Since film adaptation has often been discussed in the context of fidelity or omission, it is worth noting that in their Hollywood production of the novel (Linda Hutcheon suggests that for Hollywood "transculturating usually means Americanizing a work" 146) Lee and his screenwriter David Magee de-emphasized some of its culturally specific Canadian components while transforming others, thus reinforcing how a film adaptation can offer a different way of framing diverse encounters in the Pacific.

Stan Beeler
University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George

Cascadia in Film and Television: Bioregionalism and Its Media Reflection

Bioregionalism is a term that was invented in the 1970s to reconceptualise areas based upon physical and environmental characteristics rather than the traditional cultural methodology of human political units. "A bioregion is a part of the earth's surface whose rough boundaries are determined by natural rather than human dictates, distinguishable from other areas by attributes of flora, fauna, water, climate, soils and landforms, and human settlements and cultures those attributes give rise to" (Henkel). Cascadia, one of the first bioregions to be proposed, covers the Pacific Northwest of the United States, Canada's province of British Columbia, and parts of Alaska. In some definitions it extends over the Rocky Mountains into Alberta, Idaho, and Montana and as far south as Northern California. Although the concept of Cascadia had its roots in regional ecology, it has been seized upon by other theorists as a means of defining common economic goals of the geographic region. The natural resources of Cascadia are considered as economic assets, and natural trade regions are identified as other regions of the Pacific Rim (Edgington 333).

This sense of ecological and economic commonality has resulted in an interesting effect upon popular film and television programs that are produced in the region. Television series and films produced in Vancouver, Canada for the U.S. market commonly use a diegetic location of the U.S. Pacific Northwest because the climate and geography are virtually identical. Since American audiences tend to prefer fiction located within their own political environment, a show produced in Vancouver is often presented as set in the American Pacific Northwest (*Eureka*, the *Twilight* trilogy, *Dark Angel*, *Dead Like Me*, etc.). Actors, writers, and production companies are drawn from the population base of the entire Cascadia region and there has been a tendency for newer TV produced in both the U.S. and Canada to not bother with disguising the location (Grimm, Continuum).

In this paper I would like to discuss the transformation of a bioregional concept into a North American cultural and economic artifact in the imagination of its population. Film and television cultural products are presented to their market as if the bioregion is a de facto political and economic unit.

Glenn Deer
University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Pacific Commodities, Photo-Poetics, and the Shifting Camera in Roy Miki's *Mannequin Rising*

This paper will address the innovative hybridity of photo-collage and poetry, a "photo-poetics," developed by Roy Miki in *Mannequin Rising* (NewStar 2011), and I will demonstrate how Miki's work can be productively understood through links to influential intertexts such as Roy Kiyooka's *Pacific Windows: The Collected Poetry of Roy K. Kiyooka* (Talonbooks 1997, edited by Miki) and Fred Wah's collection of photo-poetic collaborations, *Sentenced to Light* (Talonbooks 2008) and his essay, "Is a Door a Word" (2004). Miki's photo-poetics in *Mannequin Rising* explicitly interrogate trans-Pacific conditions by exploring public spaces in Vancouver and Tokyo that are infused with globalized commodity culture. His critical procedure foregrounds photo-collages that feature multiple views of storefront mannequins and Vancouver architecture, combined with subversive, ironic discourses that sample and question the commodity fetishes of advanced capitalism encountered through walking tours of Vancouver's Kitsilano and Granville Island neighborhoods, and additional tours of the Shibuya and Ginza districts in Tokyo. One sequence, for example, is titled "Scoping (also pronounced 'Shopping') in Kits." Miki thus addresses capital's transformation of selfhood and its multiplication of images and simulated bodies in both Canada and Japan, a trans-Pacific arena of accelerating shifts in global social life: as he writes in his recent collection of criticism, *In Flux: Transnational Shifts in Asian Canadian Writing* (NeWest 2011), "as the consumers who are so necessary to capital's expansionary processes, we are washed in the proliferation of images that present the dissemination of newly forming subjects in global scenarios, of bodies undergoing forced movements and expulsions as refugees in flight from homelands, and of migrants whose displacements and passages across borders have become central narratives of our time" (38).

While important scholarship on Asian Canadian photographic-textual politics has begun to shape a distinctive field, including critical work by Kyo Maclear (1999), Kirsten Emiko McAllister (2002; 2006), Scott Toguri McFarlane (2002), Joanne Saul (2008), and Thy Phu (2011), no substantial critical work has yet addressed Miki's *Mannequin Rising*.

