

From Australia to Canada: A Conversation with Sneja Gunew*

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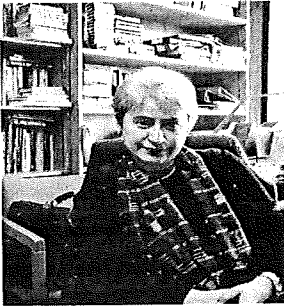
ABSTRACT

The interviewer, a visiting scholar at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada in 2001, met Sneja Gunew, an important figure in the fields of Postcolonial Theory, Feminist Theory, Critical Multicultural Theory and Minority Literatures in English, and discussed with her at length various issues centering on multiculturalism, postcolonialism, food, language, and identity.

KEY WORDS

multiculturalism
diaspora
hybridity

postcolonialism
flexible citizenship
transculturalism



Sneja Gunew has published extensively in Postcolonial Theory, Feminist Theory, Critical Multicultural Theory, and Minority Literatures in English. Some of her publications have been translated into Chinese and have appeared in the *Chinese Literary Monthly*. She is a professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of

British Columbia, where she is now coordinator of a project on "Transculturalisms Canada; Cultural Mingling: Between, Among, Within Cultures," a project that strives to include areas on the Pacific Rim, in America and in Europe. While a visiting scholar at UBC, the interviewer met Gunew and discussed multiculturalism, postcolonialism, identity and transculturalism. The interview, which lasted for an hour, took place in the late afternoon of May 2003, in Room 624, Buchanan Tower.

LEUNG: When did you first become interested in multiculturalism?

GUNEW: As a graduate student, I was interested in Anglo-Irish Literature and later discovered the early work of the postcolonial theorists produced by Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said. Spivak's early work was on W.B. Yeats—that is, she started out with Irish literature. In terms of the rise of postcolonial theory, Ireland was often seen as the first colony of England. Those issues, in terms of how the power differential in these cultures impacts on the literature, first emerged in relation to Irish literature. It

happened that I was working on these issues when I was enrolled at the University of Leeds in the early 1970s. I also did my MA at the University of Toronto in the late 1960s when the Québec sovereignty movement was very much a presence in Canada. After living and teaching in Manchester for a couple of years in the beginning of the 1970s, I ended up going back to Australia, a place where I had grown up. My own background came from the non-Anglo-Celtic groups (my father was Bulgarian and my mother German and I was born in Germany after the Second World War) and working within Australia led me to discover quickly that people with this kind of background were often ignored or their cultural input was being neglected. It certainly took me quite a while to articulate that situation in theoretical terms or in terms of academic projects.

I began with simple questions which became more focused after being hired in a university in Australia (Deakin) modeled on the Open University in England. This university, which was set up in a non-traditional way, had a School of Humanities rather than a traditional departmental structure. We also worked in an interdisciplinary way with a course-team producing many kinds of course materials for integrated courses, to be used both on and off-campus. My “enlightenment” began with a first-year course on “narrative.” One of the things that we were trying to do was to set up projects which would allow undergraduates to participate in their own research. I started to raise questions about migration histories and migrant literature in Australia at that time since some of the students came from that background, as I did too. I was also eager to learn more about these issues: What did we know about migrant literature and migrant writers? And what were the implications of that within an Australian cultural formation? Having found that none of

these materials existed except for a bibliography produced by a graduate student (Loló Houbein) in Adelaide, I came to the realization that none of the questions I raised could be answered. In a sense, I had to do a great deal of the groundwork and I discovered that other people were also interested in these issues. This was followed by a period of networking. I eventually gathered those people interested in the subject and did a lot of work. These efforts led to the production of the first comprehensive bibliography of Australian multicultural writers (Gunew et al. 1992) and the first critical study of such writers (Gunew and Longley 1992). The next step was to archive the works written by those writers and to collect their papers. It really evolved into a life-long job as I became more and more academically and emotionally involved in it.

