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University of
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The Department of British, American, and German Studies
at the University of Craiova, Romania

University of Kent at Canterbury, UK

announce

THE 16th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND CULTURAL POLICIES

TRANSITIO, TRANSMISSIO, TRANSLATIO

Spaces of Transition in the Modern World

to be held in Craiova, Romania

12-14 October 2017

FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

Transition involves a passage from one state or condition to another, transformation, adaptation, alteration or metamorphosis. It is not a sudden process, but a lengthy and difficult one, whether wished for or imposed by new and challenging cultural paradigms. A transition agenda usually implies that authority is either suspended, or in crisis, even if for an indefinite period of time.

Transitional spaces are spaces which, by definition, epitomize the uncertainty of an existence caught in-between conditions, stages of development and worlds. Frequently used in architecture to refer to “environments acting as both buffer space and physical link” (Peter Senge), a transitional space is defined by William Bridges in his book *Transitions* as “a neutral zone” inhabited “between the ending of a previous state and the beginning of the new one.” Passages, pathways, hallways, and courtyards continuously negotiate cultural identities and meanings.

The anthropological concept of *liminality* introduced by Arnold Van Gennep and further developed by Victor Turner refers precisely to this transitional stage in which a person becomes

invisible and anonymous, suspended between two worlds. Paul Virilio considers that contemporary space is dominated by new technological and electronic devices that turn the traditional time and space continuum into a “speed-space” in which the human being is barely visible, if not absent altogether. This involves a chronotopic analysis which explores the re-configuration of the concepts of space and time and how this alliance negotiates to make transitions and translations meaningful.

According to Wallace Stevens, transition is “a name for something that never could be named.” A transitional space is, therefore, neither *here*, nor *there*; neither completely *inside*, nor *outside*; it is *betwixt* and *between*, which defines an unclear area placed between subjectivity and objectivity. In literature the narrative setting and time, the plot, the tone, and the development of character undergo changes that result in a dramatic reversal of circumstances. Iain Banks’ novel *Transition* (2009) tries to put together the unclear areas that float between fantasy and reality.

Thus, this chapter (sic!) provides a perfect occasion for a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary exchange of ideas. The conference hopes to bring together scholars and postgraduate students working in a range of disciplines and departments. Speakers are warmly invited to address the discourse of transition from one of the perspectives sketched out below. Also welcome are papers which look at this topic from other viewpoints concerning the past and present states of transitional space. Possible topics can include, but are not limited to, the following themes:

Geopolitical transitional spaces

- Countries as transitional spaces
- Representations of the global landscape
- Immigrants as transient figures
- Newly-created spaces/identities/boundaries as a consequence of geographical mobility
- Airports, metro stations, tunnels, footbridges, passages, corridors, transits, bridges, harbours, etc. as indoor/outdoor spaces of transition
- Borders and empty intervals
- Spaces of transition in/and the city (elevators, toilets, partially roofed courtyards, bridges, rivers, squares, shopping malls etc.)
- Nation and religion
- Shifting ideologies and political transitions (socialism, communism, neoliberalism etc.)
- Frontier culture in America and elsewhere

Literature as a transitional space

- Colonial/Postcolonial Literature(s) in transition
- Women’s Writing/Literary identities in transition
- Children’s literature as a space of transition
- Liminal characters on the literary stage
- Transiting and transgressing narrative boundaries

- Time and space intervals in the novel
- Literary representations of transitional spaces
- English literary genres in transition
- Literary ages in transition (poets/dramatists/novelists of the Transition etc.)

(Socio-) linguistic transitional spaces

- Linguistic mobility and its consequences
- Mother tongues and adopted languages
- Vocabulary of transition
- Tropes/Metaphors as agents of change in language
- Linguistic theories in transition

Cultural practices in transition

- Teenagers and the public space
- Education as transition from one stage to another
- Spaces of transition in the cinema/theatre/mass-media/television etc.
- (Non-)spaces of transition in virtual worlds

Transition and spaces of in-between in translation

- Lost in transition/translation
- Translation and interpretation in transition (digital communication)
- Transition(s) to modernity via translations

We are happy to announce our three plenary speakers for the conference:

Professor Stephen Prickett, Regius Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Glasgow, Honorary Professor at the University of Kent at Canterbury)

Professor Patricia Erskine-Hill, Professor of Italian and Medieval Literature at Baylor University, Texas (retired)

Professor Mihaela Irimia, Director of Studies, British Cultural Studies Centre, Director, Centre of Excellence for the Study of Cultural Identity, University of Bucharest

Submission instructions

Proposals (maximum 200 words) for 20-minute papers along with a short autobiographical note (maximum 100 words) can be sent to the organizers, Dr Elena Butoescu, Dr Andreea Bratu, Dr Alina Resceanu and Dr Daniela Rogobete, at craiovaconference2017@gmail.com by **1 July 2017**. The languages of the conference are English and German.

Conference fees

-participants presenting papers: 250 RON / 60 EUR

-attendance without presentation: 70 RON/ 15 EUR

The fee will be paid upon arrival. A selection of papers will be published after the conference. The conference fee includes the publication of the volume, the conference folder and badge, certificate of participation, refreshments during the scheduled breaks, lunches, and cocktail reception. The fee does not include travel expenses, accommodation and the social programme (to be announced).

Further information

A second circular will be mailed to those who have returned the preliminary registration form. Accommodation details will be available on the conference website (currently under construction).

If you have any queries, please contact the conference organisers at craiovaconference2017@gmail.com.