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Decolonising Feminisms
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Decolonising Academia

A concept for co-teaching across the globe

Edna Harriet Mtoi, The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Tanzania
Anika Thym, University of Basel, Switzerland,

In our contribution we would like to present a concept to co-teach gender studies students from the University of Basel, Switzerland and The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Tanzania online.

Decolonization refers to the dismantling and overcoming of all forms of hierarchy related to (post)colonialism concerning economic, political and cultural relations, but also knowledge production and subjectivities. As Fanon says, a de- or anticolonial movement aims at overcoming the existence of both colonizers and colonized and leads to a new kind of humanity (Fanon, 1968). The project of decolonizing feminisms engages with this project focussing to gender relations with an intersectional perspective. As Lorde emphasizes: “The future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women [and other genders] to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference” and to overcome “the same old exchanges, the same old guilt, hatred, recrimination, lamentation, and suspicion” (Lorde, 2001, S. 123).

Co-teaching across the globe can create a space to understand and engage with the project of decolonizing feminisms. Something important for students from Switzerland to learn would be, to deal in a productive way with the kind of guilt and shame some students feel and which makes them hesitate to critically think about and judge texts by black authors. This expression of respect and fear leads to its own form of othering and distancing. Communicating across the globe could help them to allow closeness, empathy, and (self)critical judgement, which is an important base for emancipatory coalition politics.

Something important for students from Tanzania to learn could be the dynamics of gender within the struggles for new ways of being. The main question for this would be why many Africans still believe they cannot break free and step forward after colonial flags were lowered. The continent struggles to free the deep legacies of feminists and other activists and some have frustratingly felt they took a wrong path. Opening up dialogue with other students from Switzerland, students from Tanzania would be able to learn and analyse through decolonizing feminism the fundamental preconditions needed for transformation.
We will develop a selection of texts and teaching methods to enable open (self)critical dialogue and group work concerning issues that deeply matter to the diverse students and teachers concerning global, local and individual challenges we are facing.

References


**Decolonising the University: An Endpoint?**

Bethany Gum, RINGS intern (February to April 2021), Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Doing decolonial work at the university is not about reaching an endpoint of a ‘decolonised university’, decolonial work is a continuous state of being, it is a process that requires a fundamental restructuring of our institutions into spaces that are founded on inclusion and social justice. Despite locally contextualised definitions of what ‘decolonial’ means (Andrews 2018; Fanon 1961; Lugones 2010; Mbembe 2016; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Smith 1999; Tuck and Yang 2012), the primary objective of decolonial work is to challenge hegemonic power structures which have remained in place since the official end of colonial administrations across the world and to understand how these structures continue to oppress. So, how do we decolonise the university, as an endpoint, if we exist within a neocolonial, neoliberal state?

This research is focused on qualitative data I gathered during my internship with RINGS in 2021 as a part of my master’s degree at Utrecht University. I conducted interviews with feminist scholars from different geo-political locations to understand what it means to do decolonial work in higher education institutions. I analysed the data thematically to draw upon patterns and similarities and focused on four axes for analysis: race, gender, class and (dis)ability (selected because of the data). I offer a critique of the university as a site of inclusion to show how thinking differently through adopting a feminist ethics of care approach and an intersectional lens may hold a path for restructuring our institutions. I offer a concrete ways for doing decolonial work at the university in three domains: teaching and knowledge production, access to the university, and ethics and care. I argue that decolonial work must involve a greater representation of marginalised communities including listening to student demands, an increase in self-reflexive methods to understand our accountability in perpetuating social injustice, and a deeper engagement with those who have been oppressed by coloniality. Finally, I show that we must find ways of thinking differently and restructuring the university as a site of inclusion if we are to ever envision a future liberated from social injustice.

**Trust in scholarly knowledge after the pandemic, post-factual, and decolonizing turns**

Elina Oinas, University of Helsinki, Finland
The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the ways societies were seen to ideally function, making sociological questions about trust and authority relevant in new ways. In this paper the trustworthiness and authority claims of social science knowledge are in focus. During the pandemic, taken-for-granted notions of individual freedoms and collective responsibility were challenged by arguments about epidemiological facts. These, however, are only taking shape, and changing, as this virus became gradually known to scientists, yet, the societal aspects of governance came also to the fore, especially in vaccine uptake. Sociology has a long tradition in understanding how science-based policy and public trust co-exist, but sociology also needs to revisit its tools in the new situation. Do we need new ways of public engagement around knowledge, reliability and authority? The sociological debates over positivism, truth, knowledge/power and politics of knowledge production already gained urgency – and a need to revise some more skeptical accounts especially in qualitative sociology regarding reason and evidence – due to the popularity of post-factual authoritarian regimes across the world. Simultaneously, the student movements demanding decolonizing presented powerful challenges to universalizing yet biased tendencies in social sciences. How to bring these debates together? When the trustworthiness of scholars and decision makers alike is contested, what arguments are used by social scientists, to regain trust? The empirical case presented here is a study of a negotiation between global development policy makers and academics in Finland.

The IGDS: Thirty years of Decolonising Caribbean Feminisms

Dalea Bean, Angelique V. Nixon, Halimah DeShong, Tonya Haynes & Sue Ann Barratt, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies

A Roundtable Proposal

The historical, geopolitical and socio-economic realities of Caribbean societies figure prominently in how Caribbean feminist praxis emerges and is maintained. Like other regions of the world navigating histories of settler colonialism, imperialism, neocolonialism, global capitalism and, more recently, the dominance of neoliberal socioeconomic logics, it is no surprise that Caribbean feminist praxis emerges as invariably anti/decolonial. Caribbean feminist praxis also challenges ‘the colonial’ as the taken-for-granted point of departure of feminist action, organising and/or theorising in the region, to consider possibilities beyond coloniality. This is the context out of which the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at The University of West Indies emerged exactly 30 years ago.

