

In Sartrean terms European colonialism has showcased “the strip-tease” of the assumptions of Western Humanism. The obscenity of the in-human staged in the colonial setting and continuing in new versions after decolonization has entailed that the theme of shame runs through decades of colonial/postcolonial literature in English, be it in oblique or in ostensibly audible modes.

The Colloquium invites critical reflections addressing white shame, i.e. the shame of the masters/colonizers and their ‘tainted’ descendants, as well as the shame of the colonized originating in the power politics exerted on their bodies and minds, in the intrinsically alienating and deforming colonial theatre (Fanon docet).

In the convenors’ intentions the Colloquium should provide an occasion to weave thoughts on the relationship between shame and literary writing, thus interrogating the alleged “irreconciliability” (T. Bewes’s *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, 2001) of the ethical and the aesthetic when shame is at stake. One might argue, rather, whether it is not the case that literature can be the most, when not the only, adequate place for shame to find a voice.

The urgency of some reflection on postcolonial shame appears from what we are witnessing at present in Europe, with its cultural and political unpreparedness and false consciousness vis-à-vis the ‘boomerang invasion’ of refugees and asylum-seekers running for their bare lives (in a fully biopolitical sense) from the horrors of postcolonial/post(?)imperial anomy and violence.

In addition, the political cogency of the theme/issue is also effectively confirmed by the ethics of reconciliation invoked and staged by various national contexts and policies of memory that, though running the serious risk of becoming perfunctory rituals bound to eclipse the violence of history, nonetheless witness the inevitability of coming to terms with its crimes and responsibilities/covinnance.

As a matter of fact, the challenging issue that this Colloquium intends to explore is whether and how critically reflecting on the subject of colonial/postcolonial shame informing literary texts, can fruitfully contribute to a rethinking of humanism once it has been stripped down of its arrogant and exclusive biases, rather than declaring it obliterated.



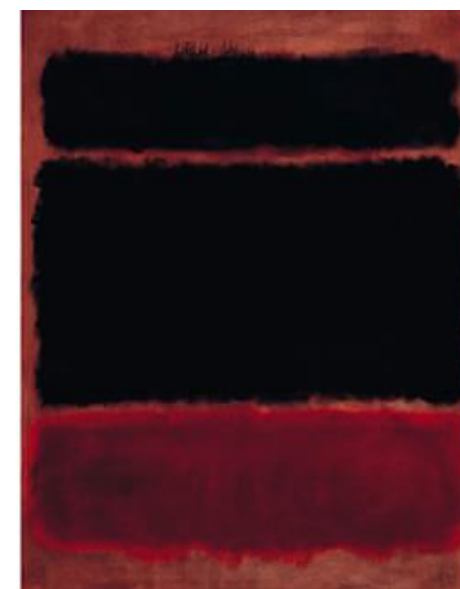
UNIVERSITÀ
di VERONA

Dipartimento
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E LETTERATURE STRANIERE

Università degli Studi di Verona
Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

SHAME IN POSTCOLONIAL/ POSTIMPERIAL LITERATURE IN ENGLISH



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VERONA, 30-31 MAY 2017

Sala Farinati - Biblioteca Civica di Verona
Via Cappello, 43

TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2017

9.45 Welcome Address
Roberta Facchinetti, Head of Department

10.00 Roberto Beneduce
(University of Turin)
Knots of History, Bodies, and Moralities in the African Experience of Guilt and Shame

10.50 David Attwell
(University of York)
Writing in Shame

11.40 Coffee break

12.00 Susanna Zinato
(University of Verona)
Cursing the Fathers' Curse: Magda and Elizabeth, Daughters of Shameful Defilement in J.M. Coetzee's Early Fiction

12.30 Discussion

13.15 Lunch

TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2017

15.15 Vincent van Bever Donker
(University of Northampton)
Shame, Justice and the Representation of Violence in Postcolonial Literature: The Case of Caryl Phillips

16.10 Angelo Righetti
(University of Verona)
"Solemn Afro-Greeks avid for grades": Individual and Historical Shame in Derek Walcott's Earlier Poetry

16.45 Coffee/Tea break

17.00 Discussion

20.00 Dinner

WEDNESDAY, 31 MAY 2017

9.30 Sue Kossew
(Monash University)
'Unfinished Business': The Role of