

RINGS 8th Annual Conference & Meeting

# DECOLONISING FEMINISMS

26th & 27th October, 2022



Hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Durban, South Africa



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PROGRAMME GUIDE

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# CALL FOR PAPERS

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Feminist scholarship, in its many different forms, seeks to problematise and destabilise the universalising structure of dominant Western ways of thinking, through which the (white) man of reason is posited at the centre of a world history that unfolds progressively through the transcendence, control and extraction of the natural, corporeal, and feminine. This “sacrificial logic” (Caldwell 2002) of modern Western thought leads not only to the symbolic erasure of woman (Cavarero 1995; Irigaray 1985) but also founds and justifies colonial conquest (Fanon 1961; Mbembe 2001), as well as environmental destruction and relentless capitalist expansion (Yusoff, 2019).

Feminist and gender studies therefore hold unique potential to work across causes to challenge the global problems of colonial dispossession, the ascendancy of whiteness, and environmental destruction in their mutually constitutive entanglement with heteropatriarchy. However, more often than not, feminism is criticised for doing the opposite, namely repeating or reasserting the universalising structure of modern liberal thought. This happens specifically when “whitestream” feminisms (Arvin et al. 2013) accept heteropatriarchy as an ahistorical framework of analysis in terms of which gender and sexuality become central to feminist theory and practice without taking seriously the ways in which heterosexuality, capitalism and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other (Lugones 2010). Rauna Kuokkanen explains that in the Nordic context, for example, “when Sami women talk about reindeer herding laws, global capital encroaching on their traditional territories, or the ability to teach the Sami language to their children, these are not seen or understood as feminist concerns” (Knoblock & Kuokkanen 2015: 278).

Indigenous and decolonial feminists have been showing in many different ways how the naturalisation of heteropatriarchy (for example, through the imposition of a “modern”, “civilised” sexuality in

the form of the nuclear family with its gendered division of labour) is at the centre of the devastating effects of settler colonialism on indigenous communities (Oyěwùmí 1997; Nzegwu 2012; Gqola 2015) and how the enforcement of “proper” gender roles is utilised in attempts of the coloniser to control the claims to land made by colonised people (Arvin et al. 2013: 15). When whitemainstream feminism assumes that woman is defined by her gender first, prior to racial and indigenous identities, it fails to understand how race is made through gender and vice versa, so that struggles against patriarchal oppression cannot be understood separately from struggles against colonial or racial domination (Moreton-Robinson 2000; Arvin et al. 2013; Lugones 2010; Oyěwùmí 1997).

Another manifestation of whitemainstream feminism’s reliance on Eurocentric or Westerncentric universalisation is the way in which women’s and feminist history is presented as a teleological unfolding of a singular conception of woman’s freedom. It neglects to engage with and take seriously the long rich histories of women’s activism and feminist theorising taking place outside of the dominant renderings of “Western” history, and often as part of struggles against racial oppression and environmental devastation in the face of Empire (Lukose 2018: 42; Arvin et al. 2013). In this way, whitemainstream feminist and gender studies repeat the centring of the white subject, the naturalisation of settler colonialism and the maintenance of the gender script that infuses colonial race technologies.

For this conference we invite contributions engaging with the project of decolonising feminist scholarship and activism, not merely in symbolic and metaphorical ways, but with a commitment to material, structural change in the world. Such contributions could explore any of the following topics (but need not be limited to them):

- Shifts away from the multiple imperial contexts and colonial models of knowledge extraction in our feminist scholarship
- The forces through which Indigenous women and Native feminist theories have been invisibilised within whitemainstream women’s studies
- Challenging white dominated research and pedagogical models

- Unmasking and dismantling epistemic privilege attached to geopolitical positioning
- The “denaturalisation of the national” (Lukose 2018: 44) as a site of feminist theory and practice
- Exposing the persistent structures of settler colonisation and its effects on Indigenous peoples and others
- Developing and incorporating multilingualism into our research as a way of undermining the hegemony of English as colonial imposition
- Forging feminist alliances in which issues of race and land are not erased for the sake of solidarity
- The complicity of feminist scholarship in the maintenance and invisibilisation of colonial structures and the dispossession of Indigenous people

Formats other than presentations, particularly more interactive formats (such as panels, roundtables or more experimental modalities) are welcome.

