

Mismatching Perspectives and Pacific Transculturality

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Abstract: Increased critical consciousness and awareness of interculturality in a global and glocal context at the beginning of the twenty-first century has increasingly used the concept of transculturation when discussing modernities. Politically transculturation can be used to describe processes of negotiation in contemporary society that lead to social awareness and solidarity, as well as ensuring the continuity of societies. The fusing of cultural forms leads to a mismatching of perspectives, hence some critics have preferred to use the terms translation and/or transliteracy to describe this concept. Transculturation is related to the “normal processes of artistic borrowing and influence, by which any culture makes part of its contribution to the conversation of mankind,” as Les Murray maintained, and “it engages multiple lines of difference simultaneously” with overlapping boundaries (Rogers 491). Referring to various authors and linking it to cultural appropriation and border crossings, this article examines how the narrative expression of *Both Sides of the Moon*, to cite the title of Alan Duff’s book, is a key feature of Pacific writing, in an area where centuries of migration from near and far have exposed different cultures to each other on social, political, linguistic and aesthetic levels. These ‘contact zones’, to use Mary Pratt’s words, provide the reader with constantly moving translated identities, cultural hybridity and a use of language that has a highly local significance in a global context.

Key words: transculturation, perspective, Pacific area.

Transculturation both as a theoretical term and as an aesthetic concept is increasingly used to describe and discuss the complexity of the globalised world in which we live. The mix of cultural identities which ensues from increased mobility, past and present emigration and immigration, as well as the acknowledgment of diasporas, poses questions as to what really *are* the identities of groups and nations. The Pacific area is particularly suitable for such an investigation since it has a variety of different ethnic groups, both indigenous and settler communities. Unlike the US where the melting pot has been symbolic of national allegiance, or the mosaic of Canada indicating multiculturalism, the Pacific has not been labelled in terms of identities. As Bill

Ashcroft has written there is a 'strange contrapuntal relationship between identity, history, and nation that needs to be unravelled' (2009a). This article will try and unravel some of these issues in relation to the Pacific area.

First a few words on what we mean by the concept of transculturation as a literary and global phenomenon. By looking at texts through transcultural eyes, or gazing at them in this way, we add a new dimension not only to the text itself as signifying worlds of subtext, but also enhance people's understanding of global and glocal world views.ⁱ Transculturation in literature does not necessarily evolve from colonial dominance of another language, but rather from literary processes and genres adapted to a new landscape and way of life. After all we define ourselves through language and the creation of sub-cultural fields. And, when we do so, we can ask whether the interference of the very form of the text may affect our view. Literary criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century has laid great emphasis on this literary borrowing, and there is an increasing debate as to the transcultural nature of it. In many ways T.S.Eliot summed this up when he wrote of the writer in "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. (1953, 16 emphasis in the original)

Though thinking within a European context Eliot's words are equally applicable today in our global world. Eliot speaks of the poet's mind as being a catalyst for emotions and feelings, for "storing up numberless phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together" (1953, 16).

The search for a suitable term to express this age has evoked various responses. As I have written of this elsewhere I shall not go into a detailed discussion of transculturation here, but refer the reader to my article in *Transnational Literature* (2011). However, it is appropriate to mention some of the terms used. Petra Rüdiger and Konrad Gross (2009) prefer the term 'translation' as more suited to express the processes which take place in transculturation. The problem with the use of this term is that translation does not allow for border-crossings in the same manner as transculturation, which is related to the "normal processes of artistic borrowing and influence, by which any culture makes part of its contribution to the conversation of mankind," as Les Murray maintained (1984, 4) and "engages multiple lines of difference simultaneously" with overlapping boundaries (Rogers 491). In an article entitled "Transculturation, transliteracy and generative art" Simon Biggs (2008) discusses Sue Thomas's term 'transliteracy' in relation to text and media, and Ashcroft writing of the role of literature in expressing transculturation uses the term 'transnation' which he sees as "the fluid, migrating, *outside* of the state (conceptually and culturally as well as geographically) that begins *within* the nation" using India as his example (2009a). To Ashcroft "[t]he transnation (...) represents the utopian idea that national borders may not in the end need to be the authoritarian constructs of identity that they have become" (2009a). That is, the constant two-way interventions, a characteristic feature of transculturation, are non-static and undermine the authoritative power of the

colonial and postcolonial. This view is also supported by Rogers who, using Navajo weaving as his example, emphasizes “the influential role of (...) forms of power while also recognizing how cultural appropriation can be constitutive of cultural particularity and agency” (495). Literature can express the dynamics of this interaction and the changing pattern of cultures linguistically and aesthetically. In a way Homi Bhabha sums this up in “The Vernacular Cosmopolitan” when he writes that “[a]mbivalence and antagonism accompanies any act of cultural translation, because negotiating with the ‘difference of the other’ reveals the radical insufficiency of sedimented, settled systems of meaning and signification” (2000: 141).

