Postcolonial Europe: Phantasmatic Spaces, Imagined Identities.

www.postcolonialstudies.nl

**Date:** March 17, 2011  
**Time:** 10.00-12.30 plus lunch  
**Location:** Drift 21, Sweelinckzaal  
**Organisation:** In collaboration with OSL/NOV  
**Speakers:** Mireille Rosello (UvA), Paulo de Medeiros (UU), Sandra Ponzanesi (UU), Birgit Kaiser (UU), Emmanuelle Radar (UU)  
**Synopsis:** The scope of this workshop is to apply the tools of postcolonial critique to specific historical and geo-political formations in Europe, which have remained a blind spot in postcolonial critique. We will discuss what makes Europe postcolonial and why the notion of Europe is more contested than ever, both internally (through the proliferations of ethnic, religious, regional differences) and externally (Europe expanding its boundaries but closing its borders). Major debates in contemporary Europe on citizenship, migration, secularism and multiculturalism will be explored from a variety of perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds.

Programme:

9.30-10.00 coffee

*In the morning there will be five different interventions from PCI Members. The morning is open to all participants.*

10.00-12.30  
**Lectures:**

**Abstracts morning programme:**

**Mireille Rosello (UvA)**  
**Border Aesthetics and European Incomplete Multilingualism: Teaching and (un)Learning**

I propose to analyze the ways in which recent European films represent conversations between migrants and nationals. One of the challenges is to account for how subjects communicate across languages rather than in the (national) language. Each dialogue invites us to rethink what it means to learn or know a minority or national idiom, and to ascertain whether linguistic and cultural ignorance or mastery constitutes power.

**Birgit Kaiser (UU)**
Living in Düsseldorf: but where on earth is that? Transnational lives and phantasmatic spaces

My contribution looks at Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s collection of short stories Der Hof im Spiegel (2001), where we find a performance of phantasmatic spaces which foreclose any easy attempt to anchor these spaces either in any underlying referential space, or in the life of an empirical person. In her work, Özdamar draws on her specific transnational experience of having left Turkey and having moved to Germany, but – as in all of her texts – these experiences are transformed into literary topologies: moving and dynamic spaces of remembrances, citation, and imagination, in which encounter-events within a lived transnational space are transformed into phantasmatic time-space-habitats that permit the co-existence of the absent and the present, the living and the dead. These latter are humorously and lovingly assembled, in the eponymous opening story of Der Hof im Spiegel in the mirror central to the story, alluding to Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass. By means of this phantasmatic assemblage, the story weaves a network of poetic and personal references and demonstrates how processes of orientation and identification, as physical and psychological processes within space and through time, are open-ended and relational. Özdamar’s story pursues this by explicitly sketching the narrator’s “personal city-map”, and her text thus offers, as Leslie Adelson had suggested for the poetry of Zafer Şenocak, sites of reorientation. Her texts draw maps which showcase multilayered temporalities and imaginary, hybrid spaces, and might in turn permit us to reorient our thinking and terminology in regard to “transnational” lives.

Sandra Ponzanesi (UU)

Europe in Motion: Migrant Cinema and the Politics of Encounter

My intervention focuses on the contested notion of the (new) Europe from the vantage point of migrant cinema. The aim is to explore how cinematic language offers alternative modalities of representation and subjectification in relation to migration, gender and identity. The emphasis of this analysis is on the politics of encounter: how the presumed strangers to Europe are figurations of Europe’s othered self while also embodying the material practices of exclusion. The politics of encounter is explored in recent films made by European filmmakers. These visual and ideological commentaries participate in the redefinition or abolition of the notion of Europe by proposing the representations of the strangers within not from original and unexpected positions but by highlighting the transformation of the ‘European subject’ through the politics of encounter.

Paulo de Medeiros (UU)

Phantasmatic Borders

As Marx famously put it, “Everything that is solid melts into air”. European borders have always been mutable but at the present they have become phantasmatic, seemingly disappearing only to resurface somewhere else, be it within the Schengen area itself, be it in the detention camps in Africa and Asia. By looking at a series of photographs by Sophie Riestelhueber and tracking several actual conditions as reported by the press and reports of the European Union, an attempt is made to sketch a view of European political developments that is likewise phantasmatic and threatening to the very ideals Europe purports to affirm.

Emmanuelle Radar (UU)
Angkor and another "Europe"?
My contribution deals with representations of the Cambodian Khmer ruin of Angkor in French and Franco-Cambodian cultural productions (literature and film). The presence of these ruins in narratives from the last decade in France is all the more intriguing in that they often seem to be a passage open and hospitable to what they cannot determine; another “Europe” as analyzed in Derrida by Gasché. At the same time, these ruins are often associated with European history (the colonial past, exclusion of immigrants in postcolonial Europe, the failing of Europe and its values, e.g. during the Red Khmer period). A phantasmatic encounter between immigrants of the Cambodian diaspora, Europeans, between past-present-future, etc. often takes place during the visit to the ruin. That the encounter should be transferred by a Khmer ruin –not a European structure – might be a way of contesting the existence of a new Europe, as well as a way to call for its emergence. I will focus the analysis on works by Jean-Luc Coatalem (Le Dernier roi d’Angkor, 2010), Raphael Aubert (La Terrasse des éléphants, 2009), Rhity Panh (Gens d’Angkor, 2003) and Jean-Baptiste Phou (Cambodge me voici, 2010).

1230-13.30 Lunch

PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL TO: OSL-gw@uva.nl