In order to push this project to the next level, I was appointed as the first multicultural representative to the federal funding body of the Australia Council for the Arts, which looks after all the funding for arts organizations and artists. It was an important position that could only work if you had the proper kind of information input. What I did then was to set up within the Australia Council a mechanism of committees at every level to make sure that I was receiving input at the Council level from all the other levels and from different art forms. Four boards—including theatre, music, literature, and community arts—had been set up and there were “multicultural” representatives on all of them. In order for me to be effective in terms of making proposals for policies, I served the committee for three years, a useful experience for me. I stayed on for one more year as chair of the Multicultural Advisory Committee looking at all the different input. It was both an interesting and a frustrating experience. Although we did produce the first

policy for multicultural arts that Australia had ever had and worked very hard to establish this policy, it was a different story when it came to getting these policies implemented. In other words, it looked good on paper but what happened behind the scenes was often business as usual (Gunew and Rizvi 1994). At the time when I was doing that, I also wrote my theoretical statements about what it meant to include multicultural arts and artists in the national culture. How did it change perceptions of the national culture? What were the cultural politics involved? It was frustrating due to a kind of resistance to multiculturalism by the mainstream, which I had found to be very different in Canada where I had lived in the late 1960s as a graduate student in the MA program at the University of Toronto (the beginning of multicultural consciousness in that country). I remained interested in how multiculturalism was practiced in Canada. The multicultural model that Australia used was in a sense based on that of Canada. There were a lot of policies and attempts to manage postwar cultural diversity. This happened at a time when Australian national culture itself was beginning to be consolidated in new ways. There was, for example, resistance coming from those who tried to consolidate Australian literature in a particular model that derived from England, and, to some degree, from Ireland and Scotland as well. Those people were mainly focused on the Anglo-Celtic tradition and had difficulty in acknowledging that any other kinds of tradition existed. A lot of debates surfaced in conferences and journals. After a decade or so, I became tired of dancing on the same spot without any progress. I did, however, manage to accumulate funding to set up the first library and networks to perpetuate the work. By this time, a lot of people started to be interested in the project. Nevertheless, it never achieved the same kind of stability that it had in

Canada or in the United States. Multicultural projects in Australia did not enjoy the same kind of support as in Canada and the United States. In the meantime, I took a teaching position in Canada because I thought it would be interesting to revisit how these things were working in the Canadian context in the mid-1990s. I finally left Australia in 1993.

LEUNG: How did you perceive your move from Australia to Canada?

GUNEW: While working in Australia, I became frustrated because there was a lack of institutional support for minority writers and artists. It was an uphill battle for me to gain support, to establish links for these minority writers, and to change public perceptions. The situation differs in Canada since it is a settler-colony which, from the beginning, had two languages and cultures. As a result, people appear to be more curious about other minorities, languages, and traditions. They are an intrinsic part of Canadian culture and literature as a matter of course in ways that have never been the case in Australia. As a theorist, I am interested in these issues and feel I have more support for my research projects in Canada.

LEUNG: How did multiculturalism move to postcolonialism?

GUNEW: In attempting to theorize multiculturalism, I was very much influenced by postcolonial theory in the 1980s. The works of Edward Said and his concept of “orientalism,” for example, came about in the mid-seventies. I was also fortunate to meet Homi Bhabha in the late 1980s, and he asked me to contribute to his first anthology entitled *Nation and Narration* (Gunew 1990). In addition, I participated in an important conference in Essex with Bhabha and Spivak. Postcolonial theory attempted to raise questions about the formation of national literatures and this proved useful in trying to define the “supplement” (after Derrida) of multicultural literatures. What was

involved in that was very similar to what I had asked in relation to multiculturalism and how to talk about minority literature within a national context. Postcolonialism talks about the national context in relation to an imperial colonial history. All these themes were in the air and they cross-fertilized each other. It also came together with the beginning of critical poststructuralist theory. A lot of resistance against theory occurred as witnessed by the controversy around postmodernism. Resistance, in terms of the formation of Australian culture, to any other claims on that culture also took place. At that stage, people also did not want to hear anything about indigenous culture, which has now become a big topic in Australia. Postcolonial theory in fact continues to be a very important reference point for the work that I have been doing. The question was how do we distinguish between postcolonial cultures such as Africa and India from settler-colonial cultures like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand? A shift of direction occurred with an increasing interest in diaspora studies and then a change from diaspora studies to considerations of globalization. In a way, it made sense to think about multiculturalism in relation to diaspora and globalization because globalization gains its local effects *via* migration and diasporic affiliations that people bring with them from different parts of the world, attaching a national formation to a kind of global design. That brings about different kinds of consequences. It has a negative consequence in terms of fundamentalism, a kind of nostalgia for the culture which is preserved in a non-constructive way. But it may also serve as a buffer against nationalism. All these come into play in the kinds of work that I am doing in relation to looking at minority literatures and their impact on a national literature. Feminism has also been a factor as I became interested in

it at the beginning of my career. I therefore do not see myself as working in separate fields. For me, all these elements are integrated.