All these concepts provide tools for analysis, not just of literature, but also of cultural and social aspects of contemporary life, and common to all is the feature of border-crossings, back and forth, a constant mediation. Texts of this kind are not looking back or answering as in much postcolonial writing, but rather expressing the complex nature of the globalized subject, the complexity of life for the individual, and are expressive of the inevitable influence of the many facets of life today. But often such fusing of cultural forms leads to a mismatching of perspectives. By this I mean the ambiguous duality of seeing and being seen at the same time, according to who is reading or viewing, and who is critiquing. Due to their lack of authoritarianism, the mismatching of perspectives in such texts is emancipatory since they subvert the colonial and the postcolonial, not necessarily indicating a transformation into something new, but rather an acknowledgment of the ambiguity of Bhabha’s Third Space. Textual spaces become thus woven meeting places rather than points of clash, and critiquing mismatching perspectives can contribute to an understanding of the identities portrayed.

One can hardly write of transculturation without mentioning Mary Louise Pratt and her discussion of transculturation as a term used by ethnographers “to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from material transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (6), that is the selections made from the dominant culture are adjusted to suit the recipient’s purpose. Settler literature and society is a prime example of this – some retaining more of the ‘mother’ country’s ideals and values, others absorbing new cultures through what David Atwell describes as “multiple processes, a dialogue in both directions and, most importantly, processes of cultural destruction followed by reconstruction on entirely new terms” (18). Such reconstructions may be hybrid, but are often ambiguously so. The ‘contact zones’ may be in theme or language, using the dominant culture’s language to portray cultural identities and phenomena which provide the reader with constantly changing translated identities. Pratt uses the term ‘contact zones’ to examine how “metropolitan modes of representation [are] received and appropriated on the periphery” (6). She comments on how even what we understand as European culture is in part founded on the ‘other’, hence Spivak’s subaltern may have more power than we realise. Pratt defends her use of the term ‘contact’ from a linguistic point of view as that is the point where the trajectories of peoples, otherwise separated, now intersect (6-7). To her the “‘contact’ perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other (...) in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (7). This perspective can be harmonious but also mismatching depending on the origins of the various cultures, since contact zones are benchmarks and references against which we read or understand.

Settler literature, especially in Australia and Aotearoa, is an interesting example for studying these zones and their translated identities, for three major reasons. First both areas have indigenous populations, though their status has been very different historically. Secondly, immigration brought a constant interchange of cultures, but also isolationism – the Southern hemisphere – the finality of early settlement, and in some cases resistance to change. And third, the necessity for immigrants to adjust their original cultural belonging to another topographical and climatic environment, as well as forming new linguistic expressions to describe these phenomena.

In the introduction to *Nuana: pacific writing in english since 1980* (1994) an anthology of writing from the Pacific Islands, Albert Wendt states that the word 'nuana' meaning 'rainbow' is an apt expression to describe the "diversity of cultures and languages, of fauna and flora found in Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia [as well as] the richness and variety of our literatures, both oral and written" (1). Wendt defines "Pacific literature [as] that written or composed by Pacific Islands peoples, especially the indigenous peoples." (2). Interestingly he maintains that though the missionaries introduced literacy, in fact it was the native speakers who did most of the converting to Christianity and thus used their own languages in the process—as he says they "indigenised writing" (1). Further he writes:

We have indigenised and enriched the language of the colonisers and used it to declare our independence and uniqueness; to analyse colonialism itself and its effects upon us; to free ourselves of the mythologies created about us in colonial literature. (3)

The transcultural nature of this writing is emphasised when he writes of how "[a]ll cultures are becoming, changing in order to survive, absorbing foreign influences, continuing, growing. (...) For me the post in post-colonial does not mean just *after*, it also means *around, through, out of, alongside, and against*"—all characteristics typical of the transcultural (3, emphasis in the original). Many of the extracts from longer texts and poems in *nuana* illustrate clearly Wendt's point, for example, the ironic poem by Jon Jonassen "Saved" (48) and the sarcastic "Darkness within the light" by Kauraka Kauraka from the Cook Islands. As Wendt himself writes in the poem "Shaman of Vision" "we measure ourselves against words" (324). Since language is the most important feature of culture let us look at how this affects transculturation in the Pacific area.

