

Shades of Pale Exploring Whiteness in Neerlandophone Literature



22nd Meeting of the **PLATFORM FOR POSTCOLONIAL READINGS**

Leiden University, 19 November 2021, 10.30-17.00h

Registration deadline: 1 November 2021

Acknowledging that the decolonisation of academia in Flanders and the Netherlands has scarcely begun, and that the grammar of race is intricately entwined with humanities research and its objects of study, we dedicate this meeting of the Platform for Postcolonial Readings to a thorough examination of the multiple layers of whiteness that mark Neerlandophone literature as well as Dutch literary studies. We aim to address the invisibility of whiteness, probing whiteness as a key component of the grammar of race in Dutch and Flemish society and as an unmarked and under-analyzed presence in many works of Neerlandophone literature. In exposing and exploring the many shades of this Dutch and Flemish whiteness, recognising yet also moving beyond the highly discursive notions of white privilege and white innocence, we hope to fathom what whiteness has meant and continues to mean in Neerlandophone literature.

Our meeting starts with a keynote lecture by dr. **Mikki Stelder**, whose expertise ranges from Dutch colonial and racist entanglements, in particular those concerning the maritime trade and slavery, to their re-narrations in the present. Their lecture is followed by a discussion of their ideas on **historicizing Dutch white innocence** and by a joint close reading of selected essays on the topic of whiteness in the Low Countries. In the afternoon, we continue our exploration of shades of Dutch and Flemish whiteness by means of three contributions on the meeting's topic by (junior) researchers working in this field. We conclude our meeting with a joint on-the-spot analysis of some fragments from the novel **Gebroken wit** (2019) by **Astrid Roemer**.

The meeting is open to all researchers – junior and senior – working in the fields of Low Countries Studies, postcolonial and globalization studies. Participation is free of charge, but please register with NICA on this webpage (<https://www.nica-institute.com/events/shades-of-pale-exploring-whiteness-in-neerlandophone-literature/>). Active participation by Research Master students may be credited with 1 or 2 EC (without/with presentation). When registering, please indicate whether you would like to earn 1 or 2 ECTS for your participation. For more information, contact Platform co-ordinator Liesbeth Minnaard (e.minnaard@hum.leidenuniv.nl) or guest organisers Lieselot De Taeye (lieselot.detaeye@ugent.be) or Marrigje Paijmans (m.g.paijmans@uva.nl).

Programme

Venue: Vrieshof 4, room 005

10.15 Walk-in and registration with coffee

10.30 Welcome & round of introduction

by Platform co-ordinator Liesbeth Minnaard, Leiden University

10.45 Introduction to the meeting's topic by guest-organisers Lieselot De Taeye, Ghent University, and Marringje Paijmans, University of Amsterdam

11.00 Keynote lecture *Dutch Maritime Imagination. A Cultural Oceanography* by **Mikki Stelder**, University of Amsterdam

12.00 Discussion of readings

Readings in preparation of discussion (will be sent to all registered participants):

- Sara Ahmed, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness." *Feminist Theory* 8 (2007) 2: 149-168.
- Elleke Boehmer and Sarah De Mul, "Introduction: Postcolonialism and the Low Countries." In: idem (ed.), *The Postcolonial Low Countries. Literature, Colonialism, Multiculturalism*. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012. 1-22.
- Hugo de Groot, "Introduction." *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*.

13.00 Lunch

Venue: Lipsius building, room 207

14.15 Further Food for Thought and Discussion: Paper Presentations

moderated by Platform co-ordinator Elisabeth Bekers, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

14.15 **Aafje de Roest** (Leiden University): "'Pretty fly for a white guy' – Constructions of Whiteness in Contemporary Dutch Hip-Hop"

14.45 **Sibo Kanobana** (Ghent University): How the Flemings Became White. A Black Perspective on Flemish (Colonial) Literature

15.15 **Lieselot De Taeye** (Ghent University): Anxious White Missionaries. Conversion Narratives in V.Y. Mudimbe and Jacques Bergeyck's Novelistic Work

15.45 Coffee break

16.00 Joint on-the-spot-analysis of *Gebroken wit* by Astrid Roemer

Readings in preparation of the joint analysis:

- Astrid Roemer, *Gebroken wit*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2019. 85-113 and 298-319.

16.45 Concluding remarks

17.00 Networking over Drinks