This proposed roundtable will situate the work and legacy of the IGDS at the University of West Indies in its 30th year of existence as a space founded on principles of decolonising and de-westernising feminist and gender studies. It also considers how we have worked in spite of, and beyond coloniality. The proposed roundtable will include 5 faculty members of the Caribbean regional institution who will discuss the pillars on which the IGDS stands in relation...
to teaching, research, outreach and activism in the Caribbean, and, more specifically, landmark feminist theorising and praxis to have emerged from IGDS faculty.

The proposed roundtable will include members who will join the conference online as well as in person, and be guided by a moderator posing critical questions to the panel.

Critical areas of focus include:

- The history of the IGDS as a space of anti/decolonial theory and praxis
- Evolution of liberatory pedagogy
- Critical Theorising: The IGDS and Knowledge production
- Research and Activism: Curating meaningful feminist action
- Challenges and The Way Forward

Violence Against Girls and Women

Manifestation of Silence Towards Sextortion in Education Institution: A Tanzania Perspective

Tatu M. Nyange and Sixbert S. Amsi, The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Tanzania

Culture of silence has fuelled sextortion to an alarming rate around the world and Tanzania in particular. The silence has a massive contribution in increasing incidences of sexual abuse. To voice out and break the silence is crucial in the fight against sexual corruption in schools, colleges and universities. Students, mostly women and girls at all levels of education institutions often face sexual corruption. The reality about sextortion is that women and girls are the most affected group; this implies human rights violations and a barrier in attaining gender equality. Victims experience long-lasting psychological effects and diminish their dignity. This paper is based on a review from available literature and social media including newspapers and blogs. The results from review indicate that sextortion is existing at all levels of education institutions from primary schools to universities; while the victims are mostly women and girls. The magnitude of sextortion in education institutions is shadowy; because of secrecy occurrence nature of sexual corruption between perpetrators and the victims. Since, sexual corruption and any other forms of sexual harassment are forbidden by the law, it is crucial to report events of sextortion to formal institutions. Therefore, awareness creation towards breaking silence against sextortion and sensitization of women’s’ and girls’ rights is of utmost importance. These will assist in ending sexual corruption and ultimately achieving gender equality.

Keywords: Sextortion, silence, women and girls, gender equality, education institution, Tanzania.
Spectacularising narratives on femicide in South Africa: A decolonial feminist analysis

Floretta Boonzaier, Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town

How are we to think about femicide in South Africa – a country with one of the highest rates of gendered violence, globally? The rate of women murdered in South Africa is around five times the global average and at least half of women who are murdered die at the hands of an intimate partner. Every so often, a South African woman’s murder is propelled into national (and sometimes international) media discourse. How these crimes are reported are important for shaping public consciousness about crimes against women, gendered violence and the sexist, misogynistic and patriarchal contexts that produce it. This paper reports on an analysis of instances of femicide that have been reported in South African national media over the past five years. It offers a decolonial feminist reading of the reporting, showing how it is characterised by an overarching narrative that spectacularizes the violence, drawing on long-standing, racialised, colonial tropes about black bodies and identities. The implications of this discourse on femicide are considered for how it contributes to the shaping of collective consciousness and public discourse around how to understand femicide, specifically its victims and its perpetrators.

Sexual Violence, Bare Life and its Colonial Origins

Amanda Gouws, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

The founding violence of settler colonialism’s logic of elimination also becomes naturalized in the post-colony. It is the colonial rule’s state of exception (Agamben) that stigmatizes colonial subjects as violent, backward and uncivilized. According to Leonhard Praeg (2007) colonial violence can be viewed as the founding violence of modernity. Violence in current day post-colonial Africa is viewed as ‘transgressive’, ‘extreme’ or ‘outrageous’. The crime of violence is measured against human rights that is introduced by Western law, but human rights are founded on the very violence it exists to criminalize. Juridical orders are marked by violence because the act of making laws that finds a new order is itself not subject to any law, in the same sense that the state of exception is judged by the same laws that make it an exception. While violence can be criminalized in the post-colony it cannot be eliminated and therefore becomes normalized.

Processes of colonization and settlement are deeply gendered. Gender and sexuality (sexual violence), just as race, were produced and mobilized in what Ann Stoler has called “the intimacies of empire” through the regulation of women’s sexuality, their reproduction, marriage and genealogy. The power of regulation was institutionalized and embodied through sexual violence. Settler colonialism introduced Western heteropatriarchy and the binary sex/gender system on foreign lands, enforcing the logics of Western sexuality as universal.
In this paper I introduce a gender dimension to Agamben’s theory of the homo sacer, to show how in current day South Africa the very high levels of sexual violence can be traced back to colonial conditions of sexual violence against slave and indigenous women.

**Young People and Sexualities**

**Decolonising Porn-Assemblages: Girls, Bodies, Gender and Desire**

Deevia Bhana, University of KwaZulu-Natal

What can girls do when they come across porn? What thoughts, feelings, interpretations, and experiences are possible given the ubiquity and prevalence of their digital exposure to sexual media and online porn? These questions arise from my recently published book *Girls and the Negotiation of Porn in South Africa: Power, Play and Sexuality*. While dominant constructs around what is possible to know about girls and porn rests on female sexual violation and girls’ passivity, the book contends that what girls can do and what porn does to girls’ capacities articulates and amplifies their feminist orientations that offer critique against racialized/ gendered bodily standards and female objectification, masculine sexual entitlements while questioning the male pleasure prerogative and broadens discussion to address porn and girls’ claims for sexual/intimate justice and gender equality.

