



## **Postcolonialism in Interdisciplinary Perspective.**

Wednesday 17th of May 2017

The Danford Room, Dept. of African Studies and Anthropology,  
Second Floor, Arts Building,  
University of Birmingham,  
B15 2TT

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 9:00 - 9:30   | Registration/ Tea and Coffee (Fage Library)   |
| 9:30 - 9:45   | Welcome Address   |
| 9:45 - 11:15  | Panel 1. The Postcolonial Political Economy: Resource Struggles.                                |
| 11:15 - 11:30 | Tea and Coffee (Fage Library)   |
| 11:30 - 13:00 | Panel 2. Exploring Exploitation: The Environment and Ecocriticism.                              |
| 13:00 - 14:00 | Lunch (Fage Library)  |
| 14:00 - 15:30 | Panel 3. Travel and Return: Identity, Belonging and Self-Representation through Image and Text. |
| 15:30 - 15:45 | Tea and Coffee (Fage Library)   |
| 15:45 - 17:15 | Panel 4. Structuring Inequality: Gender, Sexuality and Struggle in the Postcolony.              |
| 17:15 - 17:30 | Tea and Coffee (Fage Library)   |
| 17:30 - 19:00 | Panel 5. 'Inside' and 'Outside' Institutions: Religious Experience and Encounter.               |
| 19:00 - 20:00 | Wine Reception (Fage Library)   |

## **Panel 1.**

### **The Postcolonial Political Economy: Resource Struggles.**

#### **Chair: Chloe Bent**

Gemma Jennings, University of Birmingham, UK.

*'Oil Imperialism? Hydrocarbons and the Development of Franco-Algerian Relations, 1962-2002.'*

Nadine King Chambers, Independent Researcher, Canada, Jamaica and UK.

*'Shreds of Law and Ties of Land: Historical Links between Black Communities from Jamaica and Indigenous British Columbia, Canada.'*

Nicholas Sharman, University of Nottingham, UK.

*'Nineteenth Century Spain: An Early Example of a Postcolonial Political Economy.'*

## **Panel 2.**

### **Exploring Exploitation: The Environment and Ecocriticism.**

#### **Chair: Miranda Jones**

Laura Kerrigan, SUNY University at Buffalo, USA.

*'Capital Gains: Human and Environmental Exploitation in a Globalized System.'*

Selcuk Senturk, University of Leicester, UK

*'A Feminist Exploration of Natural Resources and the Environment against Masculinist Exploitation in Doris Lessing's The Grass Is Singing (1950) and Mara and Dann: An Adventure (1999).'*

Michelle Clarke, School of Oriental and African Studies, UK.

*'African Environmental Ethics and Speculative Fiction.'*

### **Panel 3.**

#### **Travel and Return: Identity, Belonging and Self-Representation through Image and Text.**

##### **Chair: Kelsi Delaney**

Sofia Aatkar, Nottingham Trent University, UK.

*'Contact Zones and Conflict in Amryl Johnson's Sequins for a Ragged Hem.'*

Oyedepo Olukotun, De Montfort University, UK.

*'Yoruba Photographs as Celebrations of Diasporic National Identities.'*

Annamaria Scorza, University of Calabria, Italy.

*'Postcolonial Literature: The Little Italian Empire.'*

### **Panel 4.**

#### **Structuring Inequality: Gender, Sexuality and Struggle in the Postcolony.**

##### **Chair: Amy Redgrave**

Susan Bradley, City University of London, UK.

*'Betwixt and Between: Challenges in Realising Women's Rights to Respectful Maternity Care in Malawi.'*

Preet Singh, Loughborough University, UK.

*'Belonging to the Communal Gaze: The Indian Female as Embodying and Representing 'Tẓẓat'.'*

(TBC) Nancy Ali, Sorbonne University (IV), France.

*'An Egyptian Queer Trajectory.'*

**Panel 5.**

**‘Inside’ and ‘Outside’ Institutions: Religious Experience and Encounter.**

**Chair: Gemma Jennings**

Emily Turner, University of Edinburgh, UK.

*‘Canadian Residential Schools and Academic Research on Indigenous-Missionary Encounter After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2008-2015.’*

Samara Guimaraes, University of Birmingham, UK.

*‘The Incorporation of Traditional Healers into Mozambican Judicial Institutions.’*

Elisa Tuijnder, University of Birmingham, UK.

*‘Institutional and Non-Institutional Approaches to Religion: A Focus on Everyday Religious Encounter in Postcolonial Congo and Borneo.’*

Gemma Jennings, University of Birmingham, UK.