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## ONLINE ACCESS

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The Conference will be available to stream live as an audience member through the following Zoom link:

[https://ukzn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_7qUzFeX\\_S3ivEOG0jnOm6g](https://ukzn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7qUzFeX_S3ivEOG0jnOm6g)

*Note: All Conference presenters will be sent a private link by invitation. If you are presenting and do not receive your link by 25 October, please contact Beth Gum (bethanygracegum@gmail.com) or Chenay Singh (SinghC2@ukzn.ac.za).*

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# DAY 1

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## Wednesday 26th October

9:00–19:00

Onsite & online

Venue: Elangeni Hotel, Suite 1, Durban,  
South Africa

8:00–9:00 **Arrival & registration**

9:00–9:30 **Opening**

*Thabo Msibi*, University of KwaZulu–Natal, Dean and  
Head of School of Education

*Deevia Bhana & Annette von Alemann*, RINGS Co-  
Chairs, The International Research Association of  
Institutions of Advanced Gender Studies

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### **Session 1: Decolonising Academia** *Chaired by Jeff Hearn*

9:30–10:00 A concept for co-teaching across the globe  
*Edna Harriet Mtoi & Anika Thym*

10:00–10:30 Decolonising the University: An Endpoint?  
*Bethany Gum*

10:30–11:00 Trust in scholarly knowledge after the pandemic, post-  
factual, and decolonizing turns  
*Elina Oinas*

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11:00–11:30 **Mid-morning tea & coffee break**

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# DAY 1

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## **Session 2: Violence Against Women & Girls** *Chaired by Fiona Jenkins*

- 11:30–12:00    Manifestation of Silence Towards Sextortion in Education Institution: A Tanzania Perspective  
*Tatu M. Nyange & Sixbert S. Amsi*
- 12:00–12:30    Spectacularising narratives on femicide in South Africa: A decolonial feminist analysis  
*Floretta Boonzaier*
- 12:30–13:00    Sexual Violence, Bare Life and its Colonial Origins  
*Amanda Gouws*
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13:00–14:00    **Lunch break**

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## **Session 3: Young People & Sexualities** *Chaired by Elina Oinas*

- 14:00–14:30    Decolonising Porn–Assemblages: Girls, Bodies, Gender and Desire  
*Deevia Bhana*
- 14:30–15:00    Teenage girls’ negotiation of ‘hetero–sexy’ on social media: a new feminist materialist perspective  
*Raksha Janak*
- 15:00–15:30    Primary schoolgirls negotiating gender and sexuality  
*Naresa Govender & Diloshini Govender*
- 15:30–16:00    Troubling gay men who teach young children: I’m not gonna hate you but I’m definitely not gonna support you  
*Shaaista Moosa*

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# DAY 1

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16:00–16:30 **Afternoon tea & coffee break**

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**Session 4: Panel – Working with Creativity, Affect & Embodiment: Decolonial Feminist Praxis for Gender & Sexual Justice**

*Convened by Tamara Shefer & Carmine Rustin*

16:30–17:00 Disobedient Women and Theatre Historiography in India  
*Swati Arora*

17:00–17:30 Uitgeskryf in grond (Edited out of/into the land): A reflection on a multimodal collaborative exhibition project  
*Janine Lange*

17:30–18:00 Uitgeskryf (written out) in ocean: An extract from a collaborative exhibition project  
*Cheri Hugo*

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18:00–19:00 **Session 5: Paper & Book Launch**

‘Troubling’ scholarship and praxis directed at young people, sexuality and gender: Reflections on a transnational dialogue

*Jeff Hearn, Tamara Shefer, Floretta Boonzaier and Kopano Ratele*

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19:00  
onwards **Cocktail event**

**Dinner (self-paid)**

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# DAY 2

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## Thursday 27th October

9:00–19:00

Onsite & online

Venue: Elangeni Hotel, Suite 1, Durban,  
South Africa

8:00–9:00 **Arrival & registration**

9:00–10:30 **Keynote speech**

The Dirge

*Dr Danai Mupotsa*, University of the Witwatersrand

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10:30–11:00 **Mid-morning tea & coffee break**