In the first part of the paper I focus on some of the main aims of the book. *Girls Negotiating Porn in South Africa* is not a pro-porn book. Rather, the book interrupts and challenges the narrow and deeply embedded narrative that reverberates in South Africa and elsewhere and which continuously sees pornographic and digital sexualised technologies as culpable in increasing girls’ vulnerability to sexual violence, damaging sexual innocence and detached from girls’ desires. For too long, girls’ (and young people’s) own experiences with porn have been denigrated and, in the Global South, the issue largely remains the domain of secrecy and shame where girls are left with no opportunity to talk to adults about, gain leverage from, or access resources to address what they see, hear, feel, and desire. As long as dominant discursive constructs prohibit such conversations, girls’ online sexual curiosities will remain hidden, forestalling any opportunity to yield insights into and address the issues that matter to them. This has grave consequences for girls, gender equality, and sexualities. Using a decolonial approach I draw from the book to illustrate how girls’ account of bodies, pleasure, race and gender reify hierarchical representations of online pornified bodies which are embedded in historical forces and territorialise pleasurable capacities where white and male bodies are upheld as desiring and desirable machines.

In the second part of the discussion I address the process of negotiating the title of the book with Routledge. My original proposal for the book was entitled, *Girls’ Porn Play: Pleasure, Power and Privilege*. I reflect on the claims made by the press house of a problematic and sensationalist title and the recommendation that I change the title and add the country location to a new and revised title. Another concern of the press house was the focus of the book on privileged girls (both black and white). While most of my work has focused on girls and young people in the context of racialized poverty, the concern about girls on the ‘lower end of the spectrum’ became another point of contention.
In conclusion I tie together the main aims of the study, with the negotiation of the book with the press house to explain the challenges of working with young people, sexuality, porn in contemporary digital times and continued reinforcement of existing hierarchies to determine the shape and form of knowledge in the Global South. In both the production and writing of this book, the politics of gender, race, age and sexuality as well as the continued colonial surveillance remains problematic. Taking a decolonising approach to porn, means to challenge and erase the power inequalities and to reimagine new ways of writing, living and being even if these defy dominant logics about what is possible to do and know sexually.

Teenage girls’ negotiation of ‘hetero-sexy’ on social media: a new feminist materialist perspective

Raksha Janak, University of KwaZulu-Natal

In the last decade, an expanding body of feminist scholarship has focused on young people, gender, sexuality, and social media. Much of this research is primarily concentrated in the Global North, with evidence suggesting the contradictory ways through which gender and sexuality is mediated on social media platforms. To address this gap, we use a qualitative research design with 30 schoolgirls aged between 13-18 years old in a South African high school to illustrate girls’ engagement with online spaces as an entanglement of matter of both human and more-than-human forms, co-existing within an assemblage that provide opportunities for girls to negotiate ‘hetero-sexy’. Inspired by new feminist materialism, this paper seeks to reimagine existing knowledge of gender, sexuality and social media by considering how the surrounding material reality of digital space may unlock alternate possibilities for girls’ enactment of sexual agency. Drawing on the narratives of semi-structured interviews, the paper shows how girls express hetero-sexy in nuanced ways through their entanglement with selfies, videos, sexting, things, objects, dress within an affective flow, suggesting girls’ active investments in their sexual desires. Notwithstanding girls’ ability to express hetero-sexy in ways that defy sexual passivity, it is found that they are simultaneously subjected to an idealized heteronormative version of sexy that entangles around colonial versions of beauty where idealized notions of female bodily capacities and male desirability are made hegemonic and girls who do not subscribe to these idealized notions of femininity are subjugated and objectified. The implications of the findings are suggestive that girls’ engagement with social media spaces illuminates the entangled historical processes that tie colonialism and sexuality in ways that continue to shape capacities for what girls can be, do or feel. Through a materialist lens, we argue that urgent attention is required to address girls micropolitical interactions with social media in order to decolonize hegemonic notions of sexuality and capacitate girls about their expressions of desire that need to be considered in relation to their complicity in dominant heterosexual norms and expectations around feminine desires.
Primary schoolgirls negotiating gender and sexuality

Naresha Govender and Diloshini Govender

In recent years, a growing body of feminist scholarship has focused on how high school girls negotiate gender and sexuality. Limited attention has been given to investigating how younger, primary schoolgirls negotiate gender and sexuality at school. To address this gap, we use a qualitative research design with 40 schoolgirls aged between 12-13 years old in a South African primary school to illustrate how primary schoolgirls negotiate gender and sexuality. Using a decolonial feminist perspective, we show how schoolgirls resist dominant gender norms that subordinate women and girls and place limits upon female sexuality. Herein the primary schoolgirls rejected sexual double standards. Despite their attempts to rupture dominant gender norms, we found that primary schoolgirls are simultaneously subjected to, and expected to enact an idealized version of femininity that rallies around cultural versions of respect, and compliance where idealized notions of femininity are normalized at school. Girls who do not subscribe to these idealized notions of femininity are ostracized. We argue that the ideal of an emphasized femininity is deeply problematic for girls who are trying to forge contemporary, agentic identities and it ultimately stagnates attempts to destabilize heteropatriarchal sexual cultures. Addressing the specific meanings primary schoolgirls attach to gender and sexuality can help to improve the effectiveness of primary school-based educational interventions promoting gender and sexual awareness and equality with the aim of creating a safe and empowering educational space for all learners.

