

Decolonial and Postcolonial perspectives on the Eastern (of) Europe



LECTURE SERIES

October 17 - 20, 2023

The lectures series is part of Ghent University Doctoral School programme aimed to advance postcolonial and decolonial critiques from a Central and Eastern European (CEE) standpoint to overcome the epistemic dichotomy of West versus East, North vs. South prevailing in the Western academic canon. The lectures are open to students and academics of all levels and disciplines interested in the theme and theory building. The lecture series is organised by the Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy in close collaboration with inter-university partners CESSMIR and Eureast Platform and outside-university partners ULB, Euroglot, and UNU-CRIS.

Keynote by Prof. Dr. Grazina Bielousova (University College London) 'Language, knowledge production, and representation'

17 October 10: 00 – 12: 00

Location: De Blauwe Vogel room, de Krook library (Miriam Makebaplein 1, 9000 Gent). [REGISTER - HERE](#)

This lecture will address the epistemic gap of Eastern European perspectives and perspectives from the Global East in Western academia. We will grapple with the terms 'Eastern Europe', 'post-socialism,' and 'Global East' as well as with what postcolonial and decolonial means in this context and what effects their usage has on knowledge production. The talk will touch upon how Eastern European/post-socialist studies emerged as a field and what it would mean to decolonise this study area. We will also discuss what it essentially means to study the areas of the world marked by intersecting imperial and anti-imperial histories.

Keynote by Prof. Dr. Dace Dzenovska (University of Oxford) 'A view on decolonization from an imperial fault line'

18 October 10: 00 – 12: 00

Location: De Blauwe Vogel room, de Krook library (Miriam Makebaplein 1, 9000 Gent). [REGISTER - HERE](#)

In a relational imperial landscape, the positions of imperial agents and subjects—or colonizers and the colonized—are unstable. People living on imperial fault lines, such as the boundary between Russia and the European Union, can simultaneously claim victimhood in relation to one imperial formation—Russia, while exhibiting complicity with another—Europe. One can also shift positions while moving within an imperial formation. Thus, for example, as state-bearing people claiming European heritage at home, Latvians must grapple with their complicity with Europe's colonial history—a project currently overshadowed by mobilizing decolonizing energies in the direction of Russia. However, as Eastern Europe labour migrants, they can become subject to Europe's legacy of racialization. In this talk, prof. Dace Dzenovska will question the decolonizing project from the perspective of the Russo-EU imperial fault line and argue that the lens of empire—rather than decoloniality—might have more analytical and political traction in the current historical moment.

Keynote by Prof. Dr. Madina Tlostanova (Linköping University). 'Relaunching decoloniality in/for the 21st century: decolonial feminisms and refuturing agendas'

19 October **16:00 - 18:00**

Location: Auditorium 1 - Marc Maes, Lichamelijke Opvoeding, **Campus Dunant (Watersportlaan 2, 9000 Gent)**. [REGISTER - HERE](#)

It has become clear by the third decade of the twenty first century that the original views and approaches of decolonial option are not only trivialized and blurred due to their hijacking by all kinds of discourses (from neoliberal to extreme right and left and from anticolonial to neo-imperial) but also unable to meet their own decolonial promises or critically engage with the complex and changing social reality. The feminist part of decoloniality is its most promising and viable element, including its internal debates with the decolonial heteropatriarchal mainstream. Decolonial feminisms that used to be marginal, can revamp decoloniality and perhaps save it from becoming a fad. This refers among others to the feminisms of the East and Central Europe, Central Asia and other semi-peripheral environments. In the rivalry of different victimhood narratives, each of which claims a central place in modernity, there is a need for transversal dialogues and deep coalitions as efforts to hear each other and develop a genuine interest in each other for the sake of refuturing. In this configuration the role of the semi-peripheric decolonial feminisms becomes more important, especially in its non-academic activist and artistic forms.

19: 00 - 21:00 you are invited to an **art house short films screening 'Eastern Screens'** and a discussion at the bar afterwards at de Koer, Meibloemstraat 86.

Dialogue between Szilvia Nagy (Central European University) and Prof. Dr Madina Tlostanova (Linköping University). 'A Way Forward, Beyond Essentialisation'

20 October 10:00- 12:00

Location Zaal Haas en Vos, de Krook library (Miriam Makebaplein 1, 9000 Gent). [REGISTER - HERE](#)

How can we comprehend and make sense of the epistemic space and 'grey zone' between the traditional understandings of the 'Global North' and 'Global South' through relational approaches? Various concepts have emerged in the last years to frame post-soviet lived experiences – Eurasia, Global East, Central- and Eastern Europe, Transperipheral–, but so far none of them seem to be widely accepted. Why is it so particularly difficult/challenging to address this epistemic 'grey space'? How can we explore and understand the spaces opened by the sudden rupture caused by the fall of the Soviet world? Avoiding the trap of re-essentialising the concepts, we seek to point out the liminal positionalities between epistemically marginalised areas in the world, such as the global souths and global easts. Therefore, we will invite the participants to think relationally and historically, this way opening a way for unexpected dialogues and future projects.

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