



Nordic Summer University



MOBILITIES &
TRANSNATIONAL
ICELAND



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Symposium | Racialization, whiteness and politics of othering in contemporary Europe

Dates | November 25-27, 2019

Venue | University of Iceland, Reykjavik (Iceland)

Address | Sæmundargata 2, 101 Reykjavik (University building called Háskólatorgi, Room 300)

Book of Abstracts

Monday, November 25th

Linda Lapiņa * 'Teaching Race by a Representative of Whiteness'? Racialization, Whiteness and Intersectional Pedagogy in Higher Education

This paper explores how racialization and whiteness influence and take shape in diverse learning spaces in a university in Denmark. I draw on autoethnographical vignettes and informal, anonymous student evaluations from my work as a lecturer. For three semesters (2018-2019), I co-taught a bachelor's course in Cultural analysis in English and Danish. Racialization was an explicit topic of the interview excerpts I had chosen to analyse with the students. The interviews explored experiences of transnational adoptees, interracial intimacies and the intersections of race and sexuality. I invited the students to reflect how the interviews, despite being situated in a specific context, illuminate racialization processes in Denmark more broadly.

We had animate discussions of racialization and racism in Denmark. As all of us spoke from racialized locations, these discussions could not avoid being personal. Some students shared experiences with racism; others expressed racist views. In this paper, I analyse moments of affective saturation from classroom discussions and students' evaluations to explore how race and intersectionality matter in a diverse university classroom. I examine how racialised positionalities are figured and contested, and the potentials and ethical implications that these processes have for intersectional pedagogy. I discuss how awareness of speaking, learning and

doing research from intersectionally emerging, racialized positions can contribute to plurality in knowledge production. The article contributes to studies of racialization, whiteness and affectivity from an intersectional perspective, with a particular emphasis on educational settings.

Manté Vertelytė * Challenges for Antiracist Education in Danish Schools: Theorizing Antiracist Education as Mood Work

How can education respond productively/positively to students' racial-ethnic experiences? As we know from Danish and international research, universities, schools and extracurricular activity spaces are those institutions through which the processes of racialization are (re)produced and potentially challenged. Antiracist education then becomes a necessary intervention to encourage students and educators to respond to the contemporary racisms and (re)production of white privileges. Based on the ethnographic study at the Danish secondary multicultural school, I will explore ways that antiracist education can facilitate spaces and practices that could potentially pave paths for social change and affirmative critique. First, I will map the challenges for antiracist education through analyzing everyday racialized classroom encounters between students and teachers. Particularly, I will discuss challenges for antiracist education through the notions of Nordic exceptionalism and colorblindness. Second, I will discuss the theoretical and conceptual implications for understanding anti-racist work as 'mood work'. The paper argues for approaching race and racism as an affective racial experience and delineates implications that such conceptual operationalization could have for antiracist education and critical pedagogies.

Tuesday, November 26th

Kris Clarke * Challenging the Whiteness of Social Work in Contemporary Curricular: Enacting Decolonization

Radicalized white nationalist movements have taken root throughout the Global North as political polarization has dramatically increased. Together with neoliberal austerity policies, these forces have profoundly shifted the basis of welfare states, migration regimes, and traditional politics. As we teeter on the edge of climate disaster, the field of social work often seems to be rather quiet, approaching social problems in a compartmentalized fashion by focusing on compliance with limited governmental policies. Though most enter social work because we want to be a part of social change and healing in our communities, many of us feel the burden of burnout and hopelessness at the scope of trauma and weight of caregiving that social workers face on an everyday basis. Yet, how can we be agents of social change from institutions deeply embedded in white privilege? This paper explores the often unacknowledged legacy of coloniality in social work and how its curricula reinforces the field as a professional practice positioned as a neutral professional activity which supports individuals, families and communities. It asks: How can social work confront the triple legacy of extractive capitalism, settler colonialism, and white supremacy when it is often too cautious to name them? How can social work decolonize its ways of thinking to produce liberatory practices without a critical interrogation of the structures of whiteness that

imbue its institutions and practices? This paper is based on a manuscript in progress that explores methods of decolonizing social work.