Troubling gay men who teach young children: I’m not gonna hate you but I’m definitely not gonna support you

Shaaista Moosa, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Men in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are often stigmatised for working in a feminised profession considered to be ‘women’s work’. One stigma facing men in ECE is an interrogation of their sexuality. Men in ECE are thus compelled to navigate a troublesome terrain within which their sexuality comes under scrutiny. The deployment of homophobic and emasculating undertones to label men who work in feminised professions as gay forms part of the sexuality stigma facing men in ECE settings across the world. In this paper we demonstrate the complex and gendered ways in which this stigma unfolds in a South African context and offer a decolonial perspective to highlight how the country’s socio-political and cultural context impacts on how parents respond to gay men in ECE. The parents in our study either favoured or rejected gay men in ECE. Notwithstanding, these opposing views, normative gendered ideals were reinforced both by those parents who supported gay men in ECE as well as by parents who condemned gay men in ECE. More importantly the global north discourse positioning gay men as paedophilic threats in ECE was disrupted by the parents in our study who favoured gay men as teachers in ECE due to the ‘inherent’ feminine qualities stereotypically associated with
gay men. Parental support of gay men in ECE had further gendered implications as parents expressed that whilst it was acceptable for gay men to teach children in ECE, it was unacceptable for gay men to disclose their sexual orientation to children in ECE. Parental condemnation of gay men in ECE was attributed to prejudiced and homophobic attitudes toward homosexual identities with a principal fear that gay men will be invested in gay propaganda that would ‘negatively’ influence children. These findings illuminate the complex gendered policing and constraints facing gay men in ECE and the urgent need to deconstruct these gendered and discriminatory ideologies and its situatedness in the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Additionally, there is a need to offer support initiatives to assist all individuals who experience gendered policing and discrimination in ECE across the gender spectrum.

Black Feminist Reflections on Decolonising

The Coloniality of Power/Gender/Being: Black Feminist and Decolonial Theory in Dialogue
Jessica Nogueira Varela, CEU, Hungary

Since the late 1980’s decolonial and black feminist theorists have utilized a distinct but comparable set of tools that examine how power marginalizes disfranchised people in distinct parts of the world. In this presentation, I propose bridging black feminist theory and decolonial theory through the analytical framework of the coloniality of power/gender/being in relation to the concept of blackness. My working definition of the coloniality of power/gender/being derives from putting together Aníbal Quijano’s definition of coloniality of power with Maria Lugones’s framing of gender and Sylvia Wynter’s analysis of being. I understand coloniality as the permeating logic of Western modernity that starts within colonialism but surpasses it. Coloniality structures Western institutions and economy; it unequally distributes resources under capitalism. In this sense, a gendered concept of blackness is fundamental towards illustrating how the coloniality of power/gender/being materially affects people’s lives across the Atlantic, particularly in the Americas, in Europe and in the Caribbean. Conceptualizing blackness requires historicizing how the colonization of the Americas and the Atlantic slave trade have generated wealth by creating and exploiting racial hierarchies divided along heteropatriarchy. In this context, gendering blackness means asking how, as Zakhia Iman Jackson writes, “gendered and sexual discourses on ‘the African’ are inextricable from those pertaining to reason, historicity, and civilisation, as purported observations of gender and sexuality were frequently used to provide ‘evidence’ of the inherent abject quality of black people’s human animality from the earliest days of the invention of “the human.” Drawing from scholarship by black feminist thinkers, such as Sylvia Wynter, Michelle M Wright, Carole Boyce Davies, Denise Ferreira da Silva, and Lélia Gonzalez, I suggest that a critical reading of blackness has the potential to expose and explain how structures of classism, racism, and sexism historically function simultaneously. By centering black women’s knowledge production, I want to make evident the invisibility of whiteness, the racialization of class, and
the visibility of race under heteropatriarchy, further questioning how decolonial theory and black feminist theory can be combined in order to unsettle coloniality.

**Doing Theory Differently: Teaching African Feminism**

Deirdre C. Byrne, University of South Africa

This paper discusses Honours students’ responses to African Feminism as part of their studies in Gender Theory. They were asked to read an article and then write an essay in which they positioned themselves in relation to African Feminism. The goal of the assignment was to decolonize the study of gender theory by emphasizing the contribution made by African feminists and to help them understand how postcolonial and decolonial feminists in Africa and elsewhere have reacted against the dominance of Western feminism. As part of their study material, students were asked to watch YouTube videos of Sylvia Tamale and other African feminists explaining the main tenets of African feminism. Unfortunately, the assignment question did not elicit the enthusiasm that had been expected, possibly because students did not have a clear grasp of the relationship between Western and African feminism. By discussing selected responses, the paper concludes that decolonizing students’ understanding of feminist theory is more complex than had been previously assumed.