Pacific writing, both in language, content and genre, is often characterized by a use of language that has highly local significance in a global context. By that I mean that cultural phenomena are expected to be understood by the reader, often making the potential 'insider' reader 'strange,' as Reed Way Dasenbrock and Peter Simpson have commented. Dasenbrock posits that texts in English which are interpolated with language other than English turn the reader from the dominant culture into the 'other.' This brings in the whole concept of register, that is the form of language that is particular to one individual or a group—a kind of code. Expressions, which might be considered grammatically or politically incorrect elsewhere, are acceptable within this framework. As Ashcroft points out "our identity, our subjectivity, is *performed by*, rather than *embodied in* language" (2009b :103, emphasis in the original). Language

and use of the native language in a text otherwise in English can make the text exotic and emphasize the gap between global reader and local writer, or, we can ask, does it equate the cultures, since no translation is necessary for those living in the country. Maori writing in English, in particular, exemplifies the use of linguistic expressions that are mutually understood by New Zealanders of all cultural backgrounds, though not necessarily by others, for example, marae, whakapapa, whanui, and the names of flora and fauna.

This marks one of the major differences between the narrative expression of transculturation and translated identities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Aotearoa is a country where all are immigrants and have come of their own accord—the Maori coming first from Polynesia and bringing with them Polynesian culture with advanced cultural artefacts and its class distinctions, which Alan Duff has dealt with in *Once We Were Warriors* (1990) where he criticizes the Maori for forgetting their heritage, a theme also taken up in *The Matriarch* (1986) where Witi Ihimaera relates the history of one of the noble Maori families and the powerful women of the past. Though fictional stories these texts are underscored by other historical documentary records

In Australia the situation was different as the immigrant population displaced the indigenous population in a typical colonial civilising mission, in addition to there being no one major indigenous language. As Brian Castro writes:

Australia has had a long history of confusing the racial with the geographic and the linguistic. Given that nations emerge out of an ambivalence about themselves, as Benedict Anderson said, 'they express an immemorial past and a limitless future, working alongside and against *large cultural systems that preceded them*', Australia has had to define itself against others. But the tendency has been that instead of defining itself, and realising itself as a continually changing society, it has nostalgically yearned for stasis, drawing on a large number of myths which, while uniting segments of its population, retards its overall ability to absorb newness and deal adequately with others. ("Writing Asia", emphasis in the original)

The role of language is at the core of mismatching. How often does a text mean something totally different to one person, due not only to his/her own use of language, or knowledge of the culture described, but it also varies according to the experience of the individual. A text read by a twenty-year old may be interpreted quite differently by the same person twenty or thirty years later. This aspect of perspective is often overlooked in literary critical commentaries, but it is just this which makes literature such a powerful tool for understanding of other cultures. As Castro writes:

Language marks the spot where the self loses its prison bars--where the border crossing takes place, traversing the spaces of others. (...) When we translate from one language to another we not only reinvent ourselves but we free up the sclerotic restrictions of our own language. We feel free to transgress, to metamorphose, to experience the uncanny, where we are receiving what Wilson Harris has called the 'quantum immediacy' of another culture. Other cultures and languages reinforce and enrich us by powerfully

affecting and destabilising our familial tongue. We gain by losing ourselves.
("Writing Asia")

This destabilizing process is frequently expressed and understood through the perspective of the narrative expression.