Jessica Nogueira Varela * Migration, Racialization and Black Women Writers: Defying European 'Color-Blindness' through Auto/Biographies

Black Women writers, such as Audre Lorde (1934-1992) and Claudia Jones (1916-1964), have contributed greatly to feminist praxis and academia, pushing the envelope on debates around class, racism and sexism all over the world. Despite their international activism and the range of their words, little has been theorized about “auto/biographical” accounts of black women writers who have, like Lorde and Jones, migrated to Europe. “Auto/biography” is a key concept in the attempt to understand women’s lives in a larger social context as put forward by Mary Evans in her article “Auto/Biography as a Research Method” (2013). Thus, taking up the challenge of theorizing about black women writers who migrated to European spaces, this paper proposes a close reading of “auto/biographical” accounts of the lives of Una Marson (1905-1965), Claudia Jones (1916-1964), and Audre Lorde (1934-1992). This paper’s primary goal is to reflect on how the black women writers aforementioned were racialized in order to offer new interpretations on the possible impacts these experiences may have had on their writing, inscribing themselves in black women’s flesh, as suggested by Cherry Moraga’s “theory in the flesh” originally developed in the anthology “This Bridge Called my Back” (1981). Through this exercise, this paper wants to move towards a critical analysis of black women writers' positionality and the different responses they offered to defy the myth of Europe as a color-blind and homogenous continent. In conclusion, this paper assesses that for Marson, Jones and Lorde one of the consequences of migrating to Europe was the re-negotiation of their standpoint through their written work. Another major consequence was the development of distinct networks of solidarity, visible through their praxis. Finally, this paper also draws intersecting connections between the structural problems that Marson, Jones and Lorde faced as black women migrants and the current lived experiences of women migrants of color in Europe.

Irma Budginaitė-Mačkinė & Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek * ‘But you do not sound Eastern European’: the Ambiguous Lives of the ‘Other Whites’ in Brexit Britain

For several years since the influx of the ‘new’ EU migrants the presence of Eastern Europeans in the UK has been seen as ‘unproblematic’. Their assumed cultural proximity has been seen as an advantage in integration (Favell and Neve 2009) and their ‘whiteness’ often rendered them as ‘invisible’ within larger British society (‘passing as British’). In fact, some claimed (Fox and Moglicka, 2017) that many of the Eastern European migrants have been using their ‘whiteness’ strategically as a way of navigating the matrices of class and racial hierarchies. The Brexit referendum has brought to the front the old suspicion that falling into the category of ‘the other white’ in census and job applications means something different than being ‘British white’ and that being ‘invisible’ does not necessarily mean being equal and ‘unproblematic’. It revealed the existing racialisation of the EU migrants (with all shades of whiteness) and the negative attitudes towards East Europeans, which some argue, had existed long before the referendum (Rzepnikowska, 2018). In our paper we focus on the covert, unambiguous and borderline forms of racism experienced by young Polish and Lithuanian migrants based on initial findings of

longitudinal comparative research project 'CEEYouth; young migrants from Poland and Lithuanian in the context of Brexit' in which we interviewed over 70 Poles and Lithuanians. While almost none of our interviewees experienced physical violence, majority of them referred to some forms of negative reactions to their Polishness or Lithuanianess – from hearing from their neighbours that now 'they will have to go home' in the wake of Brexit referendum to disappointment when one learns is from Poland not from Holland or does not sound/look like a 'Lithuanian'. We aim to give attention to and try to theorize these ambiguous forms of prejudice against East European migrants and reflect on their impact on the everyday life as well as explore some of the coping strategies they develop.

Kamila Fiałkowska & Karolina Bargłowski * Migrating 'West' in Post-Enlargement Europe: Theorizing Narratives and Counter-Narratives of Belonging in the Example of Poland

The persistent inequality between new and old member states and ensuing political and social struggles in post-enlargement Europe have recently been theorized by linking post-socialist and post-colonial literature. This article contributes to this novel strand of research by theorizing peoples' narratives and counter-narratives of belonging and the challenges they encounter to build and maintain meaningful lives and social relationships. Grounding on multi-sited research in Poland, Germany and UK and representing stories of people with varying degrees of mobility, this article provides empirical accounts on the ways in which rooted hierarchies in the political, economic and social sphere permeate the everyday lives and forms of subjectivity of people who are incorporated in transnational spaces. Empirical accounts illustrate the intricate ways in which people navigate and position themselves within unequal spatialities in post-enlargement Europe. These stories are examples of the political and social cleavages that the project of EU enlargement has (re-)produced, which are sometimes analysed as lack of tolerance of racism of people from CEE. Instead, this article approaches peoples' experiences and expectations as desires and challenges to belonging in spaces marked by a long history of migration and who nowadays are trapped between the "West" and the "Rest".

