

# Comparative literary studies in the twenty-first century: towards a transcultural perspective?

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## Abstract

In an increasingly globalised and globalising world, ‘culture’ appears as ‘an important determinant of subjectivity’ and, consequently, of creative expression (Beautell 2000). With this in mind, Tötösy de Zepetnek (1999) prompted researchers to merge the comparative study of literature with that of cultural studies, embracing what he designated the new ‘comparative cultural studies’ approach. If we are to accept Tötösy de Zepetnek’s challenge, however, as I argue in this paper, it would be better to adopt a transcultural theoretical paradigm more apt to deal with the cultural complexities of the twenty-first century mobile age. Not only does ‘transculture/ality’ – the combined notion of ‘transculture’ (Epstein 1995, 2009) and ‘transculturality’ (Welsch 1999, 2009) – appear to be endowed with the kind of dynamic non-linear nature and flexibility most needed in dealing with the fast-changing patterns and transformations in cultures and literatures, but it also seems to promote a new ‘borderless’ comparative methodology. In doing so it marks an attempt to move away from nationalist stances and the insistence on the periphery–centre, colony–empire, ethnic–mainstream, pure–hybrid dichotomies with which comparative studies (especially within a postcolonial perspective) have been so far associated. It also offers the

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possibility of overcoming the nihilistic, self-defeating nature of anything 'post-' to embrace instead the 'visionary power' (Braidotti 2006), vitalist possibilities and new beginnings inherent in an approach that accepts the prefix proto- (starting from 'protoglobal': Epstein 2004) when dealing with our contemporaneity.

Contemporary globalisation and growing transnational mobility are fostering the emergence of writers and works of fiction that are no longer identifiable with only one cultural or national landscape. I argue that a comparative approach through a transcultural lens, which we might call 'transcultural comparativism', seems to be endowed with the kind of dynamic, open nature and flexibility most needed in dealing with the fast changes in cultures and literatures of our contemporary age.

Undoubtedly, in this age of transnational flows, multiple allegiances and 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007), culture and the influence of other cultures (Hannerz 1992) appear to be important elements in identity building, and consequently of creative expression and interpretation.<sup>2</sup> While cultures become ever more fluid and intermingled (Hannerz 2001; Gunew 2003), a new generation of mobile writers, on the move across cultural and national boundaries, has started channelling and creatively expressing a 'transcultural' sensibility, fostered by a 'process of self-distancing, self-estrangement, and self-criticism of one's own cultural identities and assumptions' (Berry and Epstein 1999: 307). Indeed these authors, who in many cases (but not always and not necessarily) use 'global English/es'<sup>3</sup> or one of the variants of some other global idiom (be it French, Spanish, Mandarin or Hindi) as their preferred non-native language of creative expression, are more connected to the transnational

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2 Rønning pointed out that 'Our interpretations as readers and critics are always in some way determined by our own cultural and historical specificity, one that changes with time and circumstances' (2011: 2)

3 In this paper I use 'global English' to refer to a form of literary English that lacks slang or locally connotated expressions in order to be understood by a worldwide readership, as for example in the works of JM Coetzee or Kazuo Ishiguro. Compare Walkowitz (2007). 'Global Englishes' refers instead to Pennycook's (2007) discussion on the language mixes that result from the conflational processes between local and global idioms. Pennycook denied the connection of global Englishes both to linguistic imperialism and to nationalised forms of English (Indian English, Arab English, Singaporean English, etc), since in his opinion they are 'both mired in a linguistics and a politics of the last century, focusing inexorably on languages and nations as given entities, and ill-equipped to deal with current modes of globalization'. In Pennycook's view, the way global Englishes are used for creative expression by non-native speakers – and one might add also by native speakers who have been deeply exposed to other languages – is much more hybrid, eccentric, dynamic and transgressive than has been acknowledged so far.

patterns and literary modes of our contemporary globalised and ‘neo-nomadic’ (Dagnino 1996; D’Andrea 2006)<sup>4</sup> condition than to the more conventionally intended migrant or postcolonial literature of the late twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Transcultural writers may have in their background a migrant, diasporic, exile, transnational or postcolonial experience of some sort but the way they have culturally and imaginatively metabolised it has led them (or is leading them, at this very moment) to branch off (or to flow from, without any implied evolutionary connotation) and adopt an innovative transcultural attitude. As Schulze-Engler pointed out, discussing the growing terrain of the new literatures in English, ‘the same idea of “locating” culture and literature exclusively in the context of ethnicities or nations is rapidly losing plausibility’ (2009: xvi).

