

Research Seminar Series 2010-2011:  
Transcultural - Transnational - Global?

# Joan-Daniel Bezsonoff's Literature from across the Borders

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011, 5.30 pm  
Resource Centre, Bowland North B88

This talk will be preceded by a reading by the author at 5:15 pm at the same location, within the framework of the 2011 LitFest in DELC.

Joan-Daniel Bezsonoff (Perpignan, 1963) belongs to the generation of Catalan writers in French Catalonia who, as of the 1990s, established themselves as continuators of a long Catalan literary tradition publishing first in the Roussillon and later in Barcelona. He contributes columns to *El Periódico de Catalunya* (Barcelona), *El Temps* (Valencia), and *L'Avenç* (Barcelona).

Bezsonoff has recently stirred the debate on cultural identity on the Spanish side of the Catalan border as a result of the publication of *Una educació francesa (A French Education)* (2009), where he explores his French cultural legacy, and *Un país de butxaca (Pocket Country)* (2010), where his Catalan identity is discussed from a perspective utterly unusual for his compatriots in *Southern Catalonia*. In fact Bezsonoff had already consolidated his literary career on both sides of the Pyrenees after the critical acclaim attained by novels like *La guerra dels cornuts* (2004) (*The War of the Cuckolds*; translated into French as *La guerre des cocus*), on the presence of Catalan volunteers in the Great War. His subsequent novel in 2005, *Les amnésies de Déu (God's Amnesia)*, which obtained three prestigious critical awards in Barcelona, is set during World War II, at a time when the sexual exploits of a priest between French Catalonia and Béziers, are used to portray the moments when France started losing its multilingual identity. **Bezsonoff's well achieved narrative tone**, half way between cynical and nostalgic, was already present in *La presonera d'Alger* (2002) (*Alger's Woman Prisoner*), where he continues to assess from his complex perspective the last days of the French colonial presence in Algeria, as he had already done in *Les lletres d'amor no serveixen de res* (1997) (*Love letters are useless*), and previously in *Les rambles de Saigon* (1996), on the French twilight in Indochina.

Event organised by the Department of European Languages and Cultures (Lancaster University) and the support of Institut Ramon Llull.



# 2010 Guest Lecture Series: Reciprocal Gazes on Catalonia

## The Spanish Civil War and the Catalan Origins of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Thursday 20th May, 7.30 pm

Storey Gallery (Meeting House Lane, Lancaster), Auditorium

Prof Miquel Berga (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona)  
Professor of English Literature and former Dean of Humanities

Miquel Berga is a well-known Orwell scholar who has published extensively on the representations of the Spanish Civil War in English literature. Among his most celebrated books are *George Orwell and Spain* and *John Langdon-Davies, an Anglo-Catalan Biography*.

In this paper Berga sheds light on Orwell's experiences in revolutionary Barcelona as key historical background to his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This paper will also discuss in context the photographic representations of the Civil War, particularly with regard to the only photograph which exists of George Orwell in Barcelona, discovered by Berga among the pictures taken by Agustí Centelles prior to his exile in 1939.

Joint event organised by Litfest and *Peripheral Identities* research group (DELC, Lancaster University).



# 2009 Guest Lecture Series: Reciprocal Gazes on Catalonia

Lecture 1: Monday 9 February, 3 pm (Lecture in English)

Venue: Cavendish Lecture Theatre, Lancaster University

Dr Joan-Lluís Marfany (University of Liverpool)

"A cuckoo in the nest? Castilian in Catalonia, 1500-1870"

An assessment of diglossia in Catalonia, since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, shortly after the Crown of Catalonia-Aragon became united with that of Castile, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a time of cultural revival in Catalonia.

Lecture 2: Tuesday 10 February, 12 pm (Lecture in English)

Venue: Bowland North, Seminar Room 21, Lancaster University

Dr Joan-Lluís Marfany (University of Liverpool)

"A historian looks at sociolinguistics (and is not entirely convinced by what he sees)"

A critique of sociolinguistics taking as a departing point his own experience as a historian of diglossia in Catalonia. This paper focuses particularly on the essential ambiguity of the discipline, placed between linguistics and sociology, in the imprecision, from a sociological and historical view point, **in the use of the terms 'language' and 'dialect', and in the conceptual confusion around the question of 'bilingualism/diglossia' and the idea of 'code switching'.**

Lecture 3: Wednesday 11 March, 5 pm (Lecture in English)

Venue: Bowland North, Seminar Room 14, Lancaster University

Dr Francesco Ardolino (University of Barcelona)

**"Quasimodo in Catalonia"**

Addressing contemporary witnesses, the lecturer will follow the itinerary of the Sicilian Nobel Prize for Literature Salvatore Quasimodo during his visit to Barcelona in 1961. Passages from diaries, newspaper articles and interviews of those who still remember this stay will be assessed to reconstruct the cultural stages of a trip carried out by one of the Italian writers who most influenced Catalan literature in the second half of the 20th century.

Lecture 4: Tuesday 10 March, 5 pm (Lecture in Catalan)

Venue: Bowland North, Seminar Room 21, Lancaster University

Dr Francesco Ardolino (University of Barcelona)

**"Italian 'Futurismo' in Catalonia: Reception and misunderstandings"**

The word 'futurisme' entered the world of Catalan literature five years before the publication of Marinetti's manifesto and this coincidence originated a series of misunderstandings. Later on, when Catalan 'futurisme' had already done away with any conceptual ambiguity, it acquires a series of features that distance it from the Italian original and allow it to assimilate influences from other Avantgarde movements in the early 20th century.

Organized by the 'Peripheral Identities' research group (Department of European Languages and Cultures).  
With the support of the Erasmus teaching exchange programme.