*'Oil Imperialism? Hydrocarbons and the Development of Franco-Algerian Relations, 1962-2002.'*

The global struggle for control of and access to oil reserves, which emerged as a central political priority after World War One, has attracted research and controversy across a range of academic disciplines. Despite this widespread debate, analyses of the role of oil in international relations have focused primarily on geopolitical developments in the Middle East and Latin America, while the history of African oil, particularly in this international context, has largely been underexplored.

This paper, therefore, will explore the role of oil in the development of postcolonial relations between Algeria, one of Africa's largest producers of hydrocarbons, and a country that has been strikingly absent from existing historiographies of oil, and France. The analysis will trace the oil policies of both states over the late twentieth century, contrasting perceived French 'oil imperialism' with the projects of the Algerian state to wield the 'oil weapon' on a domestic and international stage.

As a transnational industry, constituting flows of revenues, resources and workers across national borders, the oil sector facilitates an examination of both former colony and metropole in the same analytical frame. Ultimately, I argue that the oil sector is crucial to writing encompassing histories of the development of postcolonial political structures and relations in the Franco-Algerian context.

*Gemma Jennings is a first-year PhD student in the Department of History at the University of Birmingham. She holds a BA in Combined Studies from the University of Leicester and an MA in History from the University of Birmingham. Gemma's primary research interest is the history of the oil industry in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Her research employs the oil industry as a heuristic device to explore the development of postcolonial political structures.*

Nadine King Chambers, Independent Researcher, Canada, Jamaica and UK.

*'Shreds of Law and Ties of Land: Historical Links between Black Communities from Jamaica and Indigenous British Columbia, Canada.'*

How do migration, critical race theory, floods, land loss, law and literature coalesce for a postcolonial reading of decolonization discussions? On the anniversary of Canada's 150 years of illegal settlement, what sense can be made of Black Caribbean history in the context of (Coast Salish) unceded indigenous territories? This presentation will strive to make visible the hidden relationship between the Canadian ALCAN smelter in Kitimat, Canada, and the bauxite mines of Kirkvine, Jamaica. It will explore a few of the connections that I have made in ongoing research between these sites, linked by multinational corporations; the spaces between local/rural and distant/urban; and people's histories of displacement and decolonial struggle; as ignored in academic texts. In the absence of academic documentation on the link between Kirkvine and Kitimat, the presentation will draw inspiration from Metis playwright Marie Clement's *'Burning Vision'* and its attention to the relationship between the racialized living and dead, shadowed by Empire's acts of 'war-for-profit' and 'profit-for-war'. The presentation will close with an invitation to discuss the need for ethical guidelines between 'subaltern' communities in academia,

who are writing across time, space and race in the uneven realities that are labelled 'postcolonial' or 'decolonial'.

*Nadine King Chambers is an Afro-Caribbean raised by working-class grandparents and a librarian in Jamaica. Since 1991 she has been travelling between the semi-rural and urban Pacific West Coast of Canada and Jamaica. Her formalized studies have primarily been focused on colonization, with an emphasis on Gender, Law, Resource Management, Literature and Indigenous Studies. She is grateful for acknowledgement of her unlettered support on multiple dissertations in Social and Applied Sciences. Since 2015 she has been doing independent archival research in Jamaica, Canada and England, in preparation for postgraduate studies and a collaborative documentary.*

Nicholas Sharman, University of Nottingham, UK.

*'Nineteenth Century Spain: An Early Example of a Postcolonial Political Economy.'*

This paper suggests that Spain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries shared many of the features of the ex-colonies of the British and French Empires in the post-Second World War period. Gallagher and Robinson's work suggested that many areas of the world had fallen within Britain's 'informal' Empire; exploited economically, dominated politically, but never acquired as formal colonies. They argued that Britain's leadership of the industrial revolution, supported by its command of the sea, had given it an unprecedented dominance of world trade and finance. This hegemonic dominance enabled Britain to shape the economic and political development of these 'informal colonies' around its imperial interests.

Spain was in a paradoxical position in the post-Napoleonic period: as it lost its own empire, it increasingly fell under the sway of the British (and to a lesser extent, the French) Empires. From the 1830s, Britain's free trade policies were explicitly aimed at undermining Spain's nascent textile industry. Later in the century, when Spain's mineral resources became crucial to the second wave of Europe's Industrial Revolution, Britain established a near monopoly in the extraction of Spain's copper, sulphur and iron ore resources. Combined with French dominance of Spain's financial credit market and railways, this led to underdevelopment of the country's economy and a consequent distortion of its politics.