With this social context in mind, one is induced to follow Tötösy de Zepetnek’s (1999) suggestion to merge the comparative study of literature(s) with that of cultural studies, embracing what he has designated the new ‘comparative cultural studies’ approach; namely, he proposed a way of studying literatures in a culture-sensitive environment, ‘with and in the context of culture and the discipline of cultural studies’ (1999: 2). At the same time, Tötösy de Zepetnek prompts us to incorporate methods and conceptual frameworks drawn from comparative literature into cultural studies, given comparative literature’s success in the ‘cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature and culture’ (p 2).

But if, in this contemporary scenario, we are to accept Tötösy de Zepetnek’s challenge I argue we might do it by adopting a transcultural lens, that is ‘a perspective in which all cultures look decentred in relation to all other cultures, including one’s own’ (Epstein 1999: 31). What has been missing thus far, as Cuccioletta (2001) has pointed out, has been a ‘cultural concept of the world’ that could match its other conceptualisations in the realms of economy (global

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4 In the present study, neo-nomadism or global nomadism (Dagnino 1996) is understood as a contemporary social condition/lifestyle emerging from the transnational and deterritorialised patterns produced by global mobility and by the intense digitalisation of information and communication technologies. This, in its turn, inspires alternative forms of subjectivity (D’Andrea 2006), styles of critical thinking (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Braidotti 1994, 2006) and ethical considerations based on the concepts of ‘reciprocal autonomy’ and/or responsible co-dependency (Malherbe 2000).

5 For a closer examination of transcultural writers’ identities and neo-nomadic specificities, see Dagnino (2012).

capitalism), politics (vernacular or rooted cosmopolitanism: see Beck 2006; Bhabha 2001) and socio-anthropology (transnationalism: see Appadurai 1996; Ong 1999; and neo-nomadism). The development of a transcultural model of analysis and debate, where cultures are read in their organic movements and mutual interactions against the backdrop of contemporary socioeconomic phenomena, thus opens up an opportunity to fill that gap. A transcultural perspective, in fact, sees cultures not as monolithic, self-sufficient and totalising entities but as metamorphic, confluent and intermingling processes where individuals constantly interfere with them, are transformed by them and, ultimately, imaginatively write about them (see Trojanow and Hoskoté 2012).

In this paper, I thus use the term ‘transcultural’ in two instances. In the first case it helps to describe a type of author and a kind of creative output, that is, those writers who do not belong in one place or one culture (and usually not even one language) and whose border-crossing creative works are occupied with a dialogue between cultures. Paraphrasing Pettersson (2006: 1), when talking about transcultural literary studies, we can already define a transcultural work of fiction as a work that transcends the borders of a single culture in its choice of topic, vision and scope and thus contributes to a wider global literary perspective. The second use of the term ‘transcultural’ qualifies the mode of inquiry, the set of critical tools and vocabularies that might be adopted to analyse transcultural literary texts and their creators’ ideas within a comparative paradigm, hence the suggestion of the term ‘transcultural comparativism’.<sup>6</sup> It is through this combination of comparative literary studies and transcultural studies that researchers may be better able to distance themselves from the perspective that focuses too strictly (tightly) on national literatures, which ‘represents anew an entrapment in the national paradigm’ (Tötösy de Zepetnek 1999: 6).

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6 In the same way, scholars from the Nordic Network for Literary Transculturation Studies (2011) use the concept of ‘transculturation’ not as a theory but as ‘a matrix through which a set of critical tools and vocabularies can be refined for the study of texts from a localized world, but institutionalized globally’. In this regard see also Rønning (2011).

## Theorisations of the transcultural

Conceptualisations of the transcultural drawing on the concept of ‘transculturation’ originally devised by Ortíz (1995) have been around, especially in the Latin American regions, for at least three decades (Rama 1982; Pratt 1992; Spitta 1993; Canclini 1995). In this paper I draw primarily on concomitant or subsequent theories of ‘transculturality’ and ‘transculture’ respectively devised by the German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch (1992, 1999, 2009) and the Russian culturologist Mikhail Epstein (1995, 2009), thus my coining of the combined term transculture/ality. What follows is a brief explanation of the slightly different way in which the two theorists use their concept words.

