



NETHERLANDS RESEARCH SCHOOL OF GENDER STUDIES

DOING GENDER Autumn 2014 Lecture Series

In the autumn of 2014 the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies in cooperation with the Graduate Gender Programme (GGeP) at Utrecht University organises the thirteenth round of the **DOING GENDER** Lecture Series. These lectures stress the importance of doing gender work combined with an active involvement in the practice of gender theory and research. The concept of **DOING GENDER** supports a hands-on approach to gender issues in the sense of social and political engagement with the new forms of gender inequalities that are taking shape in the world today. The lecture series wants to give space to the new generations of gender theorists and practitioners and to perspectives that innovate the field and do gender in new ways. Key is the notion of doing gender: what is the state of the art definition of gender? How do contemporary scholars and activists utilise this definition?

The **Doing Gender Lecture Series** takes place in Utrecht and is free of charge.

For more information: www.graduatgenderstudies.nl.

Registration is not compulsory, but highly appreciated: nog@uu.nl or 030 - 253 6001.

Upcoming Doing Gender Lectures

- **Thursday September 25, 2014: Dr. Raka Shome**
- **Title:** *White Femininity and Cosmopolitan Healing*
- **Time:** 16.00 – 17.30 hrs
- **Location:** Utrecht, Drift 21, room 0.05
- **Chair:** Prof. Dr. Rosemarie Buikema

The first Doing Gender Lecture comes from Dr. Raka Shome (New York). Her talk will focus on new formations of white femininity in the millennium (and contemporary post millennial years) that are articulated through particular logics of borderlessness of privileged white women. This borderlessness is organized around a discourse of cosmo-spirituality, well-being, and healing, and frequently incorporates the ethos of Asian-inflected therapeutic practices of inner wellness, planetary connectivity, and “finding yourself”. Astrology, reflexology, acupuncture, ayurveda, Asian herbal medicines, colonic irrigation, homeopathy, meditation, yoga, spiritual retreat packages, reiki, tai chi, and so on have emerged as technologies for recrafting and healing the white (usually female) subject of contemporary neoliberalism. This talk will explore the implications of such “cosmo-healing” of privileged white femininity in which white women become (seemingly) connecting to, and radiate, a global soul and “life flows”. We see this particularly articulated through female celebrities. The talk will also address how a politics of global justice seems to be replaced by a discourse of global wellness in such transnational (healing) connections of privileged white femininity.



Dr. Raka Shome is a Media, Communication, and Feminist Cultural Studies scholar who writes on postcolonial cultures and transnational feminism. Currently based in New York, Dr. Shome has published numerous articles in leading journals and anthologies in the field of Media, Communication and Cultural Studies. Some of her essays have been reprinted in key texts in the field of global communication and media studies. She is the author of *Diana and Beyond: White Femininity, National Identity, and Contemporary Media Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 2014)—a book that examines how new sets of postcolonial relations in contemporary western cultures are mediated through images of white femininity. Under her co-guest editorship, the first-ever special issue on

“Postcolonialism” was published in the field of Communication Studies in the International Communication Association journal *Communication Theory* (August, 2002). She recently also guest edited a special issue on “Asian Modernities” (2012) in the (Sage) journal *Global Media and Communication*, which included several articles focused on the question of what it means to be “modern” outside of liberal western frameworks.

Her current research interest is in the logics of non western modernities. She is currently guest editing an issue of *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies* journal (Sage Publication) on ‘Gender/colonialism/nationalism and Twenty First Century’ and is co-planning a special issue of the journal *Postcolonial Studies* on ‘Postcolonial Media Studies’. She is also a primary organizer of the first ever international conference on Postcoloniality and Communication that will take place in Villanova University in March 2015. See: <http://wfi2015.vucommdept.com/>.