LEUNG: Can you comment on postcolonial multiculturalism?

GUNEW: I am now revising my book in which I look at multiculturalism in a postcolonial context (Gunew 2003). As a matter of fact, there are strong ties between multiculturalism and postcolonialism. We cannot divorce one from the other. The former tends to look at issues in a local context, whereas the latter deals with global contexts. Take a look at the history and pattern of migration as an example. Who migrates? Where to? When? These questions are linked to the postcolonial context. The connections between multiculturalism and postcolonialism have not really been made sufficiently clear. In my book, I attempt to show that there is a false distinction between multiculturalism and postcolonialism. The two “isms” are in fact intertwined with each other. The groups who settled in Australia and Canada are very much the result of a particular history of colonialism. The way we see postcolonialism has now been changed if we look at it *via* multiculturalism. Multiculturalism has always been, in some ways, seen as a poor cousin of postcolonialism since multiculturalism was not perceived in academic debates as having the same sort of complexity and interest as postcolonialism. Multiculturalism, in a sense, is often associated with old histories and “folk” artistic productions, while postcolonialism tends to be associated with cosmopolitanism and high culture. I think this perception needs to be questioned.

LEUNG: Any speculations about the directions in which postcolonial multiculturalism will go?

GUNEW: Why has a sense of cultural differences been more progressive in Canada than in Australia? Why did the

issues of indigeneity become the dominant difference in Australia? It has something to do with the history of colonialism.

- LEUNG:** Has your position toward multiculturalism and postcolonialism been changed after your move to Canada?
- GUNEW:** Having now moved even further to look at what has been happening in relation to South America, I was intrigued by how multiculturalism returns to the debate. In Australia and Canada, the official endorsement of multiculturalism has been completely undermined. Both countries had defined themselves in national terms as multicultural but in the last ten years in Australia (and five years in Canada) multiculturalism, as a term, has almost disappeared from official government discourse. The Australian Prime Minister in fact banned the use of the term multicultural from any government documents for a year or so. We now witness a different version of multiculturalism. I am always interested in mapping what happened then and what that meant in terms of a shift in cultural politics. In America, I have been interested in multiculturalism's link to bilingual education at the state instead of the federal level. California, for instance, tried to get education established in Spanish as well as in English. But that motion was defeated. Multiculturalism in the States is linked to this kind of specific battle. The recognition of the importance of Mexico to the future of the US surfaced in the last American presidential election. It certainly created an impact on multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is thus varied and links to particular concerns instead of being part of the national rhetoric. This phenomenon has something to do with globalization because there is now a recognition and representation of national cultures in terms of a globalized context. Multiculturalism in its early days was being used to establish a kind of global link, to acknowledge a global

network that functioned both inside and outside nation states.

LEUNG: How did you see your work on multiculturalism after moving to Canada?

GUNEW: It certainly changed the way I work. While working in Australia, I functioned as a public intellectual giving talks to groups and writing to different outlets. After moving to Canada, my work became more academic and theoretical. I now engage in a wider context, working with Brazilian as well as Canadian colleagues and doing comparative studies. I still, however, visit Australia every year and keep in touch with what is going on there.

LEUNG: Can you discuss your project on the multicultural translation of food, bodies, and language?

GUNEW: Before engaging in this recent project, I was instrumental in bringing Australian feminist scholars to wider attention through the two books that I edited for Routledge (Gunew 1990; 1991). These two books aimed to show how the kind of feminist theory being produced in Australia had implications for global feminism.

The project on food stems from the fact that it is easy to talk about multiculturalism through food. I then wanted to look at food in terms of cultural studies. How do we theorize the links? How do people perceive food in relation to a particular kind of identity? Food is traditionally associated with women. What does it mean when we bring all these aspects together? The project is based on a workshop in which graduate students and faculty at the University of British Columbia met over one term to discuss links between food and women's autobiography, food and the female body, and food and the representation of female identity. It was also closely related to the areas of hunger, eating disorders, starvation and famine, and to the way in which food functions as part of the national discourse with reference to food safety

and the genetic modification of food.

LEUNG: How do you associate food with language?