This paper reviews evidence of British intellectual, political and economic ascendancy, including the increasing and official 'orientalising' of Spain. It then explores the political reaction in Spain in the shape of its developing nationalism (particularly in the industrialising provinces of Vizcaya and Catalonia) and, in the economic field, the increasingly autarkic policies which aimed to break out of the British economic stranglehold. It concludes that the experience of unstable development of notionally independent states operating within the influence of 'informal' empires, typical of the post war ex-colonies, is a general feature of imperial history.

*Nick Sharman is a PhD student at the University of Nottingham. His area of research is the economic and political relationship between Britain and Spain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He has held a variety of Board-level posts in the public and private sectors in economic development and public service management. He holds a BA in Economics and Politics from Trinity College, Dublin; MPhil in Town Planning from University College, London; MBA from Henley Management College; and a research MA in History from Royal Holloway, University of London. Among his publications is a recent article, 'Spain and Britain's Informal Empire', Prime Economics, November, 2015.*

Laura Kerrigan, SUNY University at Buffalo, USA.

‘*Capital Gains: Human and Environmental Exploitation in a Globalized System.*’

Bales, K. (2016). *Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide and the Secret to Saving the World*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau.

Grandin, G. (2014). *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom and Deception in the New World*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company.

Klein, N. (2015). *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

Rogers, T. D. (2010). *The Deepest Wounds: A Labour and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil*. Chapel Hill, US: The University of North Carolina Press.

Historians, environmentalists and heterodox economists have separately been making connections between colonization, exploitation and capitalism for quite some time. In recent years, a few scholars have brought to light these tangible connections in new ways. The authors listed above detail the link between colonization, exploitation and environmental degradation, and either hint at or pointedly blame capitalism as the cause. I will examine these books through the following questions: In what ways do each of the authors situate capitalism as a cause? Do they suggest any solution to these issues, and if so, what are they? In what ways do each of the authors link human exploitation and environmental degradation? What methods do they use to make their case?

I will suggest that these four books are bringing together interdisciplinary issues in enlightening ways. Greg Grandin, Thomas Rogers, Kevin Bales and Naomi Klein use different methods to support their theses, but the connections they draw between human exploitation, environmental degradation and capitalism are strikingly similar. I argue that the fields of economics, environmental studies and history cannot be seen as distinct. By excluding information from these disciplines, scholars fail to see the modern and historical issues as a whole. Additionally, it is no longer ethical to separate these fields, as the societal and ecological ramifications have grown too large.

*Laura is a PhD student in American Studies at the University at Buffalo. Her research interest is the role of capitalism in environmental justice issues, both historically and in the present day. She recently published two essays in the Natural Resource Conflicts anthology, edited by Troy Burnett. Laura spent several years working with low-income and refugee students with the non-profit Playworks and has worked for city and state environmental agencies.*

Selcuk Senturk, University of Leicester, UK

‘*A Feminist Exploration of Natural Resources and the Environment against Masculinist Exploitation in Doris Lessing’s The Grass Is Singing (1950) and Mara and Dann: An Adventure (1999).*’

Doris Lessing in her late postcolonial fiction *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* (1999) introduces a feminist exploration of the environment and natural resources against the masculinist exploitation of them as represented in her early postcolonial novel *The Grass Is Singing* (1950). *Mara and Dann* illustrates that colonialism as a masculine enterprise caused environmental

degradation: 'Everywhere the bones of animals lay in the dead grass.' Lessing employs Mara as a feminist explorer to interrogate this human stamp on the environment: 'There was a recklessness about the ways they used their soil and their water. These were peoples who had no interest in the results of their actions. [...] They cut down forests, so that country after country, once forested, became desert or arid.' Mara's descriptions of soil, forest and trees evoke Charlie Slatter's masculinist and rapist attitudes to the environment and natural resources in *The Grass Is Singing*: 'Mr Slatter's farm had hardly any trees left on it. It was a monument to farming malpractice, with great gullies cutting through it, and acres of good dark earth gone dead from misuse.'

The degraded images of the environment in *Mara and Dann* also signal the long-standing effects of colonialism on humans and non-humans. Lessing is critical of these effects and changes early in *Mara and Dann*: 'Everything changed: rivers moved, disappeared, ran again: trees died - the hills were full of dry forests - and insects, even scorpions, changed their natures.' The novel articulates an ecofeminist perspective that involves 'a critique of patriarchal science, [and] a concern with the degradation of 'nature'/environment [...]' to reclaim environmental discourses.