Miki's work is productively situated within a tradition of the politicized "photoglyph," or inscribed photograph, as theorized by Fred Wah in "Is a Door a Word" (*Mosaic* 2004) and Roy Kiyooka, in "Notes towards a Book of Photoglyphs" (*Capilano Review* 1990). As Wah writes, the photoglyph is "The commotion at that hyphen between image and text […] sustained by layers of reference, a whole life, including, in [Kiyooka's] case, a fingerprinted racialized life" (*Mosaic* 46-47).

Wah and Kiyooka's concept of the critical photoglyph is also usefully allied with Walter Benjamin's earlier explorations of the revolutionary and often paradoxical role of the camera in his "A Little History of Photography" (1931): as Benjamin illustrates, the camera is an epistemic threat and a solution, for it both multiplies excessive and disorienting information and provides a means of managing it. The epistemological power of the camera is revolutionary, for it is capable of revealing the "optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis […] reveal[ing] in this material physiognomic, image worlds which dwell in the smallest things – meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding

place in waking dreams" (512). With the massive proliferation of images, Benjamin emphasizes the importance of contextual inscriptions: "The camera is getting smaller and smaller, ever readier to capture fleeting and secret images whose shock effect paralyzes the associative mechanisms in the beholder. This is where inscription must come into play, which includes the photography of the literalization of the conditions of life, and without which all photographic construction must remain arrested in the approximate" (527). Miki's manipulation of the photographs of Vancouver and Tokyo can be productively framed by Benjamin's theorization of inscriptions.

Finally, this paper will consider how Miki exemplifies the self-conscious reader of his photography both through textual inscription, and also through his essential montage instrument: it is the software of "Photoshop" that permits the manipulation of the images and allows the poet-montage creator to blend his images seamlessly and to shift the "ground" of the camera. Miki's "Scoping" in Kitsilano entails an ironic form of West Coast "photoshopping," yet it resists facile consumerism. As Miki writes, with restrained sarcasm and even resignation, "What in the / spectrum of still shots came // Off as fake and artificial as a / wily summer breeze wafting / though the montage of frames? // We are consumers get used to / it we are here because you were // there and there is always a here" (13).

Jeffrey Geiger
University of Essex, Colchester

Kodachrome and Pacific Tourism: Spectacles of the Real

This paper looks at nonfiction colour films of the 1930s, when wealthy U.S. travelers embarked in unprecedented numbers on pleasure cruises around the world. Rarely screened publicly, these films offer not only unprecedented views of Pacific colonial, trade, and tourist sites, but reveal both the fixities and cosmopolitan flows of cultural, national, and imperial self-making in the midst of the travel encounter. I draw here on Jonathan Lamb's notion of the voyager's 'sublime' (which he bases on Cook's voyages), arguing that, in (re)constructing the sublime through moving colour images, the picture record not only served to heighten experience but could also constitute the experience of travel (and thus of the world). The technologizing of the tourist gaze through the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as Tom Gunning has argued, formed part of the widespread technologizing of perception itself. Indeed, Martin Heidegger referred in 1938 to the emergence of Weltbild (world picture), stating: "when understood essentially, [world picture] does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as a picture." I focus on amateur colour movies, then, not only as new media of the 1930s but as complex artefacts of a process of mediating modern global vision.

These nonfiction images of Pacific sites further suggest shifting perceptions and expectations of realism that came with the popular use of amateur colour stock (the user-friendly Kodachrome products first appeared in 1935). Drawn from various archives, this colour footage has barely been seen, no less critically examined for the ways it sheds light on the cultural habits and attitudes of Americans just before the Second World War, on the cusp of the 'American Pacific' era and the establishment of the U.S. as global superpower. What these films reveal, I suggest, is the very duality of modern cosmopolitanism itself: travelers both come into contact, record, and 'know' an 'other' while engaging with a history of media and representation (colour illustration, photographic technology, the travelogue) that together shared intimate ties to the expansion and marketing of empire.

