

## Southeast Asia CFPs

MLA 2020 • Seattle

### Southeast Asia and Australia: Literary and Cultural Connections

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**Short Description:** Collaboration between Southeast Asia Forum and Australasian Literary Studies. Explores literary-cultural connections between Southeast Asia and Australia in different genres, media, and languages. 250-word abstract and bio to Weihsin Gui ([weihsing@ucr.edu](mailto:weihsing@ucr.edu)) and Brenda Machosky ([machosky@hawaii.edu](mailto:machosky@hawaii.edu)) by Mar. 15.

**Long Description:** This call is for a proposed collaborative session between the Southeast Asia/Southeast Asia Diasporic Forum and the American Association for Australasian Literary Studies (AAALS) at the January 2020 Modern Language Association conference in Seattle. Given the geographical proximity and intertwined histories of Southeast Asian countries and Australia, we envision a session that explores existing and emerging literary and cultural connections between them across a range of writing, media, and languages.

Although there are numerous monographs and essay anthologies on the ties between Southeast Asia and Australia (and the wider region of Oceania) in the social sciences, with one exception there has not been a recent substantive study of literary and cultural productions that arise because of such connections. In Tseen Khoo's *Banana-Bending: Asian-Australian and Asian-Canadian Literatures* (2003), Alice Pung's edited anthology *Growing Up Asian in Australia* (2008), *Amerasia* journal's 2010 special issue comparing Asian Australia and Asian America, and more recently the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing's* 2016 special issue on Asian Australian writing, most of the work discussed is by authors of East Asian and South Asian descent, although there is some attention given to writing by a few authors of Southeast Asian ancestry.

We take our lead for this collaborative session from José Wendell Capili's recent literary history, *Migrations and Mediation* (2017), which traces the emergence and growth of Southeast Asian diasporic writing in Australia from the 1970s to the present day. Thus, we welcome papers on authors such as Hsu-ming Teo, Lau Siew Mei, Simone Lazaroo, Julie Koh, Dewi Anggraeni, Nam Le, Hoa Pham, Merlinda Bobis, Arlene Chai, and others. We also invite papers that focus on exchanges and collaborations between Southeast Asian and Indigenous authors and artists. Topics of interest include (but are not limited to): colonialism and race/multiculturalism, nationalism and national culture, migration and diaspora, critical refugee studies, transnationalism and globalization.

Please send 250-word abstracts and 100-word speaker bios, as well as any questions, to **Weihsin Gui** ([weihsing@ucr.edu](mailto:weihsing@ucr.edu)) and **Brenda Machosky** ([machosky@hawaii.edu](mailto:machosky@hawaii.edu)) by **March 15**. Please note that speakers whose papers are accepted for this session will need to become members of the Modern Language Association by April 7, 2019 in order to participate in the conference itself.

## Transmedia Engagement and the Performance of Place in Southeast Asia

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**Short Description:** How does transmedia storytelling transform the performance of locality and subjectivity in Southeast Asia? What are the implications of such performances for multidirectional critique? Submit 300 word abstract and short bio to Brian Bernards ([bernards@usc.edu](mailto:bernards@usc.edu)) by Mar. 15.

**Long Description:** In *Transmedia Television: Audiences, New Media, and Daily Life* (2011: 1-2), Elizabeth Evans defines transmediality as “the increasingly popular industrial practice of using multiple media technologies to present information concerning a single fictional world through a range of textual forms,” including practices such as “franchising, merchandising, adaptations, spin-offs, sequels and marketing.”

Added to the fact that transmediality has long been an essential feature of local cultural production throughout Southeast Asia—from literature and theatre to music, film, and the visual arts—are the intercultural, interfaith, and translingual encounters, aesthetics, and contexts from which such production has emerged. Episodes from the Hindu epic *The Ramayana*, for example, can be found in traditional practices of *hsaing wang* folk music ensemble from Myanmar, *Phra Lak Phra Ram* theatre performances from Laos, and *wayang* shadow puppet theatre from Java. Ramayana episodes have further been adapted, revised, localized, and updated for contemporary political critique in literature and cinema, such as in the Thai author Sri Dao Ruang’s collection of short fiction, *A Drop of Glass* (1983) and independent Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho’s *Opera Jawa* (2006).

The convergence of internet, digital video, and other participatory media has not hastened the disappearance of stage theatre and written literature but has merely expanded the field of cross-fertilization—in which different media forms become mutually imbricated and inter-referential—and has stretched the transnational basis for representing localities and subjectivities in Southeast Asia across a vast physical and virtual terrain. This special session seeks submissions attentive to transnational and transmedia storytelling in Southeast Asia, specifically in terms of how it transforms performances of “place” and locality and what the ramifications of such performances may be for a kind of multidirectional critique.

Please send your 300-word abstracts and short bios to **Brian Bernards ([bernards@usc.edu](mailto:bernards@usc.edu))** by **Mar. 15**.

## Settler Colonialism in Southeast Asia

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**Short Description:** How do texts from Southeast Asia illuminate the ways in which place, power, and politics shape settler colonialism in the region? Comparative approaches to genres, contexts, languages, and time periods welcome. Submit 300-word abstract and bio to Sheela Jane Menon ([menons@dickinson.edu](mailto:menons@dickinson.edu)) by Mar. 15.

