



Travel, Transculturality and Identity in England, c. 1550-1700



| AN ERC-FUNDED PROJECT | 2016 - 2021 |

Introducing TIDE

TIDE is a 5-year European Research Council-funded project (2016–2021) that aims to investigate how mobility in the great age of travel and discovery shaped English perceptions of human identity based on cultural identification and difference.

The role of those marked by transcultural mobility was central to this period. Trade, diplomacy and politics, religious schisms, and shifts in legal systems all attempted to control and formalise the identity of such figures.

Our current world is all too familiar with the concepts that surfaced or evolved as a result: foreigners, strangers, aliens, converts, exiles, or even translators, ambassadors and go-betweens.

By examining how different discourses tackled the fraught question of human identity in this era, TIDE will open a new perspective on cross-cultural encounters. It will put pressure on our understanding of cultural difference, transculturality and identity, and generate a new understanding of key terms, concepts, and debates.

It will produce new knowledge about the unique role played by literature, illuminating how some of our key concepts of cultural difference and identity took shape. That research will be then used by writers to generate new literature about our encounters with those same issues today. This project will consolidate our fragmented understanding of transculturality and the idea of 'betweenness' in the early modern period, and the ways it continues to have a significant impact on the contemporary world.





More than just exploration

When most people think of the great age of travel and discovery in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they think of great ships, of voyages and new worlds. They think of intrepid adventurers going out to discover new countries and new peoples, of colonisers laying claim on places whose very existence had been unknown to Europe before their arrival. But that's only part of the story.

The great age of travel and discovery was also a period when cross-cultural encounters led to radical developments in the way we think about human identity. Human movements across borders increased under the combined impact of multiple political, economic, religious and social factors throughout this period. And as they did, the ways in which we think about difference – between countries, between races, between one human being from this part of the world and one from another – developed rapidly as well, and began to take recognisable shapes and forms.

In a period marked by mobility, what did it mean to belong, or not to belong? What did it mean to move between cultures, countries, languages, faiths? How did you see yourself, and how did others see you, when you did so? Were assimilation and segregation the only two options available? Could one not be both this and that, a third thing, both part of the world one had left and the world one occupied?

These questions seemed urgent enough when the idea of TIDE was formulated a few years ago, but against the backdrop of the unprecedented scale of crisis and anxiety about human mobility and migration that has unfolded since then, they seem even more important to ask, and to understand today.

Plans for Public Engagement

The questions posed by the project possess a unique urgency in the present climate, where debates about the rights and identities of displaced peoples, nations, and groups rage not only in Europe but across the world.

TIDE therefore aims to pursue an ambitious public engagement strategy that will work with both local and national institutions, archival collections, and groups, to impact the way transculturality and identity is taught and understood in England.

Our public engagement will operate in three key areas:

- **Education and Policy**

This will include working with schools and policy makers on influencing the national curriculum and collaborating with think tanks on their reports and publications.

- **Literature and Culture**

This will include exciting new writing initiatives, local museum outreach through workshops and temporary exhibits, working with theatre companies, and creating larger networks of collaboration with national and international museums.

- **Community and Society**

TIDE aims to liaise with local trusts, higher education widening participation schemes, and community groups and programmes to confront ongoing issues of transculturality and belonging.





Visiting Writers

Working with the Centre for New and International Writing at Liverpool University, TIDE will bring together academics and contemporary writers and poets, whose involvement will provide a new context of exploration and open up a new place of dialogue between literary-historical research and contemporary developments in literature.

Five major international writers over five years will be co-hosted by TIDE and the University of Liverpool's Centre for New and International Writing. They will attend project meetings, have access to the project's research material, and respond to research and produce new writing.

In April 2017, TIDE will welcome the poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright, Fred D'Aguiar, as the first TIDE visiting writer. Fred D'Aguiar was born in London in 1960 of Guyanese parents and brought up in Guyana and London. His fiction and poetry have been translated into several languages., and he is currently Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Sarah Howe will be our Visiting Writer in 2018. Howe is a Hong Kong-born British poet, academic and editor. She has held fellowships at Cambridge and Harvard, among other institutions, and is currently a Leverhulme fellow in English at University College London.



The Centre for New and International Writing is the University of Liverpool's focal point for the study of contemporary and international literatures, for creative writing, and new writing in its many manifestations. Launched in 2013 by Honorary Professor Neil Gaiman, the Centre combines an interest in global literature in English and translation with a focus on innovative creative practice and the visual arts.

The TIDE team



Nandini Das is a literary and cultural historian, and Professor of English Literature at the University of Liverpool. Her essays and books include Robert Greene's *Planetomachia* (2007), *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570-1620* (2011), and the co-edited *Enchantment and Dis-enchantment in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama* (2016). Her investigation of the traces and impact of early modern cross-cultural encounters in Britain, and British and European engagement with the wider world, has developed through essays on Renaissance travel, and through her experience as volume editor of Elizabethan Levant Trade and South Asia in the forthcoming OUP edition of Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations*. Nandini is co-editor of the *Cambridge History of Travel Writing*, and Principal Investigator of the 'Travailer' and 'Envisioning the Indian City' projects.



Lauren Working is a historian of late sixteenth and seventeenth-century English politics and culture. Her research investigates the two-way impact of colonisation; the Anglo-Algonquian Chesapeake; material and visual approaches to civility; and wit and political friendships at the Inns of Court. Lauren's sub-project examines the consequences of colonisation, from tobacco smoking to English attempts to 'civilise' indigenous peoples, on sociability and the practice of politics in the Jacobean metropolis.



Haig Smith investigates how English overseas companies established distinct governmental identities through their religious interactions with diverse communities across the globe. His research focus on the TIDE project investigates how law and governance influenced the formation of identity in the early modern English world, examining the intellectual process in the politics of Anglo-indigenous interaction between 1550-1700 in forming early modern concepts of identity and governance.



João Vicente Melo is a cultural historian who works on early modern cross-cultural encounters and diplomacy. His research interests include diplomatic rituals, early modern European ethnographic production about South Asia and Africa, religious missions, and the European presence at the Mughal court. As a part of the TIDE project, he will publish a book-length study on the Jesuit and English presence in Mughal India between 1580 and 1650.



Roger Christofides is a Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Liverpool. His current research examines representations of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa in early modern literature and how those representations can help us to think in new ways about modern conflicts across those regions. His latest book, *Othello's Secret: The Cyprus Problem*, is published with the Arden Shakespeare and reads *Othello* as a play about Cyprus, helping to reimagine the island's current ethnic divisions.



Emma-Louise Whitehead is the Project Administrator for TIDE. She also works as a freelance bibliographer for the Oxford English Dictionary, dealing mainly with religious and scientific texts. She is also involved with Engagement for the Shakespeare North theatre project, while studying for an undergraduate degree in English, with particular interest in Renaissance drama.



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