Otto Heim
University of Hong Kong

Beyond the Rim: Redrawing Boundaries in Pacific Theater

In the past twenty years, writers and scholars from the Pacific have increasingly challenged the dominant definition of their region in terms of the 'Pacific Rim' as a view which subsumes the Pacific Ocean and the lives it sustains to the interests of continental powers bordering the region. As a defining (framing) concept, the Pacific Rim paradoxically excludes what it contains, the island world of Oceania, disregarding it, in Epeli Hau'ofa's memorable phrase, as if it were "the hole in the doughnut" (13). Against a view of Pacific Islands as tiny and isolated specks of land in a largely unpopulated sea, destined to serve as bases for resource extraction, military installations and tourist ventures, Hau'ofa and others have championed a Pacific Studies agenda that conceives of Oceania as a vast and intricately connected world, shaped by long histories of settlement and mobility and sustained by a cultural legacy of ecological stewardship and negotiating fluid boundaries. Yet the formation of a twenty-first-century Trans-Pacific Partnership and responses to it in the Asia-Pacific region, still largely leaving out the island states of the Pacific, demonstrate the abiding hegemonic appeal and power of Pacific Rim discourse in economic (and geopolitical) contexts. Meanwhile, as Teresia Teaiwa notes, the empowerment rationale of (indigenous) Pacific Studies, while articulating alternative values and methodologies for social science research, so far falls short of developing strong connections with wider networks of genuinely decolonizing scholarship and world making (115-16).

In this paper, I will explore the ways in which Pacific drama and theater can contribute to the shaping of a perspective and a vision of a Pacific world 'beyond the rim,' by attending to the cross-cultural conditions of the life of island societies themselves as well as their connections and engagement with globality at large. For this, I intend to consider how plays by Pacific writers in text and performance stage and interpret such relations by drawing, negotiating, and redrawing boundaries, of gender and kinship, culture and language, tradition and modernity. Looking at examples from various parts of Oceania, I will try to identify the social imaginaries they project and address their relevance to communities for which, as Joakim Peter says of Chuuk islanders, the horizon "is no longer 'out there' [but] now at home" (266).

Susan Ingram
York University, Toronto

Refashioning Vancouver on the Post-Pacific Rim: Agora as Soft Glass

The North American Pacific Rim as it existed in the last two decades of the twentieth century consisted of dystopic postmodern commonplaces installed along an arc running, as Alan Liu has identified, "up from La Jolla through Anaheim, Hollywood, Silicon Valley, Bill Gates's or David Lynch's Washington, to William Gibson's Vancouver" ("Remembering the Spruce Goose: Historicism, Postmodernism, Romanticism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.1, Winter 2003: 263). In this essay, which later became a chapter of *Local Transcendence: Essays on Postmodern Historicism and the Database*, Liu, who is located in the midst of the territories he analyzes in the Department of English at the University of Santa Barbara, explores the consequences of the North American Pacific Rim having become "the commonplace of the postmodern world" (263). A decade later, with postmodernism having become the stuff of museum exhibitions and declared officially over, I propose to examine one of those commonplaces via its literary fiction and non-fiction from the first decade of the twenty-first-century that can help us understand both what happened to the dystopic postmodern Pacific Rim and how it morphed into a much kinder, warmer, and fuzzier version of *Blade Runner* and, by extrapolation, what happened to postmodernism.

Specifically, I will set the Vancouver that gave rise to William Gibson's dystopic postmodern cyberpunk imaginary against the Vancouver in Douglas Coupland's 2000/2009 *City of Glass*, Lisa Robertson's 2003/2006 *Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office of Soft Architecture*, and the 2008 *Vancouver Matters*. These three collections of short essays and photographs all grapple with the changes Vancouver experienced after Expo '86 and try to understand how the city became such an urban poster-child that it could get a movement named after it. "Vancouverism" is the designation that architectural critic Trevor Boddy has popularized to refer to the form of mixed-use, vertical urban density that began to be popular in Vancouver beginning in the late 1980s. Contrasting the skinny glass skyscrapers that have come to perch on top of a commercially oriented base radiating out from Vancouver's downtown with the more massive, less mixed-development oriented developments in Manhattan, Boddy has argued both for its livability and against the social costs inherent in the growing lack of affordable housing. Concomitantly, Gibson's own imaginary has shifted as well, becoming more mainstream and fashion-oriented in the Bigend trilogy of *Pattern Recognition* (2003), *Spook Country* (2007), and *Zero History* (2010). In this presentation, I look to identify the cultural tectonics that these texts make visible and see what their patterns can tell us about the larger shifts that Vancouver has experienced since the 1980s, going from a rather low-key node on the Pacific Rim to a recognized world city in the Asian Pacific.