Jaanika Kingumets * Estonian Migrants in Finland. Constructing Allies and Others through Culture and Whiteness Talk in Facebook Conversations

Estonians, although often depicted as the best managing migrant group in Finland, still constantly need to prove their worth and negotiate their right to fully belong in their host country. Being transnationally active migrants who are closely connected to their homeland Estonia, too, they are sandwiched between various expectations on both sides of the Finnish gulf facing double pressures to succeed. After 2015 'refugee crises', led by the increasing fear over the future social change and unjust redistribution of resources, not only Finns but all the migrant groups residing in the country have needed to rethink their relationship to the increasing and diversifying migrant population in Finland. In this context, whiteness has been identified as a valuable resource linked to privilege and rights of many kinds and as such it has acquired new significance for Estonian migrants in Finland. Krivonos (2019, 2017) has recently made an important contribution in the yet only emerging research on whiteness in postsocialist context in Finland approaching the topic from young Russian-speakers' perspective. Whiteness in the context of Estonian migrants is so far completely unexplored field. In this paper, we focus on various ways in which Estonian

migrants in Finland construct their own whiteness in relation to their racialized others in Finland, usually called as blacks, Muslims or refugees in their conceptualisation. The dynamics of whiteness in between Estonians and Russian-speakers as the largest White European migrant groups in Finland in sorting out ethnic/racial hierarchies also receives special attention in our analyses.

Sophie Schmalenberger * Performing White Victimhood: The AfD and the 'Chemnitz Case'

In the "Age of Apology" (Gibney et. al 2008) dominated by mainstream liberal "Politics of Regret" (Olick 2007), academic literature on memory activism and related topics focuses on practices that give voice to the memories and 'forgotten' sufferings of minorities (e.g. Katriel 2016, Gutman, 2016). However, also the contemporary German far-right, among them the *Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)*, is increasingly engaging in different forms of memory work to articulate subject positions that are indeed not the ones of minorities but those of a (white) majority. This paper therefore focuses on the 'Chemnitz case', aiming to shed light on how the *AfD* instrumentalizes discursive and affective dimensions of memory elements (e.g. symbols, discourses) as well as of practices and performances that commemorate, mourn and thus raise attention for grievable (Butler 2009) white bodies as the true victims of contemporary global migration: In August 2018, the death of a German citizen following a physical conflict with several asylum seekers in the city of Chemnitz, invited the *AfD* to (re-)articulate German victimhood. By employing the memory repertoire of private and public mourning, the *AfD* managed to perform the subject position of (white) Germans as innocent, 'forgotten' victims of 'criminal foreigners' (horizontal other), betrayed by established political parties (vertical other). This, I argue, does not only challenge the (self-)understanding of Germany as nation of (historical) perpetrators inherent to established post-Holocaust memory culture but also mobilizes a configuration of meanings and feelings that is constitutive of an 'alternative German-ness' brought forward by the *AfD*.

Film screening and discussion: **Marta Sigríður Pétursdóttir** * Æ Íslendingasamfélagið á Kanarí

I want to present my documentary project „Kanarí“ that I made in collaboration with Magnea Björk Valdimarsdóttir. The documentary is about a community of Icelanders who dwell in Gran Canaria by the Playa Inglés. Some of them are returning tourists, others are permanent inhabitants and some of them split their time between the two places. It is a fascinating community that exists alongside all the other groups of Northern European tourists who have been colonizing the island since the 70s. Icelanders have been travelling there for more than 40 years. I have been fascinated with this community and the place „Kanarí“ has in the Icelandic nation's imagination. It is a complex image that means very different things for different social groups. The geographical and historical location of the Canary Islands is also of interest, it's a European colony in Africa and the islands were a platform for the further colonization of the Americas, tied in with the slave trade. My intention with making this film was to deconstruct nationalism and to hold a mirror to our society but also paying attention to the strange quirkiness of the place. But it also says something about white privilege as well and the entitlement to freedom of travel. „Kanarí“ relates to the topics to nationalism, whiteness, white supremacy, racism, neocolonialism, colonialism, Eurocentrism, populism, borders, economic inequality, globalisation and tourism in various interesting and intersecting ways.