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**Session 7: Philosophy, Literature & Decolonisation**  
*Chaired by Deirdre Byrne*

11:00–11:30 Watery hauntings: African women's literature and/as  
the problem of African Philosophy

*Azille Coetzee*

11:30–12:00 Epistemology of transnational perspective in literary  
studies: the case of post-Yugoslav literature

*Jasmina Lukic*

12:00–12:30 The French-Moroccan Writer Leïla Slimani and White  
Feminism

*Irma Erlingsdóttir*

12:30–13:00 Why do white women get raped in Raj Nostalgia  
literature: Decolonising trauma

*Giti Chandra*

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# DAY 2

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13:00–14:00 **Lunch break**

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**Session 6: Black Feminist Reflections**  
*Chaired by Irma Erlingsdóttir*

14:00–14:30 The Coloniality of Power/Gender/Being: Black Feminist and Decolonial Theory in Dialogue  
*Jessica Nogueira Varela*

14:30–15:00 Doing Theory Differently: Teaching African Feminism  
*Deirdre C. Byrne*

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**Session 8: Decolonising History, Religion & Politics**  
*Chaired by Tamara Shefer*

15:00–15:30 Towards Alternative Histories: The Interconstitutive Impact of the Colonial Encounter  
*Karen Gabriel*

15:30–16:00 Against the Oppression of ‘One Plot’  
*Erzsébet Barát*

16:00–16:30 War, post imperial syndrome and feminist debates in Russia after February 24, 2022  
*Olga Shnyrova*

16:30–17:00 Decolonising the Global Care Chain discussion, talking about the Subsistence Crises  
*Dina Bolokan*

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17:00–17:30 **Tea & coffee break**

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# DAY 2

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## **Session 8: Visual Activism, Affect & Decolonial Solidarity**

*Chaired by Floretta Boonzaier*

17:30–18:00 Acknowledgment and Transformation: A decolonial feminist practice of responding to oppression  
*Fiona Jenkins*

18:00–18:30 Rage  
*Lou-Marié Kruger*

18:30–19:00 Artistic praxis, and transnational and decolonial solidarity: Artists as Potential Agents to Decolonize Feminism  
*Pilar Milagros García*

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19:00 onwards **Dinner** (self-paid)

END OF PROGRAMME

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# KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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## **Dr Danai Mupotsa, University of the Witwatersrand**

*Danai S. Mupotsa teaches in the Department of African Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand. She specialises in gender and sexualities, black intellectual traditions and histories, intimacy and affect and feminist pedagogies.*

The Dirge, I offer as a governing metaphor and orientation that operates around the figure of the ‘customary’. In its first instantiation, this refers to the inventions of customary law, which also then refers to its constitutive–political–economic–juridical making of the sovereign subject embedded within the terms of civil law. These governing convention, a socio/ethnopoetics whose operative powers are necessary for the making of the “we” and their “Other”. The racialized taxonomies of these operative powers are routed in and across the production of “gender” as a sociopolitical category, and constitutive to the production of the secular monohumanist subject of liberal and other feminisms. This places particular kinds of persons in a juxtapolitical nexus concerned with ‘freedom’; in this way, the customary is the formative interruption in most of the epistemological, methodological, and when and if they appear at all, the ontological bases of all of the disciplinary formations that deal with the “African woman” as subject. The customary is also a way to think about vernacular arrangements and forms of relation that are implicitly and explicitly multilingual, in the sense that these customs of relating to being in the world are practiced across multiple relations to the self, and the self in relation to others that might also include the language of operating within the grammatical logics of our various entries or belated entry to intimate modernity. These vernaculars also operate within, but also outside and besides the forms of rationality that operate within this ethnopoetics. In this talk, I disrupt the epistemic habits, or reliance on both the sociological and anthropological category “woman”/ “African woman” which frequently operates in disciplinary formations that reproduce this ethnopoetics.

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# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Friday 28th October**

**9:00–13:00**

**Onsite & online**

Exclusively for RINGS members

9:00–10:30 **General assembly**  
*See GA agenda for further details*

10:30–11:00 **Tea & coffee break**

11:00–13:00 **Country reports**