Angela Kölling
University of Gothenburg

Pacific Voyaging Societies

In 2010 I joined the Aiga Folau o Samoa or Samoa Voyaging Society (SVS), a Samoa-registered non-profit organisation established in 2009, as volunteer. The SVS is one of several Pacific voyaging societies that joined seven double-hulled traditional ocean voyaging canoes that embarked on an 18-month voyage from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Tahiti, the Marquesas, the islands of Hawaii, and then to the East Coast of the U.S.A. and South America, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands (2011-12). The canoes or vaka are crewed by the Indigenous people of many Pacific nations. Initiated by Okeanos Foundation, a German not-for-profit organisation under the leadership of Dieter Paulman, the mission of the "Pacific Voyagers" is to reconnect with their cultural heritage, to revive traditional navigational and sailing methods, to provide overall maritime education, and raise awareness about contemporary threats to our oceans. Moreover, the voyaging societies aim to create a self-sustaining enterprise focused on leadership development and generating economic opportunities for Pacific youth. Such intergenerational and intercultural enterprise provokes a lot of challenges and raises important questions regarding the ownership and dissemination of cultural heritage and knowledge, forms of leadership and decision-making processes negotiated between the different partners (Okeanos, the voyaging societies, Indigenous elders, etc.), and, particular to my own experience of the cultural tectonics of the Pacific: how can literary and cultural studies contribute to navigate hands-on participation in such an environment?

Werner Kreisel
University of Göttingen

Current Problems in the Pacific Island World

The Pacific island world reflected in German-speaking geography

German-speaking geographic research in the Pacific island world started with the foundation of the German Reich in 1870 and the annexations in Africa and the Pacific. In the beginning geographic research was dominated by the concept of "geopolitics" with the ideas of "Lebensraum" and "Volkstumspolitik," later adopted by the Nazis which they interpreted as the supremacy of the Germanic race and their right to seize foreign lands (Karl Haushofer). Since then, the number of German geographic publications on the Pacific island world has multiplied. Today the centre of research is the problem-oriented approach.

Preventing the degradation of the ecosystems and the pollution of the oceans

Global warming has caused a rising of the sea level which is endangering lower lying atolls. The greenhouse effect and the temperature stress is leading to the widespread death of corals (coral bleaching), especially where the reefs are damaged by pollution. Today a whole carpet of refuse, the size of Central Europe, covers the North Pacific in a gigantic oceanic circulating current. Putting the oceans under national control makes economic sense for the coastal states but is counterproductive for the environment because pollution does not stop at national borders.

Further research into the El Niño phenomenon (ENSO)

Under normal weather conditions the trade winds drive warm surface water from the east Pacific to the west coast of Asia. There, clouds ascend and later rain down. Then, deep cold water currents stream in from the American coast. When the El Niño phenomenon occurs, the trade winds are stalled and the cold water no longer flows. At the same time catastrophic rainfalls flood otherwise desert-like regions. On the other hand, the west coast of the Pacific must contend with extraordinary droughts, famines, and forest fires.

Overcoming remaining colonial structures

The colonial period has not yet been overcome in the Pacific island world. The nuclear weapons tests by the U.S., Great Britain, and France have contaminated entire island groups. During the Cold War many islands served as military bases. Decolonization created mini-states that preferred a "free association" with the former colonial powers to complete independence. The insularity, the small population, and limited production capacities exacerbate the dependency in the same way as the export-oriented agriculture does. In compliance with the Law of the Sea Convention, every coastal state can claim an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of 200 sea miles in total. As a result of their insular characteristic, the Pacific islands possess huge EEZs. However, the states do not have the capital or the technology to exploit these resources themselves.

Preventing tourism as a "new form of colonialism"

Tourism promotes the "south sea myth" of blue water and happy people, which seems to be confirmed by the natural beauty of many Pacific islands. The fascination with Indigenous cultures is a further potential. The foreign currencies which thus enter the country are partly taken out of the country again; the consequences of tourism strain the natural resources and over-form the Indigenous cultures. The tourism industry is dictated from the outside just as the plantation industry used to be.

