



## PLATFORM FOR POSTCOLONIAL READINGS

# INTERROGATING THE POSTCOLONIAL PARADIGM

Date: Friday, 26 February 2016

Venue: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Campus Etterbeek, Pleinlaan 2, Brussels, Room 5 C 404

Having emerged in the 1970s as a revolutionary field of academic specialization that questioned the hegemony of western thought, history and culture, postcolonial studies soon occupied a position of legitimacy. However, as it became institutionalized in universities within and beyond the former colonial centres and helped to establish what is often labelled the 'postcolonial paradigm', the field itself has increasingly been subjected to scrutiny. A burgeoning body of scholarly texts has critically examined the central concepts and objectives of postcolonial studies and exposed the limits of postcolonialism from various angles (e.g. Marxist criticism, globalization theory). Developments and approaches such as materialism, posthumanism, globalization, environmentalism, transnationalism and the rising popularity of world literary studies have brought about a sense of crisis. Directing attention to hybrid, diasporic, cosmopolitan and transnational/cultural experiences and ethnic conflicts 'beyond' the postcolonial, they have presented scholars with the challenge of revitalizing postcolonial theory and extricating it from the confines of its traditional binary thinking.

Twenty years after the heydays of this debate, we would like to look at its consequences for our scholarly practice today. How do we accommodate the convergence of world literary and postcolonial studies? What continue to be the conceptual strengths of the ethics and politics of postcolonialism in the context of accelerated globalization and post-nationalism? How are we to theorize (migrant) subjectivities, diasporic communities, borderscapes and modes of polycultural encounters that are not immediately concerned with (or determined by) 'postcolonial issues'? How can we attend to aesthetic qualities and transnational poetics in 'postcolonial' works without devaluing their material/historicist dimensions? In short, how can we (claim to) be postcolonial scholars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Addressing the manifold ways of INTERROGATING THE POSTCOLONIAL PARADIGM and the challenges presented to postcolonial thinking and its creative expression in the arts, the Platform for Postcolonial Readings invites in particular junior researchers for a meeting that will consist of

- an introductory lecture by Roy Sommer, professor of English at the University of Wuppertal and an expert in multicultural and postcolonial fiction, literary theory and narratology;
- a collective close reading and discussion of recent contributions to the debate which interrogate the postcolonial paradigm from various angles;
- junior scholars presenting their own research in the light of the day's topic, followed by debate;
- a reading and joint on-the-spot-analysis of recent work by New Zealand novelist and short-story writer Paula Morris ([www.paula-morris.com](http://www.paula-morris.com)).

A reader will be distributed in preparation of the seminar, which is open to all researchers, Research Master and PhD students working in the field of postcolonial studies. Please register with Dr. Eloë Kingma of NICA/OSL ([nica-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:nica-fgw@uva.nl)). If you want to present your research project in the light of the meeting's topic, please contact Dr. Janine Hauthal ([Janine.hauthal@vub.ac.be](mailto:Janine.hauthal@vub.ac.be)) or Prof. dr. Elisabeth Bekers ([elisabeth.bekers@vub.ac.be](mailto:elisabeth.bekers@vub.ac.be)) by **Monday 1 February 2016**. Active participation by Research Master students may be credited with 1 or 3 EC (without/with presentation).

*The Platform for Postcolonial Readings organizes seminars for all (junior) researchers in the Netherlands and Belgium who are committed to issues of postcoloniality and globalization. As an open network, platform for debate, and reading group, our meetings are open to all.*

*Platform organizers: Elisabeth Bekers (VUB), Sarah De Mul (OU), Isabel Hoving (UL), Liesbeth Minnaard (UL); guest organizer: Janine Hauthal (VUB-FWO Vlaanderen)*

## 26.02.2016 PROGRAMME (5C404)

### MORNING: Interrogating the Postcolonial Paradigm

10.15 Welcome (Elisabeth Bekers, Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

10.30 Short introduction of the platform theme by guest-organiser Janine Hauthal (postdoctoral researcher, FWO/Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

#### 10.45 "Is there a Life after Postcolonialism?"

Guest lecture by **Roy Sommer**, Dept. of English, University of Wuppertal

11.30 Coffee break

11.45 Responses to the Lecture and Discussion of the Readings

- Boehmer, Elleke (2014). "The World and the Postcolonial." *European Review* 22.2: 299–308.
- Schulze-Engler, Frank. (2013). "Irritating Europe." In: Graham Huggan (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 669–691.
- Young, Robert J. C. (2012). "Postcolonial Remains." *New Literary History* 43.1: 19–42.

Additional Reading:

- Krishnaswamy, Revathi (2008). "Postcolonial and Globalization Studies: Connections, Conflicts, Complicities." In: R. K. & John C. Hawley (eds.). *The Postcolonial and the Global*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2–21.
- McLeod, John (2001). "'Wheel and Come Again': Transnational Aesthetics Beyond the Postcolonial." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 7.2: 85–99.

12.45-14.00 Lunch

### AFTERNOON: Presentations and Projects (with coffee)

**Further Food for Thought and Discussion** (moderated by Elisabeth Bekers and Janine Hauthal)

14.00 Mariam Muwanga (University of Wuppertal): "Modelling the African Diaspora: Representations of Black experience in Black British Narratives" *followed by discussion*

14.20 Riccardo Ceniviva (Universiteit van Amsterdam): "Romuald Hazoumè's *Beninese Solidarity for Westerners in Danger*: Deconstructing Otherness Through The Fake?" *followed by discussion*

14.40 Anna-Leena Toivanen (University of Eastern Finland): "New Technologies and Communication Gaps in Contemporary African Women's Fiction" *followed by discussion*

15.00 Katarzyna Twardowska (Jagiellonian University Krakow): "Postcolonial Theory in Latest Polish Culture Studies Discourses" *followed by discussion*

Change rooms to E.0.12

#### 16.00 "When They Grow Tired of Gazing: The Invisible New Zealander" by Paula Morris

Reading and joint on-the-spot-discussion of recent work by New Zealand novelist and short-story writer Paula Morris, who is currently Passa Porta/VUB Writer-in-Residence. For more information see: [www.paula-morris.com](http://www.paula-morris.com).

Preparatory Reading:

- "Rangatira." In: *Forbidden Cities: A Short Story Collection*. Rosedale: Penguin NZ, 2008. 207–226.
- *On Coming Home*. Wellington: Bridget Williams, 2015. (esp. chapter VIII, iche 68–75).

17.00 Concluding remarks

17.15 Drinks