Perspective

Perspective is a dual phenomenon – the one who sees and is seen – highlighting the distance and gap between identities. Jakob Lothe sees perspective as the narrative agent that perceives that there are different forms and degrees of perception. In the paper "Transculturation and Perspective in Modernism and Postcolonialism: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Assia Djebar's *So Vast the Prison*" given in 2011 he states that: "narrative perspective plays a key role in the author's sustained attempts to identify and negotiate various kinds of linguistic disruption, suppression and marginalization," and referring to Mieke Bal suggests that "perspective does not necessarily refer exclusively to the agent that perceives or focalizes, it can also be linked to the agent that is being focalized," in other words the narrative perspective, too, is crossing borders. Looked at in this way the short story especially those termed vignettes could be an example of such narrative expression. We look in through a window but know nothing of the before or after, and each character is observing the other. Frank Sargeson and Katherine Mansfield, (especially the perspective in her New Zealand stories), are masters of this art. Take, for example, Frank Sargeson's "The Making of a New Zealander":

Nick and I were sitting on a hillside and Nick was saying he was a New Zealander and he knew he wasn't a New Zealander. And he wasn't a Dalmatian any more.

He knew he wasn't anything any more. (Manhire 107)

The 'I' person sees potential for Nick to be like any other New Zealander, marry and settle down. But Nick is conscious of his difference, or his perspective of himself as a person not really belonging anywhere.

Similarly in David Ireland's *Burn* the gaze is clearly stated—Jimmy's son, Gordon, although he has received an education and goes to the city to work, returns disillusioned as to his possibilities in the white man's world. Being Aboriginal he has problems getting a job because the colour of his hands give him away as being Aboriginal (132), so he is stereotyped. In other words he is judged by his appearance not his skills. The discussion of Gordon's situation in the text is of an attitude prevalent in much political and social debate today.

Other authors who spring to mind as illustrative of this mismatching of perspectives are David Malouf, Alan Duff and Ania Walwicz. In *Remembering Babylon*, a kind of parallel to Duff's text, we have several examples of the mismatching of perspectives. The idea that Gemmy Fairley is a 'white Aborigine' is basically a contradiction in terms, and the perspective on and glorification of the remembered life back in Glasgow is also false. To Mr. Frazer Gemmy is an object of study to prove what happens to a

person who “goes bush” – he does not really see him as a person, rather as a source of information. Yet Gemmy is portrayed as acutely conscious of Fraser’s perspective on him. Through the diverse responses to Gemmy, and the Aborigines who visit him, Malouf allows us as readers to see Gemmy, both as he sees himself and as others see him, and that the settlers’ perspectives on themselves are no longer the same. Gemmy’s entry into their closed world breaks the artificial harmony which existed on the surface. If we think of this text in terms of mismatching perspectives we can see how many aspects of stereotyping become determinative of an understanding of the ‘other’.

But to turn to Duff and Walwicz. Alan Duff’s *Both Sides of the Moon* (1998) epitomizes the ambiguity of perspective. Duff makes the protagonist, Jimmy, who is conscious of his own mixed cultural identities, awaken to what his life is like. The narrator by retelling the ancestral history told to him is also an implied reader translating what he hears about family history to coincide with his own experience of life and the dual feeling of shame because he belongs nowhere. The opening pages of this text illustrate his confusion.

I am torn; yet I am more whole, since I am of both understandings, though
no singular one. I am two races, two cultures and, most of all, two different
thinkings. I am in a way against myself. But I can speak for both. (7)

I am born of each of these. A half-caste being of neither one nor the other.
Indigenous yet foreigner. Coloniser and colonised. Not brown; not white.
Thus I am everything of my country’s main racial origins and yet nothing.
(8)

Here we are at the heart of the issue of mismatching perspectives and identities that many protagonists in Australasian literature express, reader and writer viewing these situations from differing perspectives. In many ways Jimmy, rather like Gemmy in *Remembering Babylon*, is the ultimate transcultural person. Not only are both seen as ethnically mixed, but their emotional and social lives may be seen as a cultural balancing act, much in the manner indicated by the protagonist in Castro’s *Birds of Passage*. The difference lies in the fact that Jimmy, an outsider and insider to himself, comes to a positive conclusion by accepting that his difference will never change, whereas Gemmy takes the notes on which he thinks his identity is written and tries to escape back to his former life.

I would suggest that the title of Duff’s book, indicating both sides of the moon, the dark and the light, is symbolic of the issue of transculturation. Just as the moon revolves, ever changing from day to day, so Jimmy lives in a state of perpetual struggle to find his identity, or rather his compatible identities, that is who he is. The structure of the text, weaving in and out, and juxtaposing the past and the present, underscores Jimmy’s search. His life is a journey along ‘routes’ to find his ‘roots’ to use Stuart Hall’s words.

