

# Eco-Poco or The Ecocritical Turn Through Postcolonial Eyes

16 May 2012

A far-fetched posthumanist, materialist shift is taking place in the ever-changing field of postcolonial/globalization studies. New, urgent questions are being posed, such as this one: How can we analyse postcoloniality and globalization without taking the vitally important and truly global dimension of the environment into account? Under the influence of the booming field of ecocriticism, the environmental aspects of colonialism and globalization are increasingly foregrounded. Indeed, our planetary awareness largely took shape through environmental pictures of the vulnerable blue planet, spaceship Earth, as seen from Apollo 8 in 1968; and through the ongoing environmental debates on global warming, the global destruction of local ecologies, and the poverty and migration that followed. In the upcoming eleventh session of the Postcolonial Platform we will consider the bold argument that an ecocritical approach is indispensable to postcolonial/globalization studies.



That argument might run as follows: Ecocriticism provides a broader grasp than a merely sociological, political, and economical analysis, as it focuses on the environmental foundations of the global economy. Ecocriticism pushes the inquiry into postcolonial issues such as race and sexuality to even more fundamental questions about speciesism, reprocentrism, and the relation between the human and the more-than-human world. In addition, ecocriticism argues that a radical critique of the (post)colonial and of globalization can specifically be found in artistic and literary revisions of the imagination of the environment. We might think, for example, of artistic revisions of the notion of planetary connectedness, and of reflections on the connections between the local and the global, the human and the nonhuman, the animate and the inanimate.

We will spend a lively day, with a small group of enthusiastic (young) researchers, lectures, workshops, close readings, and nourishing foods and drinks, to the discussion of the productivity of the marriage between ecocriticism and postcolonial/globalization studies.

The seminar is open for all researchers, Research Master and PhD students working in the field of postcolonial studies. If you are interested in participating, please register/enroll (Res MA) with Eloe Kingma (NICA/OSL). Active participation by Research Master students (presentation, response, short paper) may be awarded with 1 EC credit. For more information, contact Eloe Kingma ([nica-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:nica-fgw@uva.nl)) or Isabel Hoving ([I.Hoving@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:I.Hoving@hum.leidenuniv.nl)).

## Programme

### MORNING: ECO-POCO, OR EXPLORATIONS OF A NEW TERRAIN

- 10.30 Welcome
- 10.45 **“Engaging the Earth (Darkly): Ecocriticism and Postcolonial Theory”**  
Introductory lecture by **Dr. Isabel Hoving**, Dept. of Literary Studies, Leiden University.
- 11.30 Break
- 11.45-13.00 **Classics-to-Be:** Close Reading and Debate
- DeLoughrey, Elizabeth, and George B. Handley. “Towards an Aesthetics of the Earth.” *Postcolonial Ecologies. Literatures of the Environment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 3-30.
  - Morton, Timothy. “Imagining Ecology without Nature.” *Ecology without Nature. Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. 169-197.
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch

### AFTERNOON: TRY-OUT GREENING POSTCOLONIALISM

- 14.00-15.00 **“The Elephant in the Room: Animals, Peoples, Environments”**  
Guest lecture by **Dr. Catherine Lord**, Dept. of Media Studies, University of Amsterdam.
- Preparatory Reading: Graham Huggan. “‘Greening’ Postcolonialism: Ecological Perspectives.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 50.3 (2004). 701-733.
- 15.00-15.15 Break
- 15.15-16.45 **Further Food for Thought and Discussion:** case-studies  
On-the-spot analysis of (a.o.) Kara Walker’s *After the Deluge*.
- 16.45-17.00 Concluding remarks
- 17.00 Drinks