**Working with Creativity, Affect and Embodiment: Decolonial Feminist Praxis for Gender and Sexual Justice**

Convened by Tamara Shefer and Carmine Rustin, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

- Disobedient Women and Theatre Historiography in India, Swati Arora
- Uitgeskryf in grond (Edited out of/ into the land): A reflection on a multimodal collaborative exhibition project, Janine Lange
- Uitgeskryf (written out) in ocean: An extract from a collaborative exhibition project, Cheri Hugo

**End of Day Session Paper and Book Launch**

‘Troubling’ scholarship and praxis directed at young people, sexuality and gender: Reflections on a transnational dialogue

Jeff Hearn, Hanken School of Economics, Finland

Tamara Shefer, University of Western Cape, South Africa
How are young people, sexuality and gender to be represented in research, policy and practice interventions? And why would two white, not-young, currently middle-class, English-speaking academics write a book on research, policy and practice interventions on young people in South Africa? Over the last few years, the two of us have worked on a book, *Knowledge, Power and Young Sexualities: A Transnational Feminist Engagement*, that *troubles* the ways young people have been imagined in global and local spaces as ‘trouble’, and how these representations are deeply raced, classed, gendered, aged and shaped by geopolitical local and global inequalities. The book speaks to transnational, transdisciplinary concerns about the politics of knowledge with respect to gender and sexuality, echoing many of the challenges raised by decolonial feminist scholars in relation to mainstream research. The book seeks to contribute to a larger critique on the way in which research and practice directed at young people in South Africa, through the optics of HIV in particular, has failed to open up alternative spaces of agency and freedom. Rather, much scholarship, practice and policy has reiterated dominant racist, classist and heteronormative discourses and practices. The process of writing this book has been a somewhat unusual one, as we have written in collaboration and dialogue from different geopolitical contexts and locations, including in relation to young people. The book has drawn, first and foremost, on research and practices in the South African context, the site of Tammy’s own research work on young people, sexuality and gender studies, along with Jeff’s long-term involvement with South Africa, sexuality and gender studies, from non-local, global North locations. We have also worked separately for many years on question of age, generation, children and young people. We have also acknowledged the somewhat fraught location we are in as authors writing about young people, in both different, but overlapping, ways. Even though our focus is on deconstructing the narratives that underpin, shape and are reproduced by research and interventions, rather than on young people themselves, we remain troubled by the dangers of being implicated in the symbolic violences we are raising. We are implicated in our own critiques. The process has been a rich experience for us both, and we acknowledge in this session the value of transnational feminist collaborations and dialogue, as well as facing the *troubling* dynamics of research and writing on gender, sexuality, young people and age across contexts of inequality and difference. In the paper, we share some key arguments in the book, and reflect on these terrains of contestation and possibility.

**Day 2: Thursday 27th October**

*9.00-18.00*

**Decolonising History and Religion**
Decolonizing Feminisms and the Postsecular Turn: Religion as Discursive, Intersectional, Performative Category (DIP) of Knowledge Production

Ulrike E. Auga, Humboldt University of Berlin

The paper develops an epistemological framework for theorizing gender and religion. 'Western' science is defined by a contested secularity of criticism. Among other aspects, it is a legacy of a simplified narrative of progress as a development from the religious to the secular. However, Masuzawa (2005) shows how the 19th century invention of an essentialized category 'religion' is a product of secularization to establish a hierarchy between modern versus non-modern. Asad (2003) elaborates the 'Western' constructed binary that locates Christianity, secularity, reason, tolerance, free thought on the one hand and Islam, fundamentalism, submission, intolerance, restricted thinking on the other.

Subsequently either all 'religion' was marked as unreasonable or Christianity as the more rational 'religion'. 'Religion' was denied the possibility of being a place where the individual subject gains agency and where new knowledge is created for a society based on solidarity.

Mahmood expands (2012/2005) Foucault's concept of resistance and Butler's concept of performativity. In a Muslim grassroots movement, she shows how agency and human flourishing can be gained in the context of religious practices. The postsecular turn challenges a certain secularist European/'Western' feminism because it contains the notion that agency or political subjectivity can also be mediated through religious piety, including spirituality.

The notion that gender equality is inherent in the logic of secularity is incorrect. Moreover, this historical fallacy has been used to justify notions of racial and religious superiority of 'white', 'Western' and Christian. Gender inequality is cemented in the emergence of 'Western' nations, characterized by a separation of public and private, political and religious (Scott 2018).

From a postcolonial, postsecular and gender/queer perspective, a specific epistemology for the investigation of 'religion' and 'gender' has been developed (Auga 2020). The method of intersectionality is revised for the analysis of 'religion'. The category 'religion', which is often neglected or essentialized in feminist theory and gender studies, is further discussed in relation to 'gender', 'sexuality', 'race', 'nation' and 'class', etc. and as a discursive, intersectional, performative category of knowledge production.

Towards Alternative Histories: The Interconstitutive Impact of the Colonial Encounter

Karen Gabriel, Delhi University, India

This paper will examine the juxtaposed dynamics of imperialism, Eurocentrism, and the Gandhian enterprise under the colonial encounter. It will argue that this dynamic impacted severely on the practices and meanings of self-definition—individual, communal, and national—in both, the Indian and the European contexts. These were elaborated with an almost
libidinal intensity in the fields of gender and sexuality, bringing sexual politics into policy and embodiment into theory and practice. The paper will critique the dominant tendency in historiography to ignore the impact of colonialism on Europe and Europeans, and even today, to treat the colonising venture as a mission. It will argue that this encounter was indexed in a multiplicity of (gendered) ways in both contexts. To do this, the paper will touch upon the distinctive gender politics that was mobilized by imperial coloniality, not just by colonial apparatuses of governance and administration, but by the occupations, vocations, and professions it created within English society. It will then discuss the gender-inversions initiated by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to counter the ideological implications of colonial subjectification, and the politico-historical developments that followed in the formation of national and communitarian identity politics in both contexts. It will conclude with a brief note on how the Gandhian politics of non-violence must be understood in a gendered sense, in order for it to be truly effective.