Wednesday, November 27th

Akvilė Buivydaite * Processes of Othering in Lithuania, taking point of departure in Ričardas Gavelis' novel *Vilnius Poker*

This paper aims to uncover the processes of *Othering* within Lithuania, looking at examples in Ričardas Gavelis' novel *Vilnius Poker*. Published in 1989 the novel exemplifies how national identity is defined by distancing oneself from the Soviet Union and aspiring towards the West, and the internal dynamic between the Lithuanian characters and the ones of ethnic background (Jewish, Polish and Russian) signifies the hierarchies of Othering and the struggle to compensate for one's sense of cultural inferiority. The national identity of Lithuanians is partially constructed by a reversed cultural colonization and a desire to regain their European status. The subjugation and representation of the Other in the novel are defined by not being as intelligent, rational, modern as a Lithuanian. However, scrutinizing contemporary examples it becomes apparent that *Othering* as a processes is partially a result of Lithuania's aspirations to be more like the West, given the history of modernity and colonization. Current political debates, such as Lithuania's response to refugee crisis or sometimes occurring racializing statements, on the one hand show the 'lack of modernization' of the Baltics, on the other hand uncomfortably remind the West of the ongoing legacies of *Othering*. This paper aims to discuss how a sometimes clumsy Eastern European rhetoric is important as it mirrors the past that the West tends not to notice and simultaneously challenges the ethics of knowledge production.

Alaaddin F. Paksoy * Turkish Orientalism Towards Syrian Refugees

Bakic-Hayden's (1995) prominent work argues that there are different degrees of orientalism and each nation others and orientalises its east to make itself more western. Turkey others its east to appear more western, modern and somehow European. According to Hanioglu (2013), there is an alive discourse in Turkey that defines the Middle East with a 'swamp' metaphor. Hanioglu evaluates these representations of the Middle East over being critical and close to racism. This point is not based only on the political discussions in recent years but also on the historical background of Turkey relations with the Middle East. Turkey welcomed more than 4 million Syrian refugees since 2011. The media content about the refugees used to have a milder discourse by the year 2016 and 2017. Economic issues Turkey was dealing with in the last couple of years empowered the othering process. This study looks at how do Syrian refugees living in Turkey represented in the Turkish media discourse. The research sample is formed by using "deviant sampling" technique and the news items having a negative tone towards the refugees are analysed by using critical discourse analysis. As an approach, Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach is chosen. The sample includes the most visited Turkish news websites and their coverage in the year 2019. The study is constructed on the discussion of Turkish Orientalism and Turkish whiteness towards Syrians and the texts are analysed in order to see how this tendency shows itself in the coverage.

Catalin Berescu * Racialized Planning as a Micro-Imperial Form of Governance of Subaltern Groups

Unlike in other parts of the world, Romanian slums and ghettos are small, scattered throughout the territory, somehow homogenously distributed and hardly visible to the public eye (Berescu). The overwhelming percentage of Roma population that inhabits them is the first indication that they are the result of an active and ongoing process of ethno-racial exclusion with deep historical roots. Racialization of the Roma is a continuous practice, precisely because they are not a homogenous group (the image of the "Gypsy" is a gadjo construct), but an archipelago of communities connected by a strong ethnic self-awareness and a sense of resistance to an extremely hostile society. One form of othering is the „nomadisation” of the war refugees from ex-Yugoslavia in Italy (Picker), and to a different extent, the similar process that is applied to Romanian Roma in France or the UK. The creation of the "villages d'insertion" does not follow the same rethoric of the "campo nomadi", but the results are quite similar in what regards „the expulsion on the systemic edge” (Sassen). The layers of colonialism are overlapping with the racialization of the nomad and with the treatment of ethnicity as race. Since social housing virtually disappeared in our part of the world and is under threat in most of Europe (Hegedus), there is a strong and frightening effect of institutionalized whiteness that can be identified in the European projects that aim to improve the situation of the Roma that can be identified in the planning practices of today.