Focusing on Doris Lessing's early and late postcolonial fiction, this paper argues that feminist exploration and observation are key to interrogating colonialism, reclaiming the environment and deconstructing the ideological interconnectedness between the oppression of women, the domination of the subjugated and the control of the environment. The paper makes several references to how dominant masculinist attitudes and behaviours shaped human history and caused the environment to degrade and natural resources to exhaust.

*Selcuk is a PhD researcher in the School of English at the University of Leicester. He completed his BA in English Language and Literature at Kafkas University, Turkey, receiving an award for being 'the most distinctive student of the English department in 2010'. He was granted a full scholarship for his postgraduate studies in 2011, and completed his M.A. in Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds, 2012. He is currently at the final stage of his PhD project, titled 'Representation of Family in Doris Lessing's Novels.' His research interests lie in issues relating to gender, race, postcolonial ecofeminist criticism, Sufi mysticism and Marxist Theory, and specifically in the construction of non-normative and non-biological families in Doris Lessing's fiction. Selcuk has been selected to represent the University of Leicester in a HeForShe campaign against gender-based violence on campus. His ideas about how to prevent violence on campus have been presented to the United Nations.*

Michelle Clarke, School of Oriental and African Studies, UK.

*'African Environmental Ethics and Speculative Fiction.'*

There is a strong history of ecological questioning in Anglophone-African Literature, with the colonial impact on the environment being at the forefront of this discussion. Realist and speculative fictions alike confront present realities of environmental degradation. However, emerging fictions from the speculative genre allows us to go one step further in our contemplation of environmental criticism, as alternative and future worlds allow us to imagine new possibilities for environmental theory. The genre allows for a counter-narrative to Eurocentric perceptions of Africa by breaking down opposed categories of tradition and modernity, magic and science, superstition and rationality. Speculative literature can be seen as a form of transformative environmentalism. Its 'pedagogic quality' allows criticism of dominant Western ideology, by both creating and reflecting upon environmentalism. Most importantly, speculative fiction has the capacity to oppose, as Yasek (2014, p.61) so succinctly writes,

“opportunistic depictions of Africa as dystopia, crumbling under the weight of natural and man-made cataclysms, which only Western corporations can save”.

Through the lens of African speculative fiction and by situating the genre within the field of ecocriticism, the paper will use approaches from African philosophy and ethics in order to critique and decentre environmental discourse from purely Western understandings of nature.

*Michelle Clarke is a PhD student at SOAS University, London. Her research interests centre on African Philosophy and Environmental Ethics. Her thesis engages with ecocritical discourse within African speculative fiction. She obtained a Research Masters (MRes.) from Lancaster University. Her background in the field of Environment and Development means that she has carried out varied field work projects such as assessing the impacts of climate change on hibiscus growers in Uganda and researching the use of oral history in land dispute cases in Ghana.*

Sofia Aatkar, Nottingham Trent University, UK.

*‘Contact Zones and Conflict in Amryl Johnson’s Sequins for a Ragged Hem.’*

In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Mary Louise Pratt coins the term ‘contact zone’. Contact zones, she explains, “refer to the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other” - an encounter that is steeped in inequality and can cause coercion and conflict (Pratt 2008, 8). Contact zones are often depicted in imperial travel writing when a (usually) European traveller encounters non-Western peoples. This meeting of formerly distant individuals and cultures is frequently constructed “in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (Pratt 7) in such travelogues. Indeed, by describing the power they exerted over travelees, travel writers, who are often seen to embody an entire nation, were able to promote imperial vigour and sentiment. In postcolonial travel writing and particularly in return narratives, the traditional contact zone is disrupted as peoples, who share a national or regional history but who have been geographically separated through the diaspora, come together. In this paper, I will explore the representation of these alternative contact zones and the nature of the interactions they instigate between the postcolonial travel writer and the travellee in *Sequins for a Ragged Hem* (1988) by Amryl Johnson. Johnson migrated from Trinidad to England when she was eleven years old and her travel narrative describes her journey back to the Caribbean, during which she meets and interacts with the residents. Ultimately, I want to suggest that Johnson’s diasporic identity disrupts the power dynamic of the contact zone as laid out by Pratt, exposing Johnson as both a native and a tourist when she travels in the region of her birth. This ambiguity highlights Johnson’s cultural fluidity and causes her to reflect on the broader issue of belonging in a Caribbean context.