Overcoming ethnic conflicts, alternatives to rural exodus, and urbanization

The nation-building orchestrated under the auspices of the colonial powers did not take any consideration of grown structures. Therefore the island groups are ethnically heterogeneous, the plantation workers who migrated during colonial times and the white migrants also changed the ethnic structures. Conflicts arise especially when individual ethnic groups do not have equal rights. Population growth and the migration from the peripheral regions to the cities reinforce urbanization and thereby slums, ethnic segregation, and unemployment.

Iris-Aya Laemmerhirt
University of Dortmund

"We Will Never Be Americans!" Hip-Hop and Resistance in Hawaii

The Hawaiian islands evoke images of long, sandy beaches with palm trees swaying in a tropical breeze, hula dancers, and surfers enjoying perfect waves. However, this image was dominantly created by the thriving tourist industry after the islands became the 50th state of the U.S. Yet, this highly idealized and romanticized picture of Hawaii conceals the dark and tragic colonial history of Hawaii as well as issues of racial discrimination. In 1893, a group of white businessmen with the aid of armed U.S. troops, declared the former independent monarchy overthrown, thereby taking away the land from native Hawaiians. Moreover, within a time-span of a hundred years, Hawaiian as a language was almost extinguished by the colonizers when they imposed English as the official language in Hawaii, as they recognized the centrality and power of the spoken word.

However, until today, several native Hawaiians fight for the sovereignty of Hawaii. From the very beginning of Hawaiian resistance, music played a crucial role for Hawaiians to raise their voice and to articulate their concerns. Interestingly enough, some Hawaiians turned to Hip-Hop and rap, which "cannot be viewed simply as an expression of African American culture" as "it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world" (Mitchell 1-2). Claiming and adapting Hip-Hop to the Hawaiian culture, Na mele paleoleo (Hawaiian Rap Music) has become a vehicle for different forms of protest. The contemporary Hip-Hop group Sudden Rush, for instance, blends Hawaiian chant and English lyrics with Hip-Hop music, thereby creating a unique sound that explores issues such as cultural pride and sovereignty. Furthermore, by using the freedom of music and by creating their own transnational sound, Sudden Rush confronts its audience with multiple provocative ideas. Their song "True Hawaiian" is only one track in which the Hawaiian artists indict the American government for injustices against Native Americans, African Americans, and Hawaiians.

Moreover, by producing bilingual tracks, using both English and Hawaiian, the Hawaiian rappers recognize the importance of the use of Hawaiian language to deliver their message of cultural pride and non-violent resistance to the annexation by the United States, thus reclaiming a sense of Hawaiian national identity.

The paper will scrutinize the role of Hip-Hop in the context of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as it provides a language of resistance to native Hawaiians, fighting for self-determination. At the same time, it will be discussed how Hip-Hop is localized in Hawaii and how it works in this economic, political, and cultural dynamics. Furthermore, it will be argued that Hawaiian Hip-Hop has become an important liberatory discourse for members of the Hawaiian community, thereby shifting grounds and existing power relations.

Stankomir Nicieja
University of Opole

Beyond the East-West Dichotomy: A Case Study of Contemporary Taiwanese Cinema

The idea of the Pacific Rim has been variously applied as an economic, geographical, or cultural concept to describe the newly-formed networks of cooperation and commercial exchange in the Pacific Ocean area. In my paper I want to explore this notion as a viable alternative to the increasingly limiting East-West dichotomy. Although the distinction juxtaposing cultures of the West with those of the East is still popular and widely applied in various contexts (from popular culture to academia), it is not difficult to see its restrictive nature. Already Edward Said demonstrated how the artificially amplified cultural differences might distort mutual understanding between nations and be used for narrow political goals. Today, in the times of global communication, hybrid identities, and mass tourism, the deficiencies of exclusive reliance on the East versus West dichotomy seem even more jarring. By contrast, the metaphor of the Pacific Rim, which shifts emphasis on cooperation rather than difference, gains currency and appeal.