**Long Description:** This special session of the MLA Southeast Asian Forum seeks to interrogate settler colonialism through a diverse range of Southeast Asian literary and cultural texts. We are particularly interested in texts that illuminate the reconfiguration of place, power, and politics in the region, both past and present. By “place” we mean the specific sites – local, national, regional, rural, urban, physical or metaphorical – which have been crucial both to the formation of settler colonialism and/or to decolonial efforts in the region. Similarly, our use of “power” and “politics” refers to the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality that inform how rights and resources are controlled by settler colonialism, and how they are renegotiated by political, artistic, and activist interventions.

This CFP is inspired by recent scholarly conversations about Asian settler colonialism and its implications in Southeast Asian Studies. While discussions of Asian settler colonialism has been most fruitfully developed by scholars such as Haunani-Kay Trask, Candace Fujikane, Jonathan Y. Okamura, and Dean Saranillio in the Pacific context, particularly in Hawai‘i, there are increasing efforts to consider Asian settler colonialism in Asia. In *Archiving Settler Colonialism* (2019), a recent anthology edited by Yu-ting Huang and Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, the editors observe the variegated performances of settler colonialisms across the globe and envision more robust future engagement with settler colonial analytics from different regional foci. Settler colonialism, as invoked by Huang and Weaver-Hightower, is “a distinct governing structure in which settler-invaders colonize by *replacing* Indigenous peoples on Indigenous lands” (3). Further, as theorized by scholars including Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, settler colonialism is enacted by settlers who “rather than ruling over the natives in a political hierarchy... seek to eliminate Indigenous peoples’ majority, to produce Indigenous lands as possessable...and to position themselves as the authentic and future ‘indigenes’ of the new world” (Huang and Weaver-Hightower 3). Yet, as Huang and Weaver-Hightower’s edition also attests, settler colonialism does not manifest uniformly across geopolitical and historical contexts, and settlers’ projects of place-making always unfold in conjunction with enduring indigeneity and other locally-specific geopolitical and social dynamics.

This session directs critical attention to how Southeast Asian cultural texts and contexts shed light on the particular settler colonial, immigrant, and Indigenous hierarchies that continue to inform the multilingual and multiracial dynamics of the region. Because “settlement is maintained precariously through the persistent replaying of settler myths throughout history and into contemporary times” (Huang and Weaver-Hightower 3), we are especially interested in the precarity of settler colonialism in Southeast Asia and in relation to diasporic Southeast Asian communities. We welcome papers that illustrate how cultural texts spanning different time periods and genres signal the shifting iterations of settler colonialism: the establishment and maintenance of settler-colonial culture and control; the assertion of Indigenous agency and resistance; and the constant renegotiation of place, power, and politics.

Please send 300-word abstracts and 100-word speaker bios, as well as any questions, to **Sheela Jane Menon** ([menons@dickinson.edu](mailto:menons@dickinson.edu)) by **Mar. 15**.

## Southeast Asia and the Oceanic

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**Short Description:** How are Southeast Asian literary and cultural texts conceptualized in the region's multiple oceanic and maritime contexts? What might other critical confluences like Nusantara, Nanyang, Indian Ocean and Transpacific studies offer? 250-word abstract, 100-word bio to Joanne Leow, U of Saskatchewan ([joanne.leow@usask.ca](mailto:joanne.leow@usask.ca)); Nazry Bahrawi, Singapore U of Tech. and Design ([nazry\\_bahrawi@sutd.edu.sg](mailto:nazry_bahrawi@sutd.edu.sg)) by Mar. 15.

**Long Description:** This roundtable seeks to add Southeast Asian perspectives to the transnational contexts and conversations on the oceanic. Through the work of Paul Gilroy, Kamau Brathwaite, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Engseng Ho, Lisa Lowe, Meg Samuelson, Viet Nguyen, Janet Hoskins, and Alice Te Punga Somerville (among many others), the oceanic has emerged both as an imaginary and a critical framework that challenges national and land-based notions of literary and cultural studies. Attention has been given to specific sites like the Atlantic, Pacific, the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean. Hester Blum suggests that “the sea is not a metaphor” but instead where we must consider “the material conditions and praxis of the maritime world.” Thus, this roundtable will consider Southeast Asia as one specific site for productive analysis: these are seas that are the source of livelihood for so many but also subject to historical and contemporary, colonial and (post)colonial land reclamations and maritime disputes. These are also seas that have seen the transport of indentured labour, migrants, and refugees.

Our roundtable hopes to bring together scholars from a range of fields and areas for an interdisciplinary conversation about Southeast Asia and the Oceanic. Our discussions will take into account the region's multiple languages, regions, and nations. Each participant will be given ten minutes to address a set of interrelated questions:

1. How are Southeast Asian literary and cultural texts conceptualized in the region's multiple oceanic, archipelagic, and intertidal contexts?
2. What could other geographical imaginaries like the Nusantara, Indo-Pacific, Sijori and Greater China contribute to this study?
3. What parallels and divergences might other critical assemblages like the Transatlantic, Mediterranean, Transpacific and Critical Refugee Studies offer?
4. How have water bodies shaped Southeast Asian and Southeast Asian diasporic aesthetics?
5. What new questions or lines of inquiry does the Southeast Asian context bring to questions of oceanic cultural imaginaries?

We look forward to receiving 250-word abstracts and 100-word speaker bios, as well as any questions. Please send these to **Joanne Leow, University of Saskatchewan** ([joanne.leow@usask.ca](mailto:joanne.leow@usask.ca)) and **Nazry Bahrawi, Singapore University of Technology and Design** ([nazry\\_bahrawi@sutd.edu.sg](mailto:nazry_bahrawi@sutd.edu.sg)) by **March 15, 2019**.

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