According to Welsch, ‘transculturality’ is mainly a new conceptualisation of culture, where any separatist vision of cultures as distinct, self-enclosed and self-sufficient units<sup>7</sup> is overcome by contemporary cultural conditions, which are now ‘largely characterized by mixes and permeations’ (1999: 197). For Epstein (2009), ‘transculture’ represents above all a mode of identity building, an existential dimension beyond any given culture, a way of being at the ‘crossroads of cultures’.<sup>8</sup> He has defined it as ‘a model of cultural development’ that liberates the individual from the tyranny of one’s own culture, ‘from the “prison house of language”, from unconscious predispositions and prejudices of the “native”, naturalized cultures’ (2009: 330, 327). In Epstein’s (2009: 339) view, this process marks the next stage of a process of liberation: in the same way as culture liberates us from the constrictions of nature and its biological, preliminary, non-cultural world, transculture liberates us – mainly ‘through interference with other cultures’ – from the conditioning effects of culture, with its set of pre-fixed, imposed habits, customs, assumptions and dynamics of group identity formation.

One cannot fail to notice that here Epstein was not really talking like a post-structuralist but rather like a Romantic, which, according to Vladiv-Glover, can be ‘a little irritating to poststructuralist ears ... In poststructuralism there is no Nature in discourse and identity issues, and there are no “origins”, since there is nothing outside the text’ (2003: 6, 5). For

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7 Welsch (1999: 195) traced back this monolithic vision of cultures to Herder’s view of folk-bound, uniform and exclusionary single cultures, with its focus on ‘inner homogenization and outer separation’.

8 Compare the position paper based on Epstein’s model by Vladiv-Glover (2003).

Epstein (2009: 341), however, origins are essential, but instead of insisting on their affirmation we should let them go, since the main purpose of culture is – through a creative and historical process of ‘disorigination and liberation’ – to make us human beings ‘a river and not a dam’:

I am willing to accept my identity at the beginning of my journey, but I do not agree to remain with it until the end of my life, to be an animal representing the tag on its cage. I do not agree to be determined in terms of race, nation, gender, or class. Culture has any sense only insofar as it makes us dissidents and fugitives from our nature, our sex, or race, or age. (2009: 341)

It is this ‘open-endedness’, this claim to ‘not belonging as the ultimately desirable cultural position’ proposed by Epstein that makes us accept his way of reasoning: ‘identification with our ‘native’ or ethnic culture turned into an ideology tends to reify us and essentialise us as “ethnics” instead of leaving us the ambience of being open subjects’ (Vladiv-Glover 2003: 5). Similarly, Welsch (2009) acknowledges that his same concept of transculturality can be applied not only at a macrocultural level but also at ‘the micro-level of individuals’: ‘For most of us, multiple cultural connections are decisive in terms of our cultural formation. We are cultural hybrids. Today’s writers, for example, are no longer shaped by a single homeland, but by different reference-countries. Their cultural formation is transcultural’ (2009: 8).

No more ‘prisoners’ of a single traditional culture, nor of any newly acquired one, transcultural consciousness and the transcultural individual can thus now live ‘diffused’ in a new dimension – a ‘continuum’, as Epstein called it, simultaneously ‘inside and outside of all existing cultures’ (2009: 333) – a way of being and perceiving oneself as highly complex and fluid, where apparent ambiguities and transitoriness are not shunned but espoused in favour of movement, mediation and ongoing transformation. This conceptualisation may resonate with Bhabha’s (2004) ‘third space’ of hybridisation as a means of identity and relationship

negotiation, but in many ways it expands it.<sup>9</sup> The way I understand it, more than to a liminal, in-between or interstitial space, the transcultural continuum devised by Epstein refers rather to an all-inclusive, non-oppositional point of confluence, an overlapping of cultures, a ‘fusion of horizons’ in Gadamer’s (1994) terms, where one cannot really distinguish what belongs to one culture and what belongs to another, where ‘us’ finishes and ‘them’ starts.

