

EACLALS TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2011

AT: Bogazici (Bosphorus) University, Istanbul, Turkey, from 26 to 30 April 2011

THEME: 'Under Construction: Gateways and Walls'

This conference proposes to examine the state of postcolonial studies using the concepts of (re)building, transition and change, process and construction, in order to discuss the social and political crises and dilemmas of the contemporary moment which urgently need addressing.

The Gateway, the Wall: these conceptual figures suggest the practical and piecemeal yet also provisional nature of our discipline and scholarly explorations, and the way that knowledge may be constructed to function as both barrier and pathway to further modes of enquiry. Delegates might like to reflect on the current state of postcolonial theory, which is increasingly used alongside new models taken from migration studies or globalisation theory. This expansion offers a 'gateway' to new discourses and disciplines, but correspondingly traditional postcolonial frameworks are also inevitably in danger of losing their critical purchase. Questions to be posed might include: Can postcolonial studies act as 'gateways' to the understanding of the contemporary world by intersecting with other theoretical models? Or do postcolonial models act as 'walls' that block perspectives currently only available if used in conjunction with other discourses and disciplines? Can earlier postcolonial discourses still be confidently applied to current economic and political conditions (e.g. the rise of the BRIC countries, especially China and India)? What new challenges do postcolonial modes of thought face today (the Middle East, for instance, is one amongst other complex areas of inquiry)? Such questions can be explored either from a theoretical angle or through particular case studies in the fields of literature, language, cinema and visual arts.

The theme 'Under Construction' also reflects the conference location in Istanbul, a city of 'border-zones' that straddles East and West, Europe and Asia, but which historically has also been a gateway between North and South, between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, between 'wild Scythia' and the 'civilised' Roman Empire, between orthodox Russia and the Byzantine metropolis of Constantinople. It hints at the layered political status of Turkey, a complex multicultural nation which was once the centre of an empire and currently seeks a 'gateway' into a larger community of nations through entry into the European Union. Turkey also images the geopolitical shifts currently occurring due to globalisation, and suggests that remappings of older notions of how the world is divided up, such as empires, colonies, nation-states and regions, are now required. How adequate in the global/glocal third millennium are current conceptual frameworks constructed around terms like cosmopolitanism, the transnational and the transcultural? What new terms and frameworks can we use to address the provisionality of contemporary life: terrorism, global warming, migration, multilingualism, diasporic subjects and groups who lack a definitive homeland?

Subthemes offering pathways towards and around the theme of ‘Under Construction’, and images of gateways, walls and border-zones:

Interactions with the Orient as the ‘Other’

- revisiting Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and Eric Auerbach’s *Mimesis*
- worlding the Text and the Critic

Interdisciplinarity and Postcolonial Studies

- the ‘post-postcolonial’ and the globalised world
- is world literature postcolonial?
- postcolonialism and transnationalism

Nation-states and Nationalisms

- the nation’s gateways and walls
- global networks versus the nation-state?
- governmentality and its discontents
- global English and language choices

Geopolitics of East and West

- revisiting empires, colonies, and commonwealths
- dying and reviving states
- China, the new empire

History and Memory

- after Gallipoli: reconstructions and representations
- national myths and identity
- trauma, mourning and memory

Postcolonial Aesthetics

- to write life or not to write life
- is there a postcolonial genre?
- electronic gateways: the death of the book?

Bosphorus – Interfaces under Four Winds

- North-South/East-West ambiguities and divergences
- myths of ‘wilderness’ and ‘civilisation’
- postcolonial romanticisms

Minority Subjects and Communities

- debating the 'Other' inside
- minority versus majority identitarian discourses

Ocean Flows and Networks

- the Black Aegean, the African Mediterranean
- islands, archipelagos, and isthmuses
- the sea as history

Postcolonial Migration and Cosmopolitanism

- the neo-liberal subject and globalisation
- constructing utopias, the 'shock of the new'
- where is the new cosmo/polis?
- diasporas, exile and migration as crossings

Ethics as Boundary and Marker

- an environmental ethics under construction
- terrorism, the subject and globalisation
- what is a postcolonial ethics?

Gender as Threshold and Border

- geographies of gender
- trans/gendering the subject
- globalising the queer

Abstracts: Deadline for abstracts is 31 March 2010.

Please submit abstracts of about 200 words for individual presentations (20 minutes) or panel proposals for three speakers (90 minutes) to EACLALS2011@googlemail.com. Include your name, affiliation, email address and a brief biography (for attachments include your name as part of the file name). Add 5-6 key words and an indication of the most appropriate subtheme for your paper.

Delegates must be EACLALS members. Check the EACLALS website at <http://www.eaclals.org> for subscription rates and for further information.