*Sofia is a first-year PhD student at Nottingham Trent University and her doctoral thesis is funded by the AHRC and M3C. Her research focuses on Caribbean-British travelogues and she is exploring the extent to which Caribbean travel writers work within or against the genre’s imperial inheritance. She is particularly interested in postcolonial travel writing and, more broadly, British migrant fiction. Sofia is a postgraduate member of the Centre for Travel Writing Studies (CTWS) and the Centre for Postcolonial Studies (PSCNTU) at Nottingham Trent University.*

Oyedepo Olukotun, De Montfort University, UK.

*'Yoruba Photographs as Celebrations of Diasporic National Identities.'*

Engaging with the theme of “national and diasporic identity and experience”, this paper presents the Yoruba people’s photographic practice as an integral part of their travel experience. The presentation posits the idea of ‘civic or family travel photographs’ as planned performances of self-representation, as projections of status, and as broadcasts of personal travel as a unique experience.

Drawing a distinction between holiday ‘snaps’ and ‘civic or family travel photographs’, the paper raises the question of what family photographs can tell us about their contemporary national and global socio-political context. Using studio and portrait photography, it not only documents Yoruba people’s travel within Nigeria and abroad, but also analyses how people take photographs to celebrate their travel experience and affirm family links. The paper moves family photographs out of their domestic setting to present how these photographs track, and respond to, national political and transnational events.

With the aid of selected private family photographs for its original source analysis and as its reference, the paper juxtaposes the theories of family photography, consolidated by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, with Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart’s theories of using photographic materiality to establish the context in which photographs are produced and can be assessed. Successively, in response to the discourse on transnationalism, the paper will engage with Tina Camp’s argument on diasporic family photographic practice. Regarding the topic of postcolonialism, the paper’s arguments will engage with Graham Huggan’s understanding of Postcolonial Studies as interdisciplinary.

*Oyedepo Olukotun is a PhD student at Leicester’s Photographic History Research Centre (PHRC), De Montfort University. His research, entitled “Purveyors of the Social Self: The Practice of Ibadan Photographers from the 1950s to the 1990s”, investigates the photographic culture of the Yoruba people of south-western Nigeria. He has a Masters in the History of Art with Photography from Birkbeck, University of London. To date he has presented academic papers at the following conferences:*

*Researching Africa Day 2017, ‘Studying Africa, Studying Anywhere: Area Studies for an Interconnected World’, The African Studies Centre at the University of Oxford, March 2017*

*‘Displaying Knowledge through Photography: Between Education and Mass Communication’, Université de Lausanne, November, 2016*

Annamaria Scorza, University of Calabria, Italy.

*'Postcolonial Literature: The Little Italian Empire.'*

Postcolonial studies arose in Italy during the 1990s, later than other European countries. The reason for this is the amnesia from which the Italian collective unconscious suffers. The term ‘postcolonial’ in Italian Studies does not create a dividing line between the Italian colonial and postcolonial periods, but rather, suggests an historical continuum between colonial past and present. The peculiarity of Italy is that it is not only a country of immigration, but its history is marked by a long tradition of emigration towards other countries, and of internal emigration from South to North. This perspective spreads new horizons of study, because it allows us to re-think other phenomena, such as the “Southern Question”, and migration flows in and from

Italy. Today, the “second generation” of immigrants in Italy deconstruct the racial hierarchy between Italians and foreigners by confusing the features of *italianità*, which is made hybrid with other cultures. In this sense, literature and “art as mirror of history” become the key to opening new hermeneutic possibilities. My focus is on the writing of four women authors (Igiaba Scego, Gabriella Ghermandi, Erminia Dell'Oro and Luciana Capretti), who come from former Italian colonies and now live in Italy. They analyse their relationships with their countries of origin, the colonial violation of Italy against those countries and their multiple identities, using writing as a form of resistance and creating a poetic of relationships and multiplicity. They are identities who have a “flexible citizenship”, who live above the hyphen between their different cultures of belonging, and who renovate the Italian language and literary canon. Their goal is to spread the transnational perspective of culture, which is not a place of belonging, as Chambers says, but a place of transformations.

*Annamaria Scorza, born in Italy in 1988, is a PhD student in Italian Contemporary Literature. She has a Master's degree in Modern Philology and is now attending the last year of a PhD at the University of Calabria (UNICAL), in Italy. She was based at the University of Birmingham last year for a research period of three months, during which she focused on Italian postcolonialism. Her field of study is the literary activity of women writers who come from the former Italian colonies.*

Susan Bradley, University of London, UK.