- **Friday November 7, 2014: Prof. Leela Gandhi (Brown University)**
- **Title:** *On Ethics of Imperfection: Practices of Self and Becoming Common*
- **Time:** 12.00 – 14.00 hrs
- **Location:** Utrecht
- **Chair:** Prof. Dr. Rosemarie Buikema
- **In cooperation with** Casco, the UU Graduate Gender Programme (GGeP) and the Postcolonial Studies Initiative (PCI)

Leela Gandhi's work deals with the history of transnational lifestyles and modes of self-work that counter aggressive cultures of globalization, forged by war, empire and capital. These askeses or spiritual exercises constitute a minor and intimate style of being global, and involve dissident practices of gender, sexuality, prayer and art. They often take the form of a moral imperfectionism—making oneself less rather than more—and may well comprise the lost content of radical democratic thought and a key to its future elaboration.



Gandhi's lecture will approach this enterprise through a meditation upon the poetic encounter between the Indian anti-colonial leader M.K. Gandhi and the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, in the troubled era of the early twentieth century. Supplementary readings, drawn from Gandhi's books, *Affective Communities* (2006) and *The Common Cause* (2014) will highlight queer practices of self-reduction and minor globality as germane to the ethical content of democracy and for the enterprise of becoming-common.

Leela Gandhi (born 1966) is Professor of English at Brown University and a noted academic in the field of postcolonial theory. She is the co-editor of the academic journal *Postcolonial Studies*, the author of the summary text *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Columbia UP, 1998), *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and The Politics of Friendship* (Duke UP, 2006), *The Common Cause. Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900-1955* (Chicago UP, 2014). She serves on the editorial board of the electronic journal *Postcolonial Text*.

This lecture is a joint venture with Casco, the UU Graduate Gender Programme (GGeP) and the Postcolonial Studies Initiative (PCI).

Renowned Doing Gender speakers of the past years were:

Saskia Sassen (Columbia University), Judith Butler (University of California, Berkeley), Antjie Krog (University of Western Cape), Susan Lindquist (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Claire Hemmings (London School of Economics), Jasbir Puar (Rutgers University), Joanna Regulska (Rutgers University), Maria Serena Sapegno (University of Rome La Sapienza), Ursula Biemann (video artist on gender and globalisation, Zurich), Marguerite Waller (University of California, Riverside), Rebecca Gomperts (Women on Waves), Rosi Braidotti (Utrecht University), Linda Alcoff (Syracuse University), Rebecca Walker, Yana Rodgers (Rutgers University), Catherine Hakim (London School of Economics), Gloria Wekker (Utrecht University), Elizabeth Grosz (Rutgers University), Henrietta Moore (London School of Economics), Saba Mahmood (University of California, Berkeley), Azar Nafisi (Johns Hopkins University), Asma Barlas (Ithaca College), Anne Brewster (University of New South Wales), Sneja Gunew (University of British Columbia), Hyekyung Lee (Yonsei University, South Korea), Pil Wha Chang (EWha Women's University, South Korea), Marja Vuijsje, Moira Gatens (University of New South Wales, Australia), Vicki Kirby (University of New South Wales, Australia), Joanna Bourke (Birkbeck College, London), Patricia MacCormack (Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom), Genevieve Lloyd (University of New South Wales, Australia), Inderpal Grewal (Yale University), Bracha L. Ettinger, Griselda Pollock (Leeds University), Femke Halsema, Ella Shohat (New York University), Robert Stam (Tisch School of the Arts), Rutvica Andrijasevic (University of Leicester), Joan Scott (Princeton University), Elleke Boehmer (Oxford University), Soledad Falabella Luco (University of Chile), Estelle Barrett and Susan Stryker (University of Arizona), Geertje Mak (Radboud University Nijmegen), Bishnupriya Ghosh (University of California, Santa Barbara), renée hoogland (Wayne State University, Detroit), Ala'a Basatneh (Loyola University of Chicago), Inna Shevchenko (FEMEN), Prof. Dr. Marie-Luise Angerer (Academy of Media Arts Cologne), Sunny Bergman.