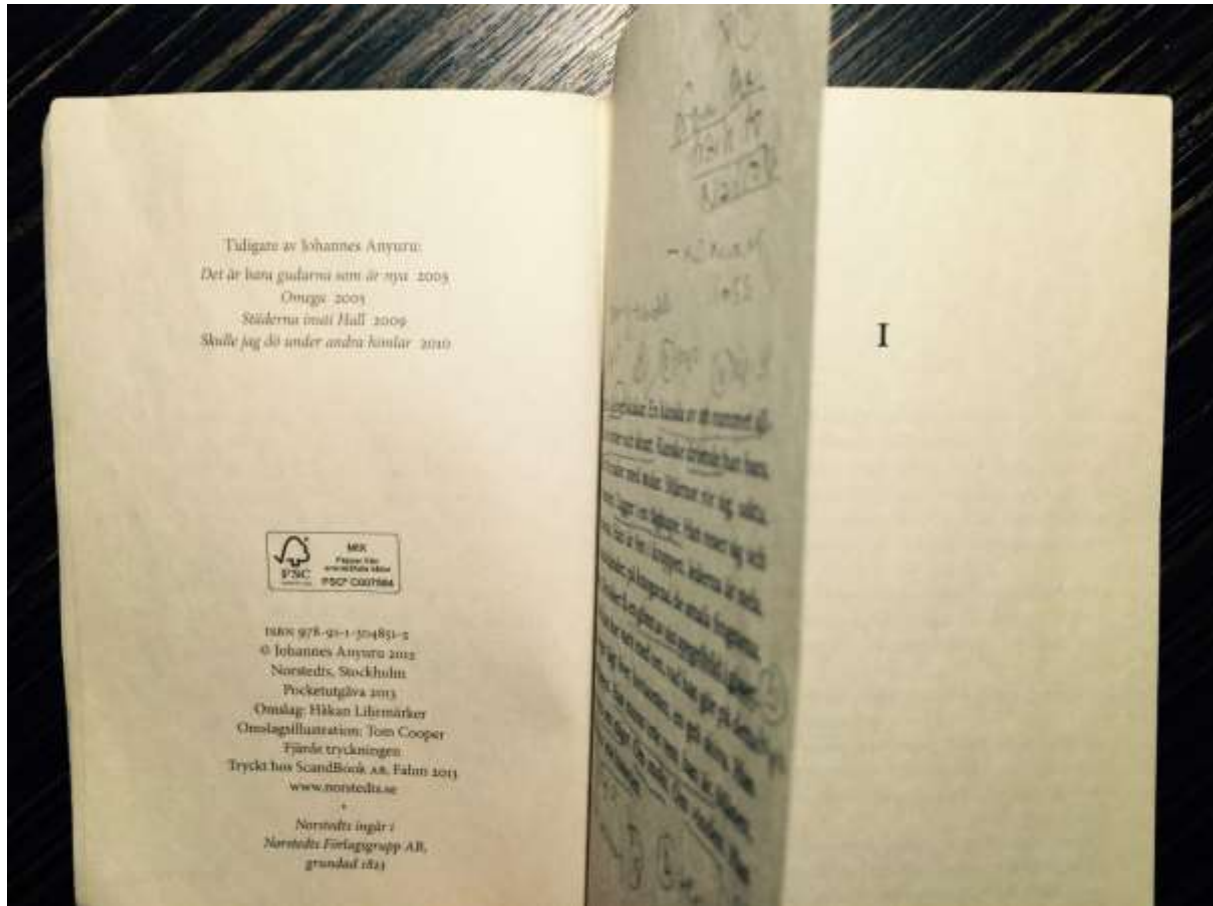


Johan Schimanski

**Lecture: Border Figurations in Migration Literature: A Border Poetics Approach**  
27.4. 2017, 18-20 Uhr EVSL/Finno-Ugristik Uni-Campus Hof 7.1., HS 1 (1. Stock)



Johannes Anyuru's 2012 novel *En Storm kom från paradiset* (*A Storm Blew in From Paradise/ Ein Sturm wehte vom Paradiese her*) describes the labyrinthical journey from Uganda to Sweden undertaken by the author's father. Using this biographical fiction as a departure point, I will be examining how a short scenic description placed at the very beginning of the novel encapsulates a whole border landscape or *borderscape*. The scene can be analyzed as a border crossing on different scales (Tanzania-Kenya, Uganda-Sweden, Africa-Europe) and surfaces (topographical, symbolic, epistemological, temporal and textual), using the methods of border poetics. The analysis can then be used to isolate a series of central rhetorical and narrative figurations of the border.