*‘Betwixt and Between: Challenges in Realising Women’s Rights to Respectful Maternity Care in Malawi.’*

Malawi is one of the world’s poorest countries. The health system, a legacy of British colonial rule, is severely underfunded and has retained the hierarchical, medical model of maternity care that predominated in Britain at the time of Malawian independence in 1964. Within this postcolonial landscape, acute health worker shortages were fuelled by a ‘brain drain’ of skilled migration and compounded by a ban on traditional birth attendants. Malawian midwives have been left struggling to meet demand and women are forced to forgo a traditional, social model of birth.

This work is part of a doctoral project exploring Malawian midwives’ perceptions of barriers and facilitators to providing care that meets women’s psychosocial needs. The results presented here focus on analysis of 26 key informant interviews carried out with senior nurse-midwife leaders and other experts in Malawi between March and June 2016. These interviews captured perspectives on the cultural, organisational and professional context in which maternity services are embedded.

Participants described a country caught ‘betwixt and between’. One clash is between traditional ‘*umunthu*’ values and modernity. Corruption, dwindling resources, poor attitudes to public services and falling standards of care were attributed to Malawi’s ‘misinterpretation’ of democracy, exacerbated by the absence of strong leadership and inadequate accountability systems or structures. Another challenge is the colonial legacy of the dual nurse-midwife model and training. This blurs the identity and status of midwives, reinforces social inequalities between midwife and woman, and plays out in micro-level aggressions in the labour ward. Against this backdrop, a growing human rights discourse and international advocacy efforts have started to highlight gaps between women’s rights on the one hand and midwives’ professionalism and responsibilities on the other. Many of the ‘betwixt and between’ that hinder the realisation of respectful maternity care in Malawi can be traced back to its colonial history.

*Susan is a PhD student in the School of Health Sciences, City University of London. Her research interest is the provision of respectful obstetric care in the context of the constraints that face health workers in sub-Saharan Africa. Her work is grounded in the premise that care which does not afford respect and dignity to labouring women has negative impacts for both midwives and women, as well as hampering efforts to reduce maternal mortality. Her specific interests are in the role of professionalism in respectful obstetric care; barriers to and enablers of women-centred care; task shifting; and supportive supervision. Her PhD project examines Malawian midwives' perceptions of the practice, impact and challenges of delivering respectful obstetric care. In 2007, Susan completed an MSc in Global Health with Trinity College Dublin, conducting primary research in Malawi. She spent the next eight years undertaking research and working with partners in Malawi, Tanzania and Mozambique.*

Preet Singh, Loughborough University, UK.

*'Belonging to the Communal Gaze: The Indian Female as Embodying and Representing 'izzat'.'*

Family honour (*izzat*) has been an increasingly prominent phenomenon in Asian cultural studies, but recent literature has been focused on acute manifestations of *izzat*, which are often associated with honour killings. In this study, the focus is on the more subtle and understated sense of *izzat*, understanding the ways in which the female body comes to embody and represent family honour. Based on an intergenerational analysis, the research was conducted with British Indian women, and formulated around the differences and similarities found amongst the varying generations. As an Indian female, and having personal experience of *izzat* and its associated connotations, I decided to investigate whether experiences of *izzat* are reflected on the Indian female body universally, and to what extent the postcolonial acculturation of Indian females in the British context may have affected the prevalence of *izzat*. Eliciting the works of Foucault (1979), Butler (1990) and Goffman, it is argued that the female body comes to embody *izzat* through disciplinary regulations placed on female decorum, behaviour, dress, and an internalisation of expected social values. Similarly, *izzat* is found to be a 'gendered' practice, leading to the performance of the 'self' to gain approval in the social world. Building a novel picture of the experiences around *izzat*, the research involved face-to-face interviews and visual ethnography (using participants' own photographs) to elicit 'lived' experiences of *izzat*. It concluded that perceptions and understandings of *izzat* remain consistent generationally, and that it is proclaimed to be a signifier of status. However, consistent with changes in cultural practices that have taken place in the postcolonial period, there are new practices of resistance to the 'communal gaze', which are prevalent in dialogues with the younger generation of British Indians.

*Preet Singh is a PhD student at Loughborough University, having secured her place through a scholarship funding programme. Her research is based on the diasporic body, intersectionality and communication. During her undergraduate and postgraduate studies, she developed a focus on postcolonialism, with an interest in South Asian cultural studies, literature and research. Her paper is based on her Master's thesis, which was awarded a first-class grade.*

(TBC) Nancy Ali, Sorbonne University (IV), France.