I would also like to point out that, even though transcultural attitudes might at present be seen as a niche/middle-class phenomenon, they nonetheless imaginatively affect and at the same time reflect and express the specific sensitivities and collective imaginaries of increasingly wider sections of global societies.

The ‘location of transculture’ is not only to be found in realities outside texts or in the texts themselves, but also in audiences that make sense of them according to ‘new regimes of reference, norm, and value’ drawing upon several cultural backgrounds.  
(Schulze-Engler 2009: xiv)

Seen through this lens, transculture/ality opens up a new perspective towards the future. That is why Epstein proposed the use of the prefix proto- instead of post- to designate essential traits of new cultural formations and define new theoretical approaches. Proto- expresses a start, a generation, the early development of a new phase characterised by its open-endedness, by the unpredictability of the transformation; post- instead signals death, decline, the end of something, and it has a self-defeating connotation. Epstein therefore invited us to nurture a proto- instead of a post- mentality, which in its transformative agency would ‘reflect a Bakhtinian transition from finality to initiation as our dominant mode of thinking’ (2004: 46; see also Epstein 1995).

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9 In *The location of culture* Bhabha developed his concept of the ‘third space’ (or multiple third spaces) in this way: ‘These “in-between” spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated’ (2004: 2). On Bhabha’s ‘third space’ see also Rutherford (1990).

## Beyond multiculturalism and postcolonialism

Both Epstein and Welsch invited us to replace multiculturalism (what Epstein called ‘the pride of minorities’) with transculture/ality<sup>10</sup> as a model to address the specificities of cultural difference and alterity. In their view, it is possible to overcome, without denying its historical role and validity, the limitations that growing numbers of critics see in the self-enclosed, at times even racialised and racialising, model of multiculturalism (most often adopted by migrant literature) that, in Sardar’s (2004) words, fetishes difference. As Schulze-Engler pointed out,

An important dimension of transculturality may be said to reside in a really existing ‘transcultural transformation’ of lifeworlds, experiences, and cultural practices ... that challenges a compartmentalized understanding of ‘multicultural’ societies in terms of a ‘benign cultural apartheid’. (2009: xiii)

Epstein challenged the ‘mosaic multicultural’ model, which simply recognises the equal rights and value of self-enclosed cultures (‘the *cocoonization* of each culture within itself), questioning its ability to address ‘the contemporary cross-cultural flows’ (2009: 329). Even if, in Epstein’s (2009) view, multiculturalism represents a necessary step in human cultural integration, (‘Multiculturalism paves the way from the dominance of one canon to the diversity of cultures’: p 349), he prompted us to go beyond it, ‘from the diversity of cultures to the even greater diversity of individuals’, in order to reach ‘a broader cultural model capable of appealing not only to specific minorities but to the universal potentials of human understanding’ (1995: 306) – what Appiah (2006) called ‘universality plus difference’. Hence, Epstein suggested a way to prevent the risk of cultural stagnation and, even worse, of global clashes between oppositional cultural allegiances: ‘Where there are stiff and “proud” identities, there are also oppositions fraught with violence’ (2009: 347).

It seems important to emphasise the fact, though, that assimilationism and multiculturalism, nationalism and local affiliations are the conditions, the forms of organisation of a society,

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10 In this case Epstein (2009) also uses the term ‘transculturalism’.

while transculture/ality is an individual condition hardly applicable, for obvious pragmatic reasons, at a collective level. Evidently, transcultural policies cannot be imposed by government agencies. Perhaps transcultural societies may only exist if they are made up of increasing numbers of transcultural individuals who are able to reproduce a transcultural mode of being. That is why in my opinion transculture/ality should be understood neither as an ideology (as the term ‘transculturalism’ implies) nor as a political stance, but rather as a mode of identity building, as a critical tool and, at the most, as a concept for individual (and artistic) cultural opposition/resistance to the complex power dynamics expressed on the one hand by global capitalism and on the other by nation-states in this age of increasing mobility. For this reason, I tend to view transculture/ality as a notion that directly stems from and can only be fostered by an increasingly neo-nomadic – that is, deterritorialised but at the same time ethically responsible and culturally engaged – approach to life at large:

This is an ethical bond of an altogether different sort from the self-interests of an individual subject, as defined along the canonical lines of classical humanism. It is a nomadic eco-philosophy of multiple belongings ... There is no doubt that ‘we’ are in *this* together. (Braidotti 2006: 35, emphasis original)

