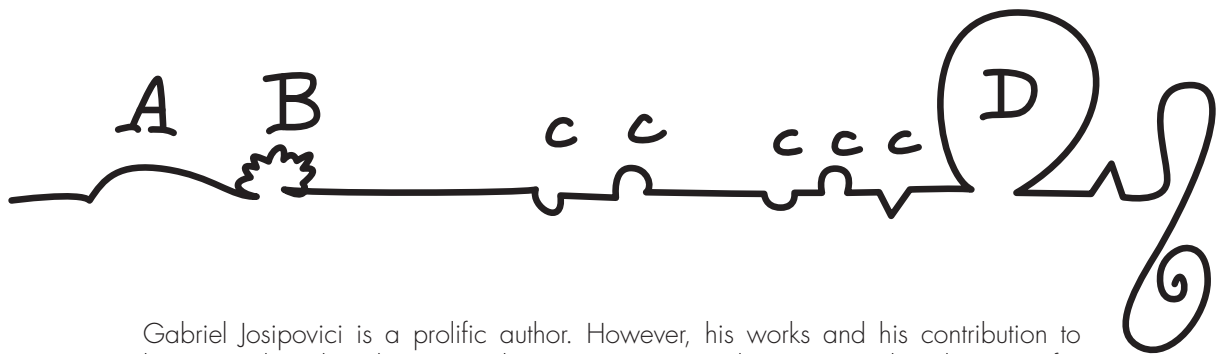


ZIG-ZAG, TWIST AND TURN: TOYING WITH GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI

Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden
22–23 September 2014



Gabriel Josipovici is a prolific author. However, his works and his contribution to literary studies, though commanding increasing critical attention and acclaim, are far from being fully acknowledged. In addition to numerous novels and a number of short story collections, Josipovici has produced several collections of essays dealing with literature and culture and has been active in literary criticism, closely collaborating with the *Times Literary Supplement*. The aim of this conference is to examine various aspects of Gabriel Josipovici's work, both related to his critical studies and to his literary oeuvre.



Dalarna University and the Transcultural Identities Research Group at Dalarna University, in conjunction with ULICES (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies, Portugal) and ERIBIA E.A.2610 (University of Caen, France), are pleased to host an international conference on the life and work of the British writer Gabriel Josipovici.

As a starting point for this conference, we have decided to adopt Josipovici's own theorization of *art-as-toy*, a concept which opens a new pathway for studies in literature. In his collection of essays, *The Singer on the Shore* (2006), Josipovici declares: "[a]rt as toy [...] is art as the hobby-horse on which we can jump." In his fiction, the very idea of toy acquires philosophical and epistemological resonance, so that it is not merely a theme, but rather a complex rationale behind narrative, poetic and existential preoccupations. Moreover, the concept of toying pits issues of knowledge and epistemology against the myth of hidden truths, mysteries and teleology, so that precedence is given to a literary project that largely relies on the ambivalent articulation between the unfathomable and the evident, the obvious and the ordinary. Rather than presenting the reader with narrative tension aiming at resolutions, Josipovici prefers to engage with the transparent straightforwardness of manipulating a toy: "all the evidence is before you: the wood, the stick, the sticking plaster holding it all together [...] the work is visible and unmysterious." On the other hand, toying may evoke Josipovici's relationship with the literary traditions in which his works are (or are not) inscribed. He writes: "I felt crushed by the weight of the European tradition." Rather than following in the footsteps of the classical authors, to whom Josipovici refers as "mountains," he envisages failure as a means of coming to terms with the need to emulate tradition. The author's stance on Modernism is an instance of such troubling relationship with the past. Yet another aspect of toying stems from intermedial and intersemiotic questions which characterize his fiction, with some of Josipovici's works putting the toy into play in a sophisticated *interplay* of arts and disciplines.

Recalling Josipovici's own words from "I Dream of Toys," we thus encourage contributors to a "zig-zag, twist and turn" of their own and explore the narrative strategies and inter-art echoes to which his books resort. Paper proposals addressing these questions from a variety of approaches are welcome.

Possible topics include, but are in no way limited to:

- art-as-toy /art and toys
- writing
- reading
- narrative strategies and narratology
- narrative fiction, novels, short stories
- drama and theatre
- essays and critical writings
- intersemioticity and intermediality
- Josipovici and Modernism

Abstracts (max 400 words) for twenty-minute presentations and a short biographical description (max 200 words) to Mario Semiao (msi@du.se) and Marcin Stawiarski (marcin_stawiarski@yahoo.fr) by 1 June 2014. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 15 June 2014. A selection of papers presented at the conference will be published in *Anglo Saxonica* (an international and peer-reviewed journal published by ULICES).

Keynote speakers

Bryan CHEYETTE, Professor of English, University of Reading
Liliane LOUVEL, Professor of English, University of Poitiers

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Further information will be available on the conference website: www.du.se/josipovici