My paper will attempt to investigate different aspects – both positive and negative – of thinking in terms of a distinct Pacific Rim identity. I will base my observations on the specific example of the present-day Taiwan and some of its film productions. I want to concentrate on the ways in which Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese filmmakers cooperate and often succeed in devising cultural constructs that go beyond the simple East-West divide. Taiwan's case is intriguing because, in my view, it represents a modern example of what Mary Louise Pratt labelled a "contact zone" – an area of intensive cooperation but also clash between diverse civilisations. Contemporary Taiwan operates under a powerful influence of three countries: China, Japan, and the United States. Taiwan's relatively small population and isolation from the major metropolitan areas of East Asia, ostensibly render the country doomed to occupy a peripheral position. However, because of its unique political situation and remarkable economic potential, it often stays at the heart of East Asian politics. Most interestingly, in the sphere of cultural production, Taiwan manages to punch well beyond its weight, often assuming a status of an influential centre. In my analysis I want to take a closer look at three concrete examples of cinematic co-productions made roughly at the same time and which in various ways engage and try to unsettle the East versus West distinction. I will analyse Monika Treut's *Ghosted* (2009), Håkon Liu's *Miss Kicky* (2009) and Adam Kane's *Formosa Betrayed* (2009). Through a close reading of the films and presentation of the larger context in which they unfolded, I want to establish to what extent they can be interpreted as attempts at building a new, Pacific Rim cultural identity.

Nicole Poppenhagen
University of Vienna

Standing on "Shifting Grounds": Negotiations of Power and Gender in Transpacific Communities

Reflecting both the current political situation of global proportions and its regional history of imperialism, scholars from various disciplines have defined the Pacific region as a contested space. Indeed, people inhabiting the islands and nations along the Pacific Rim have long lived in an area not only shaped by geological phenomena but also shaken by the tectonics of political turmoil and cultural encounters – discourses amply described by scholars of transpacific studies. In his work *Transpacific Imaginations*, Yunte Huang argues accordingly that the transpacific region must be understood as "a terrain of geopolitical struggle and an instance of epistemological battle" (4).

In the nineteenth century, the position of both men and women on the Pacific Rim was directly influenced by the region's status as a contested space: as the U.S. tried to tighten control over this space on both the geopolitical and the discursive level, the introduction of immigration laws effectively regulated transpacific migration. As a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 the situation of Chinese men in the United States deteriorated, even in comparison to their already precarious status encompassed in their representation as both the "yellow peril" and, simultaneously, effeminate, weak aliens. That Chinese women were targeted by immigration laws even prior to the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, further complicated Chinese American gender relations and representations. U.S. imperial projects, such as the annexation of Hawaii in 1898, also directly impacted migration flows and Chinese immigrants living in Hawaii. In this historical and legal context, women are often regarded as victims of what Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford designate as "double colonization." In many literary works, women of Chinese descent leave China's patriarchal society only to be exploited by a colonial system in Hawaii as well as a quasi-colonial system on the U.S. mainland, facing oppression by both Chinese and American men.

Adopting a transnational and postcolonial perspective, I will examine literary works by women writers of Chinese descent who portray Chinese immigrants, and women in particular, not only as victims of the "cultural tectonics" and political struggles but also as agents successfully navigating the "shifting grounds" in the Pacific region. An example of this negotiation is Pam Chun's novel *The Money Dragon*, in which women use the legal framework resulting from the annexation of Hawaii to undermine the patriarchal structures that oppress them.

Ultimately, my analysis will suggest that in the literature written by women writers of Chinese descent, Chinese Americans embrace the "shifting grounds" that characterize the Pacific Rim and use the ambiguities, which are created by the fluidity, mobility, and even instability in the region: as they understand the tensions and transformations as productive constellations, they challenge and renegotiate concepts of power, gender, and race.

Markus Reisenleitner
York University, Toronto

Tales of Three Pacific Rim Cities: Representations of Los Angeles, Vancouver, and Honolulu in Popular Culture

The shifts in Pacific Rim geopolitics from decolonization in the shadow of two superpowers after World War II to post-Cold War globalization have reverberated in popular culture. Japan's economic developments since the 1960s, the emergence and crisis of the Asian Tigers, capital and people flows from and through Hong Kong before and after the Handover, and the "rise" of China have left indelible traces in the cityscapes of the region and have arguably re-defined imaginaries of "global" cities worldwide. With finance and property markets increasingly underpinning the capitalist world system, global city competition along the Pacific Rim has also turned into a competition of imaginaries of livability, excitement, and desirability – qualities that feature as prominently as economic, educational, and cultural opportunities.

