

After the Empires

– reflections of European colonialism in a globalized world

Roskilde University, May 29-31, 2013

Confirmed keynotes: Kwame Nimako, University of Amsterdam, Charles Forsdick, University of Liverpool, Alberto Moreiras, Texas A&M University

European colonialism has been a major force shaping the development of the cultural, social and national orders we know today through enduring patterns of migration, political structures, and economic relations. The colonial order was a complex of different and violently interwoven cultures both in Europe and throughout the world, and it had momentous effects on the geopolitical ordering of the world.

This conference seeks to address the question of colonialism's aftermath in Europe in two interrelated ways. On the one hand, through perspectives that highlight the transnational nature of the problem of colonialism through an emphasis on coloniality, and, on the other hand, through approaches that explore the different colonial, postcolonial and decolonial strategies. Both approaches involve a theoretical and a contextual level of engagement:

On the theoretical level, the conference addresses the question of how the study of repercussions of colonialism/coloniality has developed as a practice in and across the various vernacular postcolonial histories (Spanish/Hispanic, Francophone, Lusophone, Scandinavian, German etc.). This entails discussions of (a) the translation and transformation of postcolonial/decolonial studies as the fields are put into practice within different language areas and academic traditions and (b) coloniality in Europe, specifically in relation to processes of research and knowledge construction, and the ways in which these are inserted in wider colonial political practices, for instance in immigration policies and the development and rescue industry. In both cases, we would like to discuss to what extent these different approaches enter into certain power relations and patterns when viewed in a comparative perspective.

On the contextual level the conference is concerned with how the postcolonial problem/coloniality manifests itself in various national, regional or transnational contexts. These contexts will be highlighted through reflection on a series of themes, including, but not limited to:

- Imperial exceptionalism/the local 'benevolent' exception to the concept of empire
- The idea of postcolonial inclusion
- The relationship between the idea of European nations, citizenship and racism - past and present
- Mediatized and artistic images of colonialism and postcolonial migration
- Decolonial art - including poetry, music, plastic arts, visual art
- Literary strategies of 'writing back' vs. *World Literature/Literature monde* etc.
- European postcolonial experiences and coloniality in Europe

- The subalternity and silencing of migrants from postcolonial settings
- European colonial subjects (including migrants), racism and resistance
- Regional, national and transnational structures of colonial and postcolonial power, commerce and migration.

The conference aims to put into focus the plurality and variation of the histories of colonialism and the resulting variations in the reflections of the postcolonial world. But the aim is not solely to point to this variation, but also to encourage reflections that take the variations in the field as the vantage point for a comparative practice that goes across national and linguistic boundaries and traditions in the attempt to draw a comprehensive and nuanced picture of the colonial/postcolonial realities and decolonial projects of the contemporary world. Hence we encourage proposals in other languages than English. Please send your abstract (250 words) to hopeless@ruc.dk by December 1 2012.

Additional information:

We aim to subsidise to a limited extent a limited number of people's travel costs.

Conference attendance is free.

A Ph.D.-seminar will be held in connection with the conference.

A publication based on selected papers from the conference is being planned.

Organising committee:

Christian Groes-Green, Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University

Julia Suárez-Krabbe, Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University

Lars Jensen, Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University

Mads Anders Baggesgaard, Comparative Literature, Aarhus University

Zoran Pecic, Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University