GUNEW: One of the interesting elements in psychoanalytical criticism is the association of food with language. One could argue that food and language are in competition with each other in the zone of the mouth. Lacanian theory, to some extent mediated by Kristeva, suggests that a subject first begins to form a boundary to the self in relation to 'abjection' so that the subject-in-process expels whatever is considered to be alien to the tentative boundary of the self. (It's never completely stabilized of course). The concept of the abject has become very influential. The most abject object, for example, is the corpse, in that it is paradigmatic of what must be seen as totally outside the boundary of the self. Food of course plays a role in all this. Some of the examples given by Kristeva (*Powers of Horror*) are how the child begins to understand what it is in relation to food, whether this food is the mother's breast (milk) or whether it is its inevitable separation from the mother, a separation that is manifested by the rejection of milk and other kinds of food. How that kind of relationship to food, in the sense of what we take in or what we don't take in, is somehow a threat to a "clean and proper" body, how this registers in terms of one's entry into the symbolic realm and language (or social relations). When one rejects milk as the first food in order to establish oneself as an individual, one symbolically rejects the maternal. It becomes more complicated if we differentiate between the actual mother and the more abstract maternal function. This has an important implication for language because of the "talking cure" in psychoanalysis. Since we cannot access the unconscious, we can only access language (language in the form of speaking or writing). Through language, we are able to access (to some degree) our unconscious

processes, what Kristeva refers to as the “semiotic” phase. Kristeva once stated that all writings are an encounter with abjection. Currently, I am looking specifically at the ways in which we think of language and corporeality in relation to people switching from one language to another. How does psychoanalytic theory help us to understand a process that many people in the diasporic context experience when they shift from one language and one culture to another, when they are already fully-formed subjects in that first culture and language? How does this phenomenon affect the body? How do subjects talk about this phenomenon in relation to the body? Shirley Lim’s *Among the White Moon Faces* is one example I discuss (Gunew 2003). It is a kind of violence which occurs at the corporeal level. In some ways, it shows the contradiction involved when these two kinds of subjects come together. Of course, this matter is a more complicated process since it might involve a paternal figure, the father, not just the “mother tongue.” Another example I use is the first volume of Edward Said’s autobiography (*Out of Place*) where he discusses the movement between French, Arabic, and two versions of English (British and American). When a father moves through this diasporic process, he is the one being abjected, suffering a decline in status and the language that goes with it. Other examples are Hiromi Goto’s two novels—*Chorus of Mushrooms* and *The Kappa Child*—which deal with language and its loss.

LEUNG: Can you discuss identity politics?

GUNEW: I resist identity politics in a fundamentalist version. As a flexible citizen myself, I am currently applying for Canadian citizenship. I have Australian citizenship but in the category of being a “naturalized” Australian. I became an Australian citizen because my parents were naturalized. An interesting term in itself, “naturalized,” right? I never really felt that it applied to me. I did not feel naturalized

when I spent twenty years of my life trying to change the national culture. Actually, a colleague of mine dubbed me a “portable ethnic.” I think that increasingly you have the phenomenon of academic intellectuals who don’t necessarily call one particular context or national place home. In fact what they are doing is “queering” what we think of as “nation” or “home,” “homeland,” “mother tongue.” All those categories are being questioned by people like that, who function across different kinds of global metropolitan centers. I am not sure whether that answers your question.

LEUNG: I was talking about diaspora, sojourn, assimilation (model minority), and citizenship. How do you situate yourself within a nation and a global context? It puts into question the idea of belonging. We are talking about the workers, the laborers, the Asians who came to the United States and Canada. When they gave birth to the first generation, they tried to assimilate as a kind of model minority. Whether they assimilated or were born there, they do not think their birthplace is in China or in Singapore and consider themselves as Canadian or American. If you are talking about hybridity or a kind of transnationality and a sense of belonging, how do you situate yourself within a nation or global context? How do you figure out what people really want? If we are talking about your students born here who are of mixed race, do they want to know something about the other cultures? Does it mean that they want to be in-between?