These analyses around a single example shed light on the ongoing border turn in literary and cultural studies, and how humanities-orientated *border theory* and social science-orientated *border studies* can learn from each other. Border figurations in fiction and in autobiographical narratives about migration and cultural crossings are keys to understanding how different conceptions of the border enter into exchange across discourses. My reading of Anyuru's text takes place against the background of research on border figurations in selected migration narratives published in Norwegian (Nasim Karim, Romeo Gill, Roda Ahmed, Maria Amelie, Amal Aden og Sara Azmeh Rasmussen) together with novels by

Swedish authors such as Johannes Anyuru og Jonas Hassan Khemiri. The specific figurations shed light on the role of literacy and *Bildung* in the journeys of both migrants and readers.

**Workshop:** Traumatic Figurations of Border-Crossing in Migrant Literature  
**28.4. 2017 Universität Wien Hauptgebäude HS 31, 09.45-12.30, 1. Stock Siege 9**

Using the same text as the lecture, Johannes Anyuru's 2012 novel *En Storm kom från paradiset* (*A Storm Blew in From Paradise/Ein Sturm wehte vom Paradiese her*), as its departure point, the seminar will explore the traumatic aspects of bordering and border-crossing and investigate conceptions of trauma and memory as borders. Processes of trauma (the piercing and thus crossing of physical or psychical borders to the self) and traumatization (the inability to cross epistemological boundaries to the traumatic event) bear formal similarities to border-crossing narratives, especially where the status of the event of trauma/border-crossing and repetition/dissemination over time are concerned. Moreover, recent work on 'in/visibility' (and 'in/audibility') in migrant borderscapes, inspired by Arendt and Rancière, suggest that border trauma will have a central role to play figuring the 'sense-ability' of various others in many narratives, parallel with other figurations such as border spectacle and border surveillance. In interpreting the novel, emphasis will be placed on the interplay of narrative (the audible) and image (the visible) in the tracing of trauma, inspired by Unni Langås' readings of photography, phototextuality and ekphrasis in trauma literature.

### Reading list

Johannes Anyuru, *En Storm kom från paradiset* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2012), also available in German and English translations: *Ein Sturm wehte vom Paradiese her: Roman*, trans. Paul Berf (München: Luchterhand, 2015); *A Storm Blew in From Paradise*, trans. Rachel Willson-Broyles (Breda: World Editions, 2015).

Langås' text is only available in Norwegian: Unni Langås, *Traumets betydning i norsk samtids litteratur* (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget/Landslaget for norskundervisning, 2015).

### Biography

Johan Schimanski (Dr.art.) is Professor of Comparative Literature and Department Research Head at the University of Oslo and Professor (adjunct) of Cultural Encounters at the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu. He was previously affiliated to UiT The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø, where he took part in creating research environments focusing on borders and culture and on Arctic discourses. He has been co-coordinator for the Research Council of Norway (RCN) projects *Arktiske diskurser*, *Border Aesthetics* and *Arctic Modernities*, and has led a working package on "Border-Crossing and Cultural Production" within *EUBORDERSCAPES*, a large scale interdisciplinary research project under the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Frame Programme. Currently he is a participant in a NOS-H workshop on "Borderscapes, Memory and Migration", and coordinates the interdisciplinary RCN project *TRAUM – Transforming Author Museums* together with project leader Ulrike Spring at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. In 2015 he and Spring published the monograph *Passagiere des Eises: Polarhelden und arktische Diskurse 1874* and in March 2017 he and Stephen F. Wolfe published the collaborative book *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections*. He and Spring are at present Visiting Scholars at the University of Vienna, in the departments of Finno-Ugric and History respectively.