

**Border Crossings:  
Translation, Migration, & Gender in the Americas,  
the Transatlantic, & the Transpacific**

**Society for the Study of American Women Writers  
&  
Université Bordeaux Montaigne**

**Dates: 5th – 8th July 2017**

**Venue: Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France**

**Conference director: Stéphanie Durrans**

To maintain a continuity with our previous conference (in Philadelphia, November 2015) on liminality and hybrid lives, we would like this first SSAWW conference in Europe to address the significance of “border crossing[s]” in the lives and works of American women writers. Such experiences have always been important to American women. Early diaries and travel notes left by 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century women provide us with valuable records of and about their migratory experience to the New World and their lives and experiences in America. Besides offering more records of such experiences, the 19<sup>th</sup> century also witnessed an explosion in travel writing, fiction, and poetry treating with travel, as growing numbers of American women writers could afford to travel across Europe and more widely. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more American women writers found in foreign lands a source of inspiration and creativity (e.g. Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, Kay Boyle, and Djuna Barnes in France, Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil, Katherine Anne Porter in Mexico) and some of them even made the choice to write from abroad. Meanwhile, women writers originating from other countries drew on their first-hand experience of migration, border-crossing, and uprooting to add to the growing canon of American literature (e.g. Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Shirley Geok-lin Lim). No study of border-crossing can afford to neglect the rich mine of writing contributed by Chicana writers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As pointed out by Carmen Tafolla, “[Chicanos] did not cross the border; the border crossed [them].” This was also true of many other women, moving into or across America. From such a perspective, crossing borders lends itself to the most radical strategies of subversion and defamiliarization. Last but not least, such writers as Toni Morrison explored the darker side of border-crossing by seeking to express and represent the trauma of the Middle Passage for whole generations of Africans, and the multiple dilemmas facing African American women down the decades.

The conference theme invites participants to explore the broad spectrum of possibilities generated by such cross-cultural interactions, as well as the challenge consequently posed to literary canons. How has this experience affected women writers' worldview and conception of language? To what extent do their modes of exploration differ from that of their male counterparts? How important were such contacts in allowing women writers to develop a consciousness of otherness and/or forge a community of feeling and experience transcending national and/or cultural barriers? "Chroniclers bind the inner and outward history of isolated humanity, but travellers connect all humanity together," stated Grace King in one of the first entries to her diary. More often than not, indeed, geographical borders assume an ontological dimension, and crossing them amounts to an exploration of the self as much as to a confrontation with otherness. Crossings have always involved a necessary stage of transition, transformation, and consequent redefinition of the self that questions the very stability and permanence traditionally associated with women's conventionalized roles. Thus we are very happy to consider writers using the idea of border crossing and travel symbolically or metaphorically as well as literally: early female travellers, explorers, and adventurers crossed borders in more ways than one, often by transgressing gender expectations, using this experience or awareness to reshape the conventions of many genres. One might also approach the topic by focusing on what happens when literary works cross national borders to reach foreign readers in translation. In this respect, translation studies and studies of American women writers' reception abroad constitute another potentially fruitful arena.

As a multiethnic, multilingual society, the U.S. undoubtedly provides fertile terrain for the development of a transnational consciousness that will be pivotal to our questioning on the topic. Possible approaches to the conference theme may include but are not limited to such keywords and ideas as:

- Women writers and travel writing
- The migratory experience
- Expatriate American women writers
- Expatriate women writers in Paris
- The Lost Generation
- Redefining the national canon
- Transnationalism
- Transatlantic studies
- Transcontinental/Transpacific/Transatlantic literary relationships
- Geographical borders/ontological issues
- Representations of otherness
- Cross-cultural interactions
- Cross-linguistic perceptions/living between two languages
- Women and frontier experiences
- Translation studies
- American women writers' reception in foreign countries
- Women writers' reception in America and Europe

## *Submission Instructions*

### **Deadlines: June 30, 2016 (complete panels) and August 31, 2016 (individual papers)**

Submissions are electronic. Submit individual proposals and completed panel proposals to [ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com](mailto:ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com) both attached in Word or rtf, and pasted into the body of the message.

The conference organizers welcome and encourage complete session submissions as well as individual paper abstract submissions. Affiliate associations and regional groups should follow the submission guidelines for complete session submissions.

Conference participants may appear on the program twice as presenters: once on a panel presenting a formal academic paper, and once in an additional way (for example, on a roundtable, as a respondent, or in a “professionalization” session).