GUNEW: Because, increasingly, people have experienced that condition, it poses the question of the idea of belonging with a new urgency. In a sense, it takes away the certainty from what we have taken for granted, that if you are attached to a particular place for a long period of time, you have some kind of automatic sense of belonging. As people move around the world and have this mixed type

of background, they help articulate the ways in which belonging is a much more unstable category than we thought. And, in a sense, belonging of any kind is somewhat problematic and belonging particularly in relation to a particular piece of land is also difficult. As we know, it can give rise to all kinds of conflicts. I hastily qualify that since at the same time one has a great deal of sympathy for the source of indigenous land claims which are, to some degree, at odds with this problematized belonging because in this postcolonial context indigenous peoples often have a long history with a particular area which is very much part of their identity. In order to restore that sense of identity, the descendants of the colonizers have to return to a kind of legitimation in relation to the land. So it is not all that simple. I am saying that, in another way, diaspora or national diasporic trajectories have meant that people must have less confidence in those ideas of belonging than we used to take for granted. And diasporic (be)longings are used to mobilize certain kinds of nationalism. But I think it is not easy now to talk about belonging in an unproblematic way.

LEUNG: People have asked Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan what kind of category they want to put their writings in or what kind of writers they want to be classified as being. They claim themselves to be American writers. Do they want to stick to the nationality of being an American?

GUNEW: I think Maxine Hong Kingston's point is that she wants to change the traditional definition of what an American is. I understand her strategy. When you say, as a hyphenated writer in Canada, "I am Canadian," what you mean is that you want to change the current perception of what people think of as a Canadian writer. You want it to be so flexible that it includes the so-called minority or hyphenated writers like yourself. So it is a kind of strategy.

You have to redefine what is meant by American or American writer or a Canadian writer or an Australian writer.

LEUNG: Maxine Hong Kingston once asserted that she herself is an American writer. Does it mean that her origin as an Asian-American writer excludes her from being qualified as an American writer?

GUNEW: There is a whole politics around that. Maxine Hong Kingston's writings, for example, were not in the past included in regular courses on American literature. Things have now changed in the US and in Canada too. There is much more of an awareness that the term, American, would include someone like Amy Tan or Maxine Hong Kingston.

LEUNG: For cultural productions they won't include you in the category of American Literature, but they still think you are an American or a holder of an American passport.

GUNEW: Yes, but that is debatable too, that is why Japanese internment was such an important case both in the United States and in Canada. It showed that even if you have been a citizen for several generations, you suddenly find yourself deprived of that citizenship when something happens, when history takes a particular turn. So what does citizenship really mean? Of course, there is an awareness of and interest in the history of what it meant and means to become a citizen. Lisa Lowe's work is very important in this respect. Who is/was a citizen and who is/wasn't? What is the legal ground for that?

LEUNG: But as a flexible citizen, you might not enjoy all the rights of being a citizen within that nation.

GUNEW: In theory, flexible citizens do because they simply have more than one citizenship.

LEUNG: If you are staying here for a period of seven months the government says that you have health insurance, but if you are out of the country for a period of time, you can't

enjoy this benefit. With flexible citizenship, one surely enjoys something but will lose something.

GUNEW: Every country has its own kind of structures around citizenship. The example of Japanese internment clearly shows that it can be destroyed very quickly if necessary. So there never are any absolute guarantees around citizenship.

LEUNG: So a country might even forbid you from being a flexible citizen, one who can enjoy all kinds of privileges.

GUNEW: Well, Australia certainly allows dual citizenship. My husband is British and, as you probably know, within the European Community, a lot of laws have been suspended because they are trying to make it a much more diverse community and a different kind of entity. A lot of immigration rules have been suspended within the European Community. So it keeps on changing and is by no means fixed.

LEUNG: Can you tell us something about your project on transculturalism?

GUNEW: Speaking of flexible citizenship, I certainly felt for the first time that I was really part of Canada when I was asked a year ago by the International Council for Canadian Studies to be involved in an international project on transculturalism. The project was described in great detail in both the ICCS and on my website (<http://arts.transculturalisms.ubc.ca>). In short, it is an interdisciplinary project that has six directors looking at five different project topics (political science, history, tourism studies, cultural métissage and hybridity) related to transculturalism and Canada in a very wide sense. My involvement in the hybridity project is to bring together scholars from Canada, Australia, the USA, and the United Kingdom to look at ways of interpreting cultural hybridity. A conference in Oct. 2003 in Vancouver will discuss cultural hybridity in relation to areas of indigeneity,

“mixed race,” emergent art forms citizenship and globalization. Our focus will be on how artists theorize transculturalism and hybridity and how they come to terms with new ways of seeing culture.** Raymond Williams in the early 1970s talked about “structures of feeling” in relation to culture. He suggested that it is in the arts that one can get a sense of emergent paradigms for new social relations. We will ask artists, academics, and others involved in this project to discuss these issues. In addition, we have established dialogues between the Francophones and Anglophones in Canada, and with our sister groups in Latin America, both Hispanic and Portuguese.