*'An Egyptian Queer Trajectory.'*

Since 1990, homosexuals in Muslim countries have been supported by human rights groups and a transnational network of advocates in Europe and North America who support gay and lesbian

rights. Western diplomacy and human rights groups have placed LGBT rights front and centre in the dialogue between Western and non-Western states, making it a new signifier of the civilized vs non-civilized divide.

However, these human rights organizations do not bear in mind the intersectionality of issues of gender and sexuality with race, culture, religion and class. Tackling these issues requires a sensibility to the particularities of the Arab/Muslim context. What are the implications of 'coming out' in a culture that places immense importance on family ties? Can one be a homosexual and still be a pious Muslim? The queer trajectory, from a once-stigmatized act to one of normative standing, changes its shape from one place to another.

It was ironically the 2001 arrest of 52 gay men on Queen Boat for acts of 'debauchery' that stimulated the growth of a homosexual community in Egypt. Erotic communities are usually born after times of severe legal and social backlash. A repressive era is also a formative era for sexual identities to establish themselves and become recognizable. In the West, new erotic communities only began to take shape at the turn of the 20th century, because of legislative action taken against them, such as the anti-obscenity laws. The AIDS epidemic, to a different extent, had similarly given new blood to the gay community. It is, as the historian Claude Burgelin says, 'the descent to hell', which is often the most constructive for group identities. Such events become a trigger of collective memory and a catalyst for establishing or writing a group into history.

*Nancy Ali is a research associate at the Centre du Recherche en Littérature Comparée (CRLC) at the Sorbonne (Paris IV). She finished her PhD, entitled 'Violence et fiction dans le roman contemporain' in 2014, also at the Sorbonne (Paris IV), focused on the contemporary novel written in French, English and Arabic. Her current research centers on texts written by subjects who have been historically excluded from writing based on gender, sexuality and race.*

Emily Turner, University of Edinburgh, UK.

*'Canadian Residential Schools and Academic Research on Indigenous-Missionary Encounter After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2008-2015.'*

In December 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concluded a seven-year study and response to residential schools established throughout Canada from the 1870s to the 1990s for indigenous children in the country. It concluded that the schools, many of which were run by Canada's main religious denominations and supported by the federal government, were intended to explicitly separate these children from their families and culture, and to assimilate them into Euro-Canadian society. It also recognized openly that the schools were sites of significant physical, mental and sexual abuse for thousands of children, and have had a lasting impact on the individuals who attended them, their communities and indigenous nations throughout Canada.

With this understanding of the intent of these institutions, questions arise about a scholarly approach by non-indigenous academics towards religious organizations and their relationship with Canadian indigenous people. This paper will address the complex narrative of understanding, researching and writing about the religious-indigenous encounter in Canada from a postcolonial perspective. I will examine the historiographic trends in this area and discuss the ways in which contemporary scholars can, and have, moved forward with the knowledge that missionaries and religious professionals were involved with institutions that were not only

horrific for their direct victims, but have also shaped many of the issues faced by indigenous communities today.

I will discuss these issues from a general perspective, but will also draw insight from my own discipline, architectural history, where I study the religious architecture of Christian missions in relation to indigenous people and their impact on cultural change. In doing so, I will suggest ways in which to approach this topic, in order both to present historical information, and to provide a space for dialogue about the impact and legacy of residential schooling within the Canadian context.

*Emily is a third-year PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. She completed a Masters in Theology at the University of Toronto in 2014. Her current work focuses on the infrastructural development of Christian missions in the Canadian north between 1850 and 1900; the ways in which space facilitated cultural encounter and change in indigenous communities; and how it was enacted as a fundamental aspect of missionary practice. She has also examined the ways in which these strategies were enacted in other areas of the world and the European-indigenous contact narrative throughout the early modern period. She has published research on these issues in Architectural History and The Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, and has a forthcoming article in Studies in Church History.*

Samara Guimaraes, University of Birmingham, UK.