My contribution is interested in exploring how these developments manifest themselves in the Anglophone popular culture imaginaries of three North American cities that have operated as portals to the Pacific Rim: Los Angeles, Honolulu, and Vancouver. Featured in a wide range of films and TV series since the 1960s, their imaginaries have been impacted by the very different ways in which these cities have tried to negotiate their respective geopolitical positions. Los Angeles has deliberately embraced the Pacific Rim role since the Bradley years (1973-1993) in its efforts to become a major economic powerhouse and global city (highlighted by the Olympics of 1984), inevitably leading to tensions with local African American and Latino communities, which have become a staple of that city's imaginary. Honolulu was cast as an exotic playground during much of the twentieth century, its imaginary blending seamlessly into the neighboring surfer beaches of Waikiki, while its precarious position at the border to the dangerous other of Asia was cemented by the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Consequently, popular culture has had to articulate these histories to Pacific Rim geopolitics by mitigating its history of colonial violence and de-emphasizing its exotic status while foregrounding all-American traits (especially the ubiquitous presence of the military) while maintaining traces of its desirable qualities as a holiday playground. Vancouver came to the Pacific Rim party relatively late. Earmarked by Expo 1986 and the Olympics in 2010 (or, some would argue, the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 and the Handover of 1997), the city has been re-imagined less conspicuously than its American counterparts. Often represented as generically "Pacific Northwest" in film and television, it has nevertheless established itself as a model of livability, property development, and gentrification.

Comparing the hegemonic imaginaries of these three cities in popular culture can contribute to disentangling the complex histories that continue to exert pressure on the specific forms these imaginaries take in defining them for global audiences. As such, popular urban imaginaries of Pacific Rim cities during the last decades, my paper argues, constitute a chronotype of globalization.

Markus Schleich
Saarland University, Saarbrücken

Haven't You Heard? It's the End of the World: Guillermo del Toro's *Pacific Rim* between Economic Identity and Cultural Alterity

At the turn of the century, then U.S.-Secretary of State John Hay declared that the Mediterranean was the "ocean" of the past, the Atlantic the ocean of the present, and the Pacific the ocean of the future (Wojtan). Following this assessment, what better place could there potentially be to host a "futuristic outer terrestrial monster film" (McCarthy) like Guillermo del Toro's *Pacific Rim*? The movie, which takes place in the near future, comes across as a typical sci-fi apocalypse: in 2025 humanity is under assault by the Kaijus, colossal alien beasts who rise from an interdimensional portal on the Pacific floor. To combat them, humanity builds the Jaegers, equally colossal humanoid war machines. But since the Kaijus attacks grow more aggressive and powerful, humanity's governments resort to building massive coastal walls. The four remaining Jaegers are redeployed to Hong Kong to defend the unfortified coastline until the wall is completed. Stacker Pentecost, commander of the Jaeger forces, devises a plan to end the war by using a nuclear warhead to destroy the portal, from which the Kaijus originate.

So much for the story. At first sight, it sounds like a simple monster film in which "substance simply does not matter in the summer blockbuster context" (Watercutter), it does not feel like a hatchery of subversion. However, this film could be read as a commentary on the tension between those countries that are tied together by the Pacific Rim. One could start to ask what the giant creatures represent? The Kaijus, somewhat organic creatures, come from the centre of the Pacific, attacking the margins, therefore functioning as disconnecting agents, who keep those states of the Pacific Rim separated. The Jaegers, who are giant man-built machines, were designed to destroy the Kaijus and bring together the different states.

On a more abstract level, these two very different creatures can be read as the two main drives of that region, economic growth and cultural independence. There are daily reports of increased trade of Pacific Rim nations, especially those in the Asian sector. But whereas there is a shared interest in economic growth, the incompatibilities of various belief systems and cultural values cannot be ignored. The Kaijus can be understood as embodiments of discordance. Their sudden appearance from the centre of the ocean makes them perfect carriers of an inherently shared alterity: they are aliens, but they come from within. They are living organisms and of an ancient nature, which compare well to those cultural heritages that existed long before globalization occurred. Their attacks read like attempts to remain a certain kind of otherness within that context of economic equalizing.

The Jaeger, as instruments of the humans' governments, are unifiers. As tools of political interests, they strive to create an identity that is constituted by shared economic interests. Their mechanical appearance underlines the somewhat unnatural imposing of capitalist and Western values on a variety of different cultures, therefore being just as destructive as the Kaijus. By building a wall to protect the Rim against the Kuijas, the Jaegers also decide what lies within the globalized identity of the region and what does not.

So if the apparently "good guys" win, it is not the end of the world, but of many small worlds, which are all absorbed by a constructed identity that leaves no room for otherness.

