

Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies

NEW APPROACHES TO WORLD LITERATURE



21st Meeting of the **PLATFORM FOR POSTCOLONIAL READINGS**

27 June 2019, 10.30-17.00h
E0.09, Roeterseilandcampus UvA, Roetersstraat 11, Amsterdam

The interest scholars such as Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch took in world literature fifteen to twenty years ago has recently been criticized by, for instance, Michael Allan and Aamir Mufti as (too) generalizing and universalizing. These and other critics have started to think about location and multilingualism in order to bypass the globalizing tendencies of earlier scholarship. Already as a field world literature tends to exclude non-Western traditions, canons and languages. Francesca Orsini proposes to speak of “multilingual locals” and “significant geographies” with the aim of pluralising our understanding of world literature and foregrounding the subjectivity and positionality of its actors. After all, many of the literary works that travel beyond their original contexts of production never become visible in a truly global way, but circulate in particular geographies and across specific languages.

In this meeting of the Platform for Postcolonial Readings, we take a cue from Orsini to consider the production of world literature from the perspective of multilingual locals and significant geographies. We interrogate how these new approaches problematize and reinvigorate the concept of world literature, and examine its applicability to postcolonial studies, globalisation studies, migration and minority studies, and other fields.

Our meeting starts with a keynote lecture by **Prof. Francesca Orsini**, whose expertise spans the literary history of South Asia, world literature and multilingualism with a focus on the Global South. Her lecture is followed by a discussion of her ideas and by a joint close reading of essays by Orsini and other scholars. In the afternoon, we continue our exploration of world literature, multilingualism and spatiality by means of contributions on the meeting’s topic by (junior) researchers working in this field. We conclude our meeting with a joint on-the-spot analysis of a striking case-study.

The meeting is open to all researchers – junior and senior – working in the fields of postcolonial and globalization studies. Participation is free of charge, but please register with NICA (nica-fgw@uva.nl). For more information, contact Liesbeth Minnaard (e.minnaard@hum.leidenuniv.nl) or Jesse van Amelsvoort (j.d.van.amelsvoort@rug.nl). A reader will be distributed in preparation of the seminar and on the day itself foods and drinks will be provided.

PROGRAMME

10.15 Walk-in and registration with coffee

10.30 Welcome & introduction of participants

by Platform co-ordinator Liesbeth Minnaard (Leiden University)

10.45 Introduction

by guest-organiser Jesse van Amelsvoort (University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân)

11.00 Keynote lecture "Located, Multilingual: New Keywords for World Literature"

by Francesca Orsini (SOAS, University of London)

12.00 Discussion of readings

Readings in preparation of discussion (a reader will be sent to all registered participants):

Text 1: Orsini, Francesca. "The Multilingual Local in World Literature." *Comparative Literature* 67.4 (2015): 345-74.

Text 2: Laachir, Karima, Sara Marzagora and Francesca Orsini. "Significant Geographies: In lieu of World Literature." *Journal of World Literature* 3.3 (2018): 290-310.

Text 3: Mufti, Aamir. "Prologue: The Universal Library of World Literature." In *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literatures*. Harvard University Press, 2018. 1-13.

13.00 Lunch

14.15 Further Food for Thought and Discussion: Paper Presentations

moderated by Platform co-ordinator Elisabeth Bekers (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

14.15 "Postcolonialism, Postcritique, and the Politics of Untranslatability" by Marc Farrant (Amsterdam University College) *followed by discussion*

14.45 "Writing (Beyond) the Oral Tongue: Gender and Multilingualism in the Works of Najat El Hachmi and Chika Unigwe" by Núria Codina Solà (KU Leuven) *followed by discussion*

15.15 "Defending *Chandrakanta*: Analysing the Rise of Hindi and Devakinandan Khatri's Defense of Hindustani in *Chandrakanta*" by Abiral Kumar (University of Delhi) *followed by discussion*

15.45 Coffee break

16.00 Joint on-the-spot-analysis of three poems by Tsjêbbe Hettinga

moderated by guest organiser Jesse van Amelsvoort

16.45 Concluding remarks

17.00 Drinks