Against the Oppression of ‘One Plot’

Erzsébet Barát, University of Szeged & CEU, Vienna

In my talk I shall focus on the entanglement of whiteness with heteropatriarchy through challenging the Westerncentric approach to hegemonic masculinity that emerges as a consequence of whitestream feminism’s (Arvin et al. 2013) reliance on universalizing their particular socio-cultural contexts. This will be an important extension of Connell’s (2014) concern about the colonializing effects of his concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and his call for a world-centered rethinking of masculinities. I will also argue that, as a corollary of that universalizing academic practice, this universalizing disposition is grounded in an empiricist effort to re-biologize gender. Ironically, this self-critical effort is made as an attempt to foreground class relations of power in the global political economy. In order to move beyond this binary trap of colonialization, I shall show that the foundationalist biologization does not allow us to understand that gender can be the modality of classism, racism, cis-heteropatriarchy and vice versa (Barát 2021). I shall argue for the importance of an intersectional approach and its methodological consequences in order to open up the space for multiple plots to be heard (Yuval-Davis 2006). I shall analyze the Hungarian radical feminists’ turn to a Marxist criticism of neoliberalism - mostly inspired by Nancy Fraser (2012) and suggest instead Wendy Brown’s (2015:17) critique to expose and challenge their act of economizing the political. The data for my talk will be their stance on the Hungarian Government’s ‘pedophile law’ in 2021.

Decolonising the Economy and Politics

Decolonial Feminism and International Development

Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, Macquarie University, Australia

On 25 May 2020, George Floyd was murdered giving the global Black Lives Matter movement
an impetus during a period marked by a global pandemic. The combination of the Movement and a pandemic revived conversations about decolonization in the field of international development, conversations that have been around for decades. Why, in the seven decades following the start of political decolonization for the formerly colonized are these conversations still being held? And is the current sectoral focus on localization—a conversation that continues to be driven by INGOs located in the global north—sufficient to address the concerns of the global south/majority world? These questions are embedded in global power relations. I examine these through the lens of decolonial feminist theory and the modernity/coloniality matrix highlighting how the individualist ethics of the global north/minority world is at odds with the relational ethics of much of the majority world/global south.

War, post imperial syndrome and feminist debates in Russia after February 24, 2022

Olga Shnyrova, Ivanovo Center for Gender Studies, Russian Federation

February 24, when Russia started so called “war operation” in Ukraine, dramatically changed the life not only of combatant parties, but of the whole world. Sincere support of the state actions by the large part of Russian citizens living not only inside the country, but abroad, had made political and social scientists return to the study of the problems of the post-imperial syndrome and post-imperial consciousness in Russia. Feminists’ postcolonial studies represent a different, fresh approach to the study of post-colonial processes and therefore are now widely in demand among independent researchers not only in Russia and Ukraine, but also in the post-Soviet space as a whole. During last four months a number of international on-line conferences, debates and roundtables with the participation of Russian and/or Ukrainian feminists happened analysing and reflexing invasion Russian in Ukraine from the point of view of feminist postcolonial analyses. Our international summer school in Moldova “War, gender and precarity” took place in Moldova in July, also included hot debates whether existing decolonial approaches, produced mostly by Western academia are adequate for the analyses of Russian colonial project, and how we can transform and rethink them.

From the other hand, feminist groups and communities became the most active participants of anti-war resistance in Russia confronting war gender-based violence producing by dominant patriarchal system. Their different practical and theoretical acts of resistance also create new discourse that confronts post-imperial dominant discourse in Russia and should be analysed.

So, the paper will discuss what is happening with Russian feminist thought after the war with Ukraine started and how this new feminist debates influenced the development of postcolonial and imperial studies.

Decolonising the Global Care Chain discussion, talking about the Subsistence Crises

Dina Bolokan
The global care economy and the accompanying care chains have been widely discussed beyond gender studies in the social sciences and in society. However, these have been accompanied by conceptual and epistemological narrowing. As a result, (I) care has hardly been understood as the production of life in its broadest sense, (II) discussions of transnational care relations have largely lost their emphasis on the historical weight of colonialism and exploitation in a global, patriarchal, and neocolonial world, and (III) the centrality of care as self-care and as a resistance practice of marginalized communities has received little attention. As a result, the specific challenges of migrating workers from global peripheries who work in agriculture in wealthier countries and who practice subsistence agriculture in their countries of origin have been largely overlooked.

I propose (1) to reflect on care from an epistemologically as broad as possible, but socioeconomically embedded and place-based perspective, thus deconstructing the binary-western-patriarchal-colonial understanding of care, and (2) to develop an intersectional and decolonial perspective on care, which at the same time opposes scientific and disciplinary narrowness that limits theoretical, empirical and political reflections.

This contribution shall open the space for a multidimensional discussion on caring relations. In doing so, we begin with empirical research and the lived realities of agricultural workers, but move beyond empirical investigations of translocal living and working conditions. The aim is to expand the understanding of the crisis of social (re)production by the perspective of the subsistence crisis in order to decolonize the discussion about global care chains and to connect it with abolitionist perspectives and reflections on earth care.

**Visual Activism, Affect and Decolonial Solidarity**

**Acknowledgment and Transformation: A decolonial feminist practice of responding to oppression**

Fiona Jenkins, Australian National University, Australia

Public displays of recognition for Indigenous pre-colonial inhabitation, care of country and continued culture have become standard in Australia only in the last decade or so. An Acknowledgment is now requisite to ceremonially opening multiple occasions, taking place in a wide range of institutional settings for activities as diverse as parliamentary sessions, lectures, protests, concerts, conferences and zoom calls. Acknowledgments vary in giving more or less explicit attention to the terms of an oppression that begins in colonisation and remains sequestered in all the injustices bound up with an ‘unceded sovereignty’, including the ongoing vulnerability to domination by the state that this condition of dispossession configures.