*‘The Incorporation of Traditional Healers into Mozambican Judicial Institutions.’*

This paper will present the impact of traditional healers in the Mozambican justice system as an alternative to liberal state-building. In Mozambican community courts, traditional healers who are older and more influential within the community are invited by AMETRAMO (Association of Mozambican Traditional Healers), local judges and *regulos* (local chiefs) to identify culprits and stolen items and to judge mainly witchcraft cases. They also help in solving a variety of other conflicts and disputes. I argue that traditional healers symbolise the representativeness of restorative justice in Mozambique, since they engage in communally-based treatments of culprits and reparations instead of retributive justice. The recognition of the impact of traditional healers by local chiefs (*regulos*), AMETRAMO (the state) and the people (beneficiaries), as mediators between state and society through their impact in the community courts, represents the legitimacy of these actors in the traditional justice system of Mozambican society. My research represents a critical approach to liberal peacebuilding through Hybridity and Post-Liberalism in International Relations. The recognition of local needs emerges as a more critical version and praxis of liberal peace-building and state-building in IR, moving away from a hierarchical international system and highlighting the political importance of everyday issues and locally-salient forms of representative institutions of statehood, which are often connected to resistance, customs and traditions.

*Samara Guimaraes is a PhD candidate in International Development at the University of Birmingham. She earned an MA in International Relations at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in 2013, with a thesis written on the role of the United Nations Program for Development (UNPD) in the state-building process of South Sudan from 2009 to 2012. Her thesis focused on the agency’s role during the electoral process of the country, and on the maintenance of post-referendum projects until 2012. Prior to that, Samara received a BA in International Relations at the Universidade Estadual da Paraíba in 2010, with a thesis on the influence of religion and ethnic conflict in the formulation of Sudan’s politics. It addressed the discussion on the global recognition of Human Rights, focusing on civilizational structures in southern Sudan and on internal political developments.*

Elisa Tuijnder, University of Birmingham, UK.

*'Institutional and Non-Institutional Approaches to Religion: A Focus on Everyday Religious Encounter in Postcolonial Congo and Borneo.'*

This presentation will explore the study of religion in postcolonial contexts by comparing two different field sites and modes of approach. First, it will re-examine the work that I completed for my MA thesis, which focused on the education and development activities of one Roman Catholic Order, the Sisters of the Annunciation, in rural Kikwit, Democratic Republic of Congo. The topic of religion was approached through an institutional and traditional sociological lens, in which ethnographic and qualitative data was brought into conversation with the ideas proposed through modernisation and secularisation theory. Although the thesis rejected these meta-narratives and advocated hybridity (as well as warning the reader against binary distinctions such as 'modern' and 'traditional' or 'sacred' and 'secular') it still maintained these problematic concepts, claiming that modernity and secularity as ideas of progress and political concepts have remained meaningful in our analysis of Africa. Thus it retained, if only for analytical purposes, these troublesome and outdated concepts, in spite of the fact that they were first dictated by a Christian/ European dynamic, and were exported to Kikwit by the forces of colonialism. This institutional way of looking at religion has dominated academic discourse. Therefore, the paper will then discuss through my thesis findings what the limits of this approach are, and what transferable material I may have for my doctoral research. At present, I am proposing in my doctoral funding application a study of religion beyond institutionalism and meta-narratives, which looks at religion on a day-to-day basis through everyday encounters between Muslims, Christians, Traditionalists and those who adhere to Chinese Traditional Religion in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

*Elisa has an MRes in Modern History and International Relations from the University of Groningen. Her focus on Africa, and particularly religion in Africa, brought her to the University of Birmingham as an Erasmus intern. After completion of the Masters she started working for the ERC-funded research project, 'Knowing Each Other: Everyday Religious Encounters and Tolerance in S-W Nigeria' at the Department of African Studies and Anthropology. She is currently writing a doctoral proposal on everyday religious encounters in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.*

## Registration.

Attendees are encouraged to register for the event at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/postcolonialism-in-interdisciplinary-perspective-tickets-33636517730>

There are a limited number of spaces available and tickets will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Travel Information.

Information about how to reach Edgbaston Campus can be accessed here:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/contact/directions/getting-here-edgbaston.aspx>

Please see the Edgbaston Campus Map for directions to the Arts Building:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/edgbaston-campus-map.pdf>

## General Inquiries.

All inquiries should be directed to:

[postcolonialmidlands@gmail.com](mailto:postcolonialmidlands@gmail.com)

## Acknowledgements.

The funding for this event was kindly provided by the AHRC Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership, with which five of the organizers are affiliated. We would like to thank Professor Charlotte Hempel for her support with the application.

We would also like to acknowledge the Department of African Studies and Anthropology and the staff on the department for their advice. Special thanks are owed to Dr Benedetta Rossi, Dr Insa Nolte, Dr Kate Skinner and Dr Rebecca Jones.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the panellists for their stimulating contributions.