LEUNG: Speaking of new writers, why hasn't Evelyn Lau's writing received much critical attention from academics? Her works aren't chosen as reading material for classes in English as compared to SKY Lee or Wayson Choy. Any speculations?

GUNEW: I write about Evelyn Lau in a chapter of my new book (Gunew 2003). What I suggest about her is that she represents a new departure in terms of the “confidence” (if that is the right term) of Canadian writers who come from non-Anglophone or non-Francophone backgrounds. While Lau is of Chinese descent she refuses to write about her “ethnicity,” preferring instead to mine the terrain of what has been dubbed “dirty realism” or urban realism. Lau writes about sexuality, prostitution, sexual relations but not about ethnicity. Critics have either seen her as somehow dissembling (if she's Chinese-Canadian why doesn't she allude to this? What is she hiding?) or they see her as representing her supposed ethnic group in rather seedy or shameful ways. Lau, on the other hand, claims her right as writer to choose any subject she desires.

LEUNG: As director of the Centre for Research in Women's

Studies and Gender Relations at University of British Columbia, can you tell us some of the initiatives, missions, objectives, and visions you have for the Centre?

GUNEW: Over the last years the Centre has been fortunate to launch its graduate program at the M.A. as well as the Ph.D. levels (in collaboration with Simon Fraser University). While the program is off to a flying start, it is important to strengthen and consolidate it in a number of ways. Continuing the tradition set up by the previous director Valerie Raoul, in particular, of establishing well-funded research projects, I perceive this to be a crucial means to support graduate students. I would like to see such projects harnessed more formally to designated themes linking them, perhaps, to the regular conferences run by the Centre and to use such themes as ways of targeting specific visitors who come each year. There are various ways in which the Centre might capitalize on the wealth of talent brought by such visitors and research themes might be one way of building on these as well as taking them in the direction of more formal seminar series, designed to be attended by the graduate cohort. In addition, I would like to establish more formal links with the many faculty associates of the Centre, since a crucial element in the new graduate program is to have an interdisciplinary group from which we can draw people for graduate committees. Here my long experience of interdisciplinarity, both in Australia and Canada, would be of particular advantage.

Finally, my experience in other countries means that I can bring to this position an international network of the kind which is increasingly useful in these times of economic curtailment. I have already explored collaborative possibilities with equivalent Centres in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and have some contact with Australia and New Zealand as

well as with Latin America. International collaborative research is increasingly a part of the new globalism and suggests new avenues for funding as well as the production of the kind of research which brings the university together with the wider community.

For the Centre's mandate, please refer to the website: www.wmst.ubc.ca.

LEUNG: Finally, what are you working on now?

GUNEW: I am trying to develop further my concept of a "stammering pedagogy," a note on which I end my recent book *Haunted Nations*. In the conclusion I engage briefly with Rey Chow's fascinating comment on the temporal disjunction between the theoretical (future) and autobiographical (past) impulse in relation to the "difference revolution" (Chow 2002). My claim is that the theoretical fuses, in the work of some "poet pedagogues" (artists who are also teachers), with the autobiographical to produce a "future history" or a theory which is linked with specific histories (both personal and communal but not in any homogenized sense). An example is Richard Fung's recent video work on the impossibility of a Chinese presence in the Caribbean (*My Mother's Place; Sea in the Blood; Islands*) or Brian Castro's characteristically self-reflexive and ironic "autobiography" *Shanghai Dancing*. The "personal" becomes a springboard for creating new theoretical and pedagogical paradigms. I link this to a notion of "academic performance" drawing on recent performance theory, that is, what is involved in "performing" theory. Continuing my comparative agenda, I site this within a comparative framework that moves from multiculturalism to transculturalism.

NOTES

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** The “Transcultural Improvisations: Performing Hybridity Conference” took place at U.B.C. on October 16–19, 2003. Built on the international three-year Transculturalisms project, the conference was focused on the notion of “performance” and examined métissage/hybridity under four headings: idigeneity; mixed race; performing hybridity (new art forms); and citizenship/immigration/ multiculturalism. More ample information can be found on the web-site [http://www.webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve home](http://www.webct.ubc.ca/SCRIPT/Transculturalisms/scripts/serve%20home).

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