The practice is not without paradoxes and problems. For instance, the ritual inscribes a fundamental difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities, while overlaying these, for instance in the performance of Welcome, with other figurations such as ‘host’ and
‘guest’ that are rarely entirely fitting to the occasion. The practice is at once powerful and disquieting in its effects and implications, aspects explored in this paper. What is it for an oppression to be publicly acknowledged? And how, in that acknowledgment, does identity take on a particular form or relationality? Drawing on inspiration from Foucault, Arendt, Patchen Markell and Ariella Azoulay, I argue that avowing this critical stance places a demand on Acknowledgment to exist in some degree of resistance to the rituals of recognition.

I describe my own use of artworks accompanying the performance of Acknowledgment as an attempt to generate a more complex and critical practice in the context of teaching Feminist and Gender Theory. But by invoking complex forms of self-expression and encounter, how far does this practice succeed in contributing to a decolonial feminist project?

Rage

Lou-Marié Kruger, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

People in the world have every reason to be in a state of total rage. What we do with that rage together is important. Rage can be crafted—it’s sort of an art form of politics (Gessen, 2020).

Why is it that our current time is referred to as “the age of rage”? Why is it that so many very different feminist scholars (Butler, Cherry, Nussbaum, Rose among others) are writing about rage, claiming also that “feminists are raging”? What are South Africans specifically so enraged about? To what extent is this rage gendered and raced and classed? In this paper I will address some of these questions by looking at South African rage from a psychological perspective, trying to unpack the nature of rage, the causes of rage and the impact of rage in our particular context. I want to explore how rage, when recognized, understood and managed can become an energizing and constructive force, rather than a destructive one. I will do this by looking at the relevance of the recent rage literature and the work of more classical rage scholars (such as Audrey Lorde and bell hooks) for South African women.

Artistic praxis, and transnational and decolonial solidarity: Artists as Potential Agents to Decolonize Feminism

Pilar Milagros García, University of Groningen, the Netherlands

Las Tesis’ “Un violador en tu camino,” a cultural text originating from what is known as the “Global South,” can be considered a cultural text that both offers a renewed transnational awareness about a common struggle among women, gender-based violence, and also decolonizes Western “whitestream” feminism. Inspired by the power of the aforementioned artistic form to transgress boundaries (geographic and epistemic), this presentation aims to explore whether the current global gender backlash and certain Western “whitestream”
practices can be reversed via artistic forms that are transnational (i.e. not bound by nation-state borders”). Those artistic forms may also help decolonize Western feminist practices by encouraging feminist and cultural studies scholars “to rethink the transnational feminist frameworks that disrupt the prevailing North/South dichotomies,” among other dichotomies (Okech and Musindarwezo, 2019, p. 256).

In artistic installations, a prevalent and transnational symbol to memorialize victims of gender-based violence has been shoes. This presentation will focus on two artistic installations: Mexican artist, Alina Chauvet’s installation with painted red shoes to commemorate victims of gender-based violence in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico in 2009, and an installation by Turkish artist and graphic designer Vahit Tuna that showcases over 400 pairs of high heel black shoes. The purpose of this presentation is to analyze whether those artistic installations can become a means of transnational solidarity by analyzing how the transgressions in which those transnational artists engage, such as utilizing different colors or forms, may preclude rather than encourage transnational solidarity. Finally, this presentation also investigates whether those installations that originate from what is known as the “Global South” may help decolonize current Western feminism practices by “engag[ing] with and tak[ing] seriously the long rich histories of women’s activism and feminist theorising taking place outside of the dominant renderings of “Western” history.”

Photographic Subject Reconsidered. Collective Belonging and Subject Formation in Zanele Muholi’s Queer Visual Activism

Elisaveta Dvorakk, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

Recent postcolonial feminist discourses in the field of Visual Culture Studies have been catalysed by the photographic and queer activist work of Zanele Muholi (*1972 in Umlazi/Durban). In their photographs, Muholi re-visions Black LGBTQIA+ life in South Africa (Zanele Muholi 2010, 2018). Muholi’s radical photographic approach rethinks the concepts of the photographic subject, the notion of gaze technically mediated through a camera, and the visual constructions of belonging (Sarah Allen, Yasufumi Nakamori 2020). In this activist approach, photographic subjects are reimagined and recognised as active participants with their individual human dignity. Drawing on Muholi’s photographic series “Being” (2006-ongoing) and “Somnyama Ngonyama” (2012-ongoing), this paper reflects on the notion of collective belonging and subject formation from the postcolonial and queer perspectives of Photographic Theory and History. The series “Being” portrays – often in the genre of nude photography – various forms of relationships and life in the Black LGBTQIA+ community. Themes such as intimacy, care, belonging and family are focused. The series “Somnyama Ngonyama” contains numerous self-portraits by Muholi and enables a critical reflection on their mode of photography which offers a fluid and disidentified representation of the photographic subjects and their gendered bodily materialities.
Philosophy, Literature and Decolonisation

Watery hauntings: African women’s literature and/as the problem of African Philosophy