In the more specific domain of literary studies, the transcultural perspective may thus prove to be a viable alternative to the criticism of migrant/diasporic literature seen through the lens of multiculturalism. By overstressing the value of difference as well as of territorial nostalgia for lost geographies and broken identities (with ‘displacement’ as a main trope), this literary imaginary seems unable to foster togetherness and solidarity beyond ethnic/religious/national borders and to envision alternative modes of belonging for a new kind of derooted, denationalised or post-national generation of citizens (and writers). Migrant/diasporic literary expressions may thus be viewed as an initial step in the movement towards the complexity and multiplicity of cultures that might eventually lead to a transcultural mode of being, writing, reading and critiquing. ‘Cultural disinheritance becomes a stimulus for creativity: the border-crosser is the empowered free agent for whom the diaspora, with its binary concepts of centre and margin, no longer applies’ (Lindberg-Wada 2006: 3).

The transcultural perspective is also gaining increasing currency among those writers and literary scholars who feel the need, without denying its innovatory inputs, to supersede the problematic nature of the postcolonial paradigm, seen as far too attached either to an excessively reified vision of cultural/ethnic identities or to a political ideology ‘tied to notions of “Third World” liberation’ (Schulze-Engler 2007: 21). Paradoxically, in this respect, even the ‘loose’ use of the term ‘postcolonial’, as Ong has pointed out, ‘has had the bizarre effect of contributing to a Western tradition of othering the Rest’ (1999: 34). In the same vein, Grabovszki acknowledged that in the postcolonial discourse ‘we have the implicit and explicit differentiation between a “home” culture and a culture of the “Other”’ (2003: 53).

Postcolonial approaches tend to understand cultural dynamics ‘in terms of classical dichotomies such as colonizer vs. colonized or centres vs. peripheries’ (Schulze-Engler 2009: xi) and ‘obsessively remain tied’ to notions of cultural difference, dissidence, subalternity and marginality (Helff 2009: 78). This outlook is perhaps less appropriate in a world where the thus far perceived monocultural western imperialism is being replaced by a plurality of centres of techno-economic power, cultural creativity and extended knowledge. As Schulze-Engler pointed out, not only do ‘many postcolonial debates today seem increasingly irrelevant to literary studies’ but ‘some of the chief tenets of postcolonial theory now seem hard to reconcile with the literary and cultural dynamics of a rapidly globalising world’ (2007: 21). On the contrary, by highlighting cultural confluences and intermingling, the new transcultural paradigm in literary criticism appears more suitable for describing and analysing the kind of creative literature that stems from transforming societies in an increasingly globalised world. Which does not mean forgetting about the ever-present issues of mutual exploitation and subalternity, the machinations of power and renewed prejudices fostered by forced globalised proximity to which postcolonial thinking has contributed. But, as McLeod pointed out, ‘We are urged to think instead across and beyond the tidy, holistic entities of nations and cultures – transnationally, transculturally – if we hope to capture and critique the conditions of our contemporaneity’ (2011: 1).

To a certain extent, transcultural literature corresponds to the third moment of the migrant/ethnic/multicultural writer process of imaginative transformation proposed by Jurgensen (1999), the process that, starting from the native cultural perspective (first moment) and the need for cultural mediation (second moment), leads to the development of ‘a language of creative cultural transformation’ (Hopfer 2004: 27).

So, where does transcultural literature stand in relation to postcolonial and multicultural literature? We might say that to a certain extent transcultural fiction flows out from those previous domains/categorisations while still being permeated by them. In other words, it marks a further literary ‘wave’, in Moretti’s (2000) terms, in the cultural and geographical dislocation of narratives from the centre towards the periphery – or better still, it signals the nullification of the dichotomy between centres and peripheries. Potentially, every periphery can now become the centre and vice versa, in a constant game of construction and deconstruction where it is impossible to identify any longer a single, permanent and hegemonic centre. As Lindberg-Wada remarked: ‘The concept of transculturation, with its denial of centre–periphery binarism, is seen as a way of overcoming difficulties of linearities, or postcolonial reversed linearities’ (2006: 156).<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusions

In light of contemporary ‘cultural globalisation’ and at the dawn of what Burke saw as a ‘new global cultural order’ (2009: 115), what mostly matters is the need to find new interpretative keys and theoretical frameworks, together with a new terminology, that may prove better suited to the analysis of an emerging transcultural literature. In other words, there exists the premise for a critical perspective more attuned to the sensibilities not only of a new breed of mobile, denationalised (or ‘dispatriate’) transcultural writers but also of a growing culturally dislocated readership and scholarship (see Dagnino 2012). Undoubtedly in these liquid times of global mobility even the creative (literary) transnational and post-national outputs

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11 On the other hand, Moretti (2000: 55) acknowledged that, if globalisation as an economic system within the framework of liberal capitalism has unequal effects, the same can be said for literature, which, despite having become (or being in the process of becoming) a truly ‘planetary system’ – that is, ‘one world literary system (of inter-related literatures)’ – is ‘profoundly unequal’.

connected to this most recent human condition ask to be read, studied and analysed through a new interpretive lens. As Helff remarked, ‘it seems problematic to approach transcultural texts with a narrative theory that does not consider the extratextual world and transcultural practices as their main sources of information’ (2007: 279).

With transculture/ality we now have a new perspective (with its reasoning and vocabulary) from which to critically address the cultural impact of global modernity and its creative expressions, away from the ‘continuing influence of the nation as a structure for the study of literature’ (Connell and Marsh 2011: 97). Through this lens it is thus possible to promote a type of ‘transcultural comparativism’ for the global age as a model to connect literary works produced in different countries and in multiple cultural and linguistic contexts. Transculture/ality appears to be endowed with the kind of dynamic non-linear nature and flexibility most needed in dealing with the fast-changing patterns and transformations in cultures and literatures. It also seems to foster the premise for a new ‘borderless’ – rather than simply border crossing – comparative methodology. In doing so, it marks an attempt to move away from nationalist stances and the insistence on the periphery–centre, colony–empire, ethnic–mainstream, pure–hybrid, self–other dichotomies with which comparative studies (especially within a postcolonial perspective) have been so far associated. It also offers the possibility of overcoming the nihilistic, self-defeating nature of anything ‘post-’ to embrace instead the ‘visionary power’ (Braidotti 2006), vitalist possibilities and new beginnings inherent in an approach that accepts the prefix proto- (starting from Epstein’s ‘protoglobal’) when dealing with our contemporaneity.

It is not just a question of literary genres, tropes, plots, technical solutions and devices; it is also, or rather more, a question of changing sensitivities, emerging mindsets, approaches and, subsequently, of the different imaginaries and literary expressions, more attuned to contemporary cosmopolitan/pluralistic outlooks, that are being created in the process, through the active interaction between the *lived experiences* of transcultural writers and their globalising – possibly, transcultural – readership. It is true that it is impossible to ‘measure’ and thus to quantify aspects such as ‘sensitivities’, ‘imaginaries’ and ‘outlooks’ but, possibly,

these can be made manifest (and thus detectable) in a literary work – for example in the choice of characters, of voice, of setting or in the use of language that is being made by individual authors.

As such, it becomes necessary to mark out a partially new territory of discourse that is by its own nature deterritorialised or, at least, denationalised and, most of all, extremely fluid and essentially transcultural. On the other hand, it is hard not to share Berry and Epstein's point of view when they admitted that they are now 'much less ready to believe that any one system of explanation – however subtle or powerful – can be the whole answer or can provide a fully useful model of analysis' (1999: 303). By privileging a transcultural perspective, that is, 'a movable praxis, a constantly shifting and dynamic approach', as Pennycook (2007: 37) stated, we thus acknowledge also its ability to promote, emphasise and consider vital a flexible and fluid manner of enquiry particularly suitable to the present context of global mobility, global writing and global languages.<sup>12</sup> It is in fact in this context more than anywhere else that 'the constant process of borrowing, bending and blending of cultures ... the communicative practices of people interacting across different linguistic and communicative codes, borrowing, bending and blending languages into new modes of expression' is mostly felt and experienced (Pennycook 2007: 47).

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12 As Pennycook implied, this means treating languages (and among them, the more globalised ones) not as discreet entities as in the old categorisations where languages, as well as identities, 'are assumed along lines of ... location, ethnicity, culture' but rather as social activities (practices) 'always in translation ... always under negotiation' (2010: 682, 684–685).

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