Similar thoughts are expressed in two poems by Maori writers, “The Pakeha Half” by Pearl de Vere Boyed

I will not let you take away
that which is mine,

making me
choose to be
only one or the other;
I also speak with other ancestors
and share their pain and pride;
sing their songs;
pray their prayers;
and hear their forebodings.

Look close upon my face
and see me as I am.
Half and half. (*Te Ao Marama* 3: 1993, 35)

And Rosemary Kohu Hinewirangi in one of her poems "I Am Maori" poses the question:

Am I Maori?
Yes I am
For I have brown skin.
...
Am I Maori?
No. My language is English.

And then concludes that she feels she is becoming Maori as she learns more about her ancestors and culture, but still ends with the same question as she began, "Am I Maori?" - it depends who is observing (*Te Ao Marama* 3:1993, 51). Again the ambiguity of perspective is expressed.

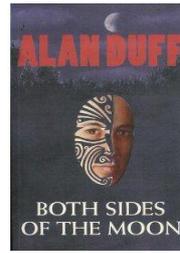
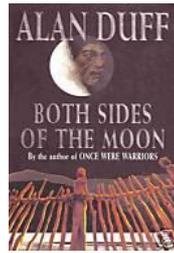
By many regarded as the angry (though no longer so young) man of New Zealand writing by Maori Duff has suffered from the interpretation of his works as autobiographical, or termed as autoethnography. Pratt defines the use of this word as "instances in which the colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms. (...) [and] construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations" (7). This is exactly what Duff is doing in much of his work—taking contemporary situations and historical ideas of Maori and juxtaposing them to throw light on issues, which though they can be seen as personal given his own background, are fiction. To me, looking at his fiction in relation to his non-fiction writing and articles in the media, he is critiquing culture that remains static. The Maori warrior culture is portrayed as a binary world of black and white, either you are with us or against us, and at any moment losing a battle could turn you into a slave, or worse, a source of food. Duff does not spare the reader details of cannibalism. Whereas some critics have focused on the Maori history described, to me this is a background for what Duff really wants to say which is that we have to leave the old ways, acknowledge their existence, but belong in the present. The relating of the warrior past, not Te Amo whom Jimmy thinks is his ancestor, but chief warrior Te Aranui Kapi, who ran away from battle and caused the complete defeat and break up of his power and regime—the ultimate disgrace for a warrior, is juxtaposed to parental and social failure in Jimmy's life. Te Aranui Kapi, the warrior, has an awakening when he

sees the consequences of all the fighting for a child swept down the river with its mother, who, though drowning, smiles at him in such a way that it haunts him permanently (182). He begins to reflect, something portrayed as a disaster for a warrior, who must never doubt that what he does is right. Duff is asking us as readers to accept that people may change and can no longer adhere to the old ways—they become human. These two aspects of life are also paralleled in the text in the portrayal of two groups of outcasts, those with whom Te Aranui Kapi seeks shelter, who are rejected by the clan because they are physically deformed, but are shown as intelligent and willing to encounter and mingle with the new white people who arrive. The other group remain in their old-fashioned ways continuing the old warrior regime but without any form for civilization, and finally go under.

This interpretation is remarkably different from that of Otto Heim and others who see this book as one about shame, both on the part of the protagonist who is ashamed of his Maori mother's behaviour, and of his own sexual failings, and on the guilty conscience of the Pakeha, and of Duff himself.

If *Both Sides of the Moon* suggests that the image of the fierce Maori, despite its long history, still has the power to shock, it also indicates that what makes this image still compelling is the residue of unacknowledged shame in the bicultural relationship of Pakeha and Maori. As Jimmy's story seeks to demonstrate, the confrontation of such shame can lead to the discovery of one's ability to respond to how one is perceived by others and to imagine bicultural identities that acknowledge history without being trapped in it. Responding to his own reception, Duff's shameful autoethnography seems to express his unease with his public perception by both defiantly stepping up his debunking rhetoric and gropingly searching for a more charitable attitude towards his enemies. If the former response appears to have exhausted itself in his latest novel, the latter still seems to leave room for imaginative exploration." (Heim 2007)