Azille Coetzee and Louise de Toit, Stellenbosch University

It is no secret that philosophy was historically established as the endeavour of white men and that this history continues to underpin and inform the workings of the institutionalised discipline in contemporary university spaces. Philosophy is a discipline deeply anxious about its own boundaries, its alarm about who enters strikingly reflected in, for example, the lengthy debates (spanning decades) about what kind of African thought qualifies to be called by the name of Philosophy. This, as well as the discipline’s inherent preoccupation with the universal rather than the particular, the abstract rather than the material, has rendered Philosophy particularly obtuse for certain kinds of thinking, and oblivious to large currents of political and aesthetic reflection that have shaped contemporary intellectual engagement with our world. In this article we will consider a few literary works by African women (including Bientang (2020) by Jolyn Phillips and Butterfly Burning (1998) by Yvonne Vera) and compile a list, register or glossary of problems that they make/are for African philosophy. We argue that, in their preoccupation with the intersections between environmental destruction, settler colonialism and heteronormative patriarchy, these works require radical imaginative engagement with reality, serious attention to the particular and the material, as well as dauntless and watery disregard of many old boundaries. Inspired by the scholarship of Eve Tuck an d C Ree (and also others, like Christina Sharpe) we read these creative works as hauntings that violate the terms of settler colonial knowledge that require the splitting off of the particular from the universal, the body from the mind, the people from specific places.

Epistemology of transnational perspective in literary studies: the case of post-Yugoslav literature

Jasmina Lukic, Central European University, Hungary

Within a larger framework of decolonial theory, the paper investigates epistemological potentials of transnational perspective in literary studies. The idea behind the paper is that transnational perspective calls for a different interpretative framework in regard to inherited values and ossified traditions of national literatures, which are most often based upon legacies of colonialism, and yet persist as given and ‘natural’ frames of interpretation. Following the main principle of decolonial thinking as a call for new knowledge production, the paper argues that transnational perspective in literary studies offers a possibility to create a new conceptual framework to support thinking beyond and across borders. It creates spaces of disruption of homogenous narratives of national literature, and spaces of subversion that affirm minor literature as it is defined by Deleuze and Guattari, and taken over by a number of theorists of transnational literature (like Azade Seyhan, Mads Thomsen, Shu Mei-shi and Francoise
Lionnett, and Paul Jay). Understanding post-Yugoslav literature as transnational literature, the paper investigates strategies used by post-Yugoslav authors to create spaces of subversion in totalizing discourses of artificially constructed national histories, imposed upon the region after the 1990s break up of the common country. Written within and outside the region, transnational post-Yugoslav literature opposes imposed values of conservative re-interpretation of the past and opens up thinking about the region towards new recognition of alternative futurites, based upon knowledge production and creative praxes of various marginalized groups (migrants, women, LGBTQIA+).

**The French-Moroccan Writer Leïla Slimani and White Feminism**

Irma Erlingsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The French-Moroccan writer Leïla Slimani is noted for evoking important questions pertaining to Moroccan society and for her powerful stance on Moroccan individual freedom struggles, both in her novels and non-fictional work. Slimani is very much aware of her positionality and its burden—often insisting on the singularities of the literary text and its plurivocal nature, while giving voice to women’s rights in Morocco. Yet, she has been criticized for colonial undertones—for imposing imported French mores on Moroccan society without paying enough attention to cultural identities and realities within postcolonial contexts and for promoting what has been termed a “white,” specifically French, colonialist, Islamophobic and racist feminism.” As a result, her works have alienated a large segment of her Moroccan audience on the grounds that it reflects non-inclusive, Euro-centric feminist struggles.

In the paper, I analyze this criticism of Slimani’s works and her response to it by focusing, in particular, on two of her latest novels *The Country of Others* (2021) and *Watch us Dance* (2022)—where Slimani tells the story of her French grandmother who emigrated to Morocco after World War II—as well as on a non-fictional work entitled *Sex and Lies: Sex Life in Morocco* (2017), which recounts the experiences of young Moroccan women who are constrained by a conservative cultural environment that both condemns and commodifies sex.

**Why do white women get raped in Raj Nostalgia literature: Decolonising trauma**

Giti Chandra, University of Iceland, Iceland

As Britain lost many of its Asian and African colonies between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s, a new genre of fiction emerged from England, which was quickly labelled ‘Raj Nostalgia’. Novels of the heyday of the British ‘raj’, full of dashing Englishmen, seductive Indian women, and stoic Englishwomen, flooded the market. MM Kaye’s *The Far Pavilions*, Paul Scott’s four novel series, *The Raj Quartet*, and John Masters’ *Nightrunners of Bengal*, were just the most famous in a host of such titles. Several of these were subsequently made into movies or TV serials, the most popular of which was Scott’s *The Jewel in the Crown* series in the early 80s.
Differing in literary quality and layered in terms of political content, these nostalgia novels did share some common tropes, one of which is of the white, Englishwoman raped by an Indian man. This trope turns up repeatedly in literary ‘classics’ such as EM Forster’s *A Passage to India* as well as the first of the Raj Quartet novels, *The Jewel in the Crown*, among many others. As Salman Rushdie pointed out in an article, this is a strange trope considering that, given the colonial situation, it should be the Indian woman being raped by the British man. In Rudrangshu Mukherji’s book on 1857, references are made to transcripts of interviews with British officers who repeatedly assert that, in all the violence of the ‘mutiny’ “the thought of rape never crossed the native’s mind”. In the face of the ubiquitous and much perpetuated image of the white woman as an object of lust for the ‘native’ man, this is a remarkable position for so many Englishmen to take.

What then to make of these competing public ‘memories’ and their fictional memorialisations? Why does British fiction so counter-intuitively see its colonial past in terms of being raped, and why do British officers, speaking of the horrific killings of British women and children at sites like the Bibighar and Sati Chaura, absolve all Indian men of even the intent of rape? This paper will attempt to answer some of these questions through a feminist, decolonial, reading of EM Forster’s *A Passage to India* and Paul Scott’s *The Jewel in the Crown*. 