

Stranger Things: Rethinking Defamiliarization in Literature and Visual Culture

Amsterdam, 12-13 December 2019

Keynote Lecture

Strangers in Paradise: Migrant Figurations in Media Culture

Sandra Ponzanesi (Professor of Gender and Postcolonial Studies, Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, s.ponzanesi@uu.nl)

The notion of defamiliarization is very much linked to processes of othering and alienation but also of fear and fascination. From Homi Bhabha's notion of the uncanny as 'un-homely' to Sara Ahmed's concept of 'stranger fetishism' (2000), defamiliarization has played a central role in postcolonial theory in articulating constructions of difference and intimacy. This talk analyses how this *Verfremdung* takes place in media culture in general, and in cinema more specifically, with respect to migration, the migrant body and migrant figurations. The aim is to explore how alternative modalities of representation and subjectification are possible through different visual registers in contestations and deconstructions of 'symbolic bordering' (Chouliaraki, 2018).

Bio:

Sandra Ponzanesi is Professor of Gender and Postcolonial Studies at the Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Her interests include the reception of the postcolonial field in relation to the cultural industry, the understanding of the notion of Europe from a postcolonial perspective, postcolonial cinema studies and the exploration of digital literacies of migrants in transnational contexts. She is the project leader of the ERC project [CONNECTINGEUROPE](#) and Director of the Postcolonial Studies Initiative (PCI). Her key publications include *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry* (2014), *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (2012) and *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture* (2004). She is also the editor of *Gender, Globalisation and Violence* (Routledge, 2014) and co-editor of *Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2018), *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2016), *Deconstructing Europe* (Routledge, 2012) and *Migrant Cartographies* (Lexington Books, 2005). She has guest-edited several special issues on postcolonial Europe, digital migration and postcolonial cinema for peer-reviewed journals such as *Social Identities*, *Interventions*, *Crossings*, *Transnational Cinemas*, *Popular Communication* and *Television and New Media*.