The shame can be understood if we look at the other half of Jimmy's story, his teenage search for himself, corruption by a pedophile, and the perpetual state of being torn between loyalty to his mother who behaves like a slut, and his father who represents respectability. That critics such as Heim see the text as one of shame is credible given that Duff's descriptions are graphically explicit, whether writing of the cannibalism of the warriors, paedophilia, or prostitution. He has been criticised for this—but what if we see the novel as of its time, where explicit references are common, and where Duff has a purpose in trying to explain the uncertainty of a teenage boy—searching for himself and his identity in a world of mixed impressions. His is not a straightforward childhood, torn as he is between the two cultural backgrounds with which he has been brought up, and the incompatibility of his parents. The transculturality in the text lies in constant border-crossings in which Jimmy moves back and forth between cultures, and not just ethnic ones, throughout the text which closes urging him “to come to this side of the moon. Tell[ing] him that dark is only but a step away, though a big step, from here this other all covered in light. In light, e kare, child, children of my beloved people” (314).



Different interpretations of this text are also seen in the covers of the texts. I have picked out two, but there is at least one more. *Both Sides of the Moon* as illustrated above clearly shows different Western views of Maori. One depicts a younger Maori man with half his face tattooed in a fairly traditional pattern, indicating his Maori ancestry; the other is to my mind more impressive and symbolic. It portrays an older Maori peering out of the light side of the moon, but sitting on the dark side of it—the man in the moon—looking down on a fence. The covers invite different interpretations. Though both men are Maori they are basically different—the one with the tattoos is representative of a cultural heritage, in the other the fence indicates a border that has to be crossed and re-crossed or broken down while the older man represents the wisdom and knowledge of the elders and the heritage of Maoridom. To me this is more symbolic of the theme of transculturation—the constant waning and waxing of the moon as symbolic of Jimmy’s ambiguity in relation to his Maori and Pakeha ancestry.

Transculturality and the mismatching of perspectives also pervades the prose poetry of the Australian writer of Polish descent Ania Walwicz. Her texts are spoken drama lending themselves to theatrical presentation, as she has said in interviews. She is voyeur and author, and her gaze, often ironic and satiric, encompasses her own cultural background as well as that of Australia. Writing is an act of exploration, whether of legend as in “Fairytale” that has a traditional outline but with a twist, as well as humour and irony, or in her texts about everyday things, such as “white” about winter and snow or “travelling.” In “Fairytale” the author starts in a traditional manner, the tale of a king with three daughters whom he wants to marry off. But these are no ordinary princesses, they have doctorates and high demands on their suitors, so much so that “the king suggested maybe you could marry two princes apiece a good looking for sleeping with and a clever one to talk to” (1992, 45). Instead they use, like Frankenstein, scientific methods to produce the perfect husband. Even after marrying them they are no longer satisfied, so kill their husbands “because they enjoyed working in the laboratory more than marriage” (45). The anticipated perspective of the reader is mismatched by the characters in the tale and their views on male perfection. In her meditation on Hope’s poem “Australia” from 1939, about the country to which Walwicz has emigrated, the inward looking gaze on the land is prominent and underscored by the repeated use of ‘you’ whether in descriptions of the natural: “You big ugly. You too empty. You desert with your nothing nothing nothing,” or in the ‘imagined’ gaze on Walwicz herself, the foreigner: “You make me a dot in the nowhere. You never accept me. For your own (...) You tell me I look strange.” In these texts by Walwicz traditional and contemporary attitudes are interwoven and combined in border-crossings that confront, even force, the reader (or listener) to take a new look at the ‘glocal.’

In conclusion, I have sketched above some ideas as to how we may approach the issue of transculturation in literature from the Pacific. I have used the word mismatching of perspectives consciously as I see the gaze as manifold, the Pacific reader, the indigenous reader, and the global reader. Like much else in life, the very expressiveness of these texts adds a dimension to them providing both glocal and global readings. We can also ask whether looking at literature from a transcultural perspective also expresses a resistance to the project of global modernization, since the fictional characters are often portrayed as ambiguous in relation to who they are. An understanding of the complexity apparent in such literature can thus be contributive to racial and cultural understanding.

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ⁱ The term ‘glocal’, an appropriation of the local into the global, which emphasises the influence of the local culture over the global, is particularly useful when writing of transcultural aesthetics since the two worlds are not exclusive of each other, but intertwined. In many texts an investigation of identity is typified by a clash between the self and these surrounding cultures.