### **Complete Panel Submission Guidelines-June 30, 2016 Deadline**

The cfp for complete panel submissions can be posted on the SSAWW website in addition to other venues of your choice. For posting on the SSAWW website, please send cfp to [ssaww.web@gmail.com](mailto:ssaww.web@gmail.com).

Listserv members can circulate the call at: [ssaww-l@ucsd.edu](mailto:ssaww-l@ucsd.edu).

Session lengths are 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Complete sessions may take the form of panels or roundtables. A panel normally consists of three, preferably four presenters, who speak for approximately 15 minutes each with 15 minutes left for discussion. Roundtables consist of five or more participants who speak briefly (6-8 minutes), and emphasize discussion among themselves and with the audience.

The organizers welcome variations on and innovations in format within the allotted time frames. If you are proposing a different format for a complete session, please explain the format clearly, and state the rationale and benefits.

If submitting a complete session, please ensure that notifications go out by the end of June at the latest to those whose proposals are declined for the particular panel so that they can still submit individual paper abstracts by the conference submission deadline of August 31.

Email Header: Please put 1) “Complete Session” in the subject line, followed by a brief title (one to five words); 2) OR the name of the affiliate association; 3) OR the name of the regional group

Please include the following information for complete session proposals in the body of the email, as well as attached in Word or rtf.

Adapting the guidelines set out by the American Literature Association which facilitates the copying of accepted submissions directly into the program, we ask that you provide a summary of the panel information at the beginning of the submission in the following format, listing the session title, the chair and affiliation (if any), the organizer (if different from the chair), and affiliate association/group name (if any), and each of the presenters, citing name, affiliation (if any), and title of paper in quotation marks. Please turn off auto format to prevent automatic indenting. Commas separate the name, affiliation, and title, and there is no period at the end. Here is an example:

Gender and Print Culture

Chair: Mary Smith, Nu University

Organized by the North American Society of Women Scholars of Print Culture

Jane Eyre, Thornfield College, "The Afterlife of Women's Words"

Will Ladislav, Middlemarch University, "Writing the Right Moment"

Hester Prynne, Independent Scholar, "Embodied Print"

Jo March, Concord State College, "Writing for Money, Writing for the Self"

In addition, please provide the following information:

- Contact person's name and contact information: email and phone (to be used only if email fails)
- Title of session
- Type of session: please indicate if this is a panel or roundtable, or please explain if you are proposing an alternate format
- Chair: name and affiliation (if any)
- Brief biography (60 word limit)
- Organizer's name and affiliation (if any), and brief biography (60 word limit) if different from the Chair; or if the session is being organized by an affiliate association or regional group, please provide its name here
- Abstract overview of session submission (250 – 300 words)
- A/V requirements: please indicate none or yes; if yes, please specify the equipment required.

For each presenter:

- Name and affiliation (if any)
- Title of paper
- Abstract (250 – 300 words)
- Brief biography (60 word limit)
- Email contact

Submit to: [ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com](mailto:ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com) by June 30, 2016.

## **Individual Paper Abstract Submission Guidelines—August 31, 2016 Deadline**

Email Header: Please put "Individual Submission" in the subject line, followed by a brief title of the paper (one to five words)

In the body of the email, as well as attached in Word or rtf, please include the following:

To facilitate the copying of accepted submissions directly into the program, please provide the submission in the following format at the beginning of the submission:

Name, affiliation (if any), title of paper in quotation marks; the items are separated by commas and there is no period at the end.

Example:

Mary Smith, Nu University, "Empowered by Literature"

Then, please provide the following:

- Name and affiliation (if any)
- Email and phone contact (phone will only be used in the event of email failure)
- Title of paper:
- Abstract (250 – 300 words)
- A/V requirements: please indicate none or yes; if yes, please specify the equipment required.
- Brief biography (60 word limit)

Submit to: [ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com](mailto:ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com) by August 31, 2016.

Every attempt will be made to notify submitters of the status of their proposals by October 31, 2016 and to have the draft program in place by November 30, 2016.

### *Estimated Conference Costs*

**Early registration (between November 1, 2016 and January 31, 2017):**

- Faculty members: circa 130 euros (incl. lunch, coffee breaks and closing banquet)
- Students: circa 100 euros (incl. lunch, coffee breaks and closing banquet)

**Late registration (after February 1, 2017):** circa 145 euros (faculty)/115 euros (students)

**Accommodation:** 60-150 euros per night (hotel) or 30-40 euros per night (basic student accommodation)

**Questions about conference registration can be directed to:**

[ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com](mailto:ssaww2017.bordeaux.montaigne@gmail.com)

**Thank you!**