Armanc Yildiz * Integration as Whitening: A Queer Refugee Shelter in Berlin

Berlin opened one of the first queer refugee shelters in Europe at the height of the so-called "refugee crisis" in 2016. This was made possible by the designation of queer refugees as a "special group in need of protection" by the Berlin Senate. Many residents have been attending integration courses as they wait for the decision of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees on their legal status, and the shelter have been inviting experts on issues such as sexuality and trauma to give seminars. Residents are also outspoken about their willingness to "integrate," which can be seen as an expression of "normalization." In this paper, I argue that in this context, integration becomes synonymous with "whitening" (Fanon 2008, 33). It holds the promise of erasing differences, leading a "normal" life, leaving behind the experience of refuge, and starting over. Integration and whitening connote increased opportunities, expanded space for self-expression and agency, and social mobility. In that sense, whitening is a "template of value" (Munn 1992, 121) that increases refugees' ability to act upon the world. While being queer positively affects this value production, holding onto one's cultural background does the opposite since integration is generally understood as assimilation, or making similar. In other words, I look at how queerness becomes part of whitening (Puar 2007; Haritaworn 2016) within the context of the "refugee crisis" in Germany.

Mariska Jung * Be/coming Civilized: Whiteness, Multiculturalism and Animal Ethics

The past decades Europe witnessed the emergence of the animal figure onto political stages. In countries such as the Netherlands, Portugal and Belgium animal welfare parties participate in local and national elections and in more countries still social movements concerned with animals

are effectively influencing political debates. The reduction of meat consumption has matured into being a real alternative in the struggle against climate change, and veganism has gained significant popularity. In the same period Europe witnessed also the electoral success of right-wing parties, severe criticism on multiculturalism and an increase in reported Islamophobic and anti-Semitic attacks. What remains strikingly understudied, however, is how these two developments relate to each other. Nevertheless, practices such as ritual slaughter according to Jewish and Islamic rites have become increasingly politicized in Europe since the turn of the millennium. Whereas academia has substantively researched how gender and sexuality politics have become a vehicle through which specific groups in Europe are racialized, the need to unearth the complex dynamics between animal ethics and race has yet to reach European academic shores. This paper fills this gap by centering the politics of animal ethics in its study of racialization. The paper departs from the acknowledgment that Europe is a post/colonial continent and demonstrates that animal ethics have always been an influential part of racial hierarchies in colonial empires. It then discusses how race, animals and multiculturalism are entangled today. Thinking race and animal ethics together, this paper opens up the analytical space to conceive of a dimension of racialization that often remains illegible.

Ana Svetel * Perceptions of Perfection: Imageries and Narratives about the 'Nordicness' Outside the Northern Europe

Throughout the 2010s the nonfictional literature on selected cultural and social aspects of various 'Nordic identities' has flourished and gained a considerable amount of attention outside of the Northern Europe. Those publications (probably the most well-known, among numerous, is Meik Wiking's *The Little Book of Hygge: The Danish Way to Live Well*) reinforce the image of the neat, well organized, happy, safe and cultivated Nordic societies and fit with the media narratives and public discourses about this region in Europe. Nordic countries are predominantly portrayed in a distinctively positive manner. Together with the wider array of goods, places and ideas branded as 'Nordic' or 'Scandinavian', the books on 'lovable Nordic exceptionalism' strengthen ethnic and regional stereotyping which is often perceived as the opposite to the narratives constructed about the Balkan, Eastern and Southeastern regions of Europe. The perception of the 'Nordicness' intersects with the ethnic, regional, racial and class hierarchies which are relational on one hand and socially reinforced on the other. I will analyze the perceptions of the 'Nordicness' especially through the multiple interpretations of the hygge concept outside the Northern Europe, through the digital appearances of the selected online keywords – hashtags (nordichome, scandinavianliving, hyggestyle, etc.) and through the selected examples from the Slovenian mediascape. These perspectives will show how some dimensions of the 'affective economies' (Ahmed 2004) and 'intimate public' (Berlant 2008) interplay with the various forms of inclusion and exclusion, imitation and expectation.