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Samoa's "Affective Value": Rhetorical Strategies in German Oceanist Discourse

The metaphorization of Samoa as 'The Pearl of the South Seas' in 1895 marks a successful shift of the focus of German oceanist discourse away from Tahiti. Together with it, sexual desire shifted from the Tahitian *vahiné* to the Samoan *taupou*. At the turn of the century, the Polynesian heterotopia of Samoa became a prominent object of German colonial desire. This desire was fuelled by a combination of two rhetorical strategies in colonial propaganda, first the eroticization of the archipelago and second the tropicalization of Samoa.

Foreign minister Bülow justified the acquisition of the cluster of islands by stressing its affective value ("Affektionswerth"), its value for German national self-assurance. A major concern of the German colonial administration of Samoa was the ongoing hybridization on the archipelago. The bachelors among the colonial masters stand in the limelight of this discourse. Their sexual behaviour led to results which were declared 'undesired' in colonial discourse. The administration wanted to prevent at least illegitimate offspring from falling under German jurisdiction. Colonial power aimed at excluding hybrids from German citizenship.

My paper shall offer results of a research project on the discursive construction of Samoa as a space of hybridity and its problematization in literary discourse. The analysis confronts oceanist literature with travel reports and anthropology, files from the German colonial administration, and German news coverage of Samoa. An archaeology of German oceanic affects lays bare fissures in a discourse which moves from celebrating the dissolution of the self on a Pacific island to the conjuring up of an abjection against spoiling the 'purity of the blood' in cultural contact. The thesis is that small events on the economically rather unimportant archipelago contributed considerably to the formation of an emotional regime of paranoia against hybridity in German imperial culture.

In my presentation, I will focus on two case studies of travellers to Samoa from the German life-reform movement:

- Carl Eduard Michaelis was planning to set up a life-reform colony on Samoa when he had to be expelled by the colonial administration in 1911, as he provoked local protests against his racist denigration of mixed marriages. My thesis is that Michaelis only frankly spoke out what was commonplace thinking in contemporary colonial discourse. The media in Germany reacted in defence of Michaelis, thus prefiguring Hitler's paranoid abjection of the so-called colonial 'bastard brood'.
- Erich Scheurmann is still famous today for the publication of his *Papalagi* book. A life reformer himself, he joined the Nazi party in 1937. My analysis will show that his views on the purity of the blood arise from experiences of his sojourn on Samoa in 1914/15. When he actively participated in colonial revisionism, he propagated the cultivation of an abjection against hybridity.

The racism of Michaelis and Scheurmann points to a dangerous liaison of colonialism, life reform, and fascism. I will analyze racism as an emotional style, governed by the cultivation of an attitude of abjection and designed for distinguishing the colonial 'master race' from the colonized.

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Becoming Oceania: Ecopoetics and the Planetary Pacific Rim, Or "Walking on water wasn't built in a day"

The ocean of global-capitalist dynamism remains riddled with antagonisms of political, territorial, and commercial conflict any contemporary version of the "Pacific Rim" needs to conjure. In an environmental sense as well, we all but forget the ocean while dwelling in an urban life-world that depends for its material well-being on, from, and across the ocean. As in long-standing Romantic tropes, the ocean becomes an alien presence of elemental, uncanny sublimity, at once threat and source of its own curative powers, as in deep-sea microbes that can eat up the potent greenhouse gas, methane. This sea of alien obliviousness can flip into site of waste disposal, excess, remainder, abduction, from oil spills to radioactive contaminants, as the ocean waters become filled with the heaviness of our military history and technological blunders. From the Bikini atoll atomic testing and indigenous displacement to the latest nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, we threaten not just the water and air of the region but the Pacific as planetary bioregion. The tsunami reminded Pacific dwellers from Sendai in coastal Eastern Japan to Santa Cruz in Northern California that the Pacific Rim is not just discourse or trope, it is a geologically interactive bioregion. On the other hand, images of oceanic interconnection would also move us towards theorizing a shared vision of "Oceania" as a site of transpacific and transnational solidarity. Transpacific ecopoetics (in writers like Epeli Hau'ofa, Juliana Spahr, Brandy Nalani McDougall, and Craig Santos-Perez) push towards figurations of a Pacific Ocean connected to a planetary vision of oceanic belonging, ecological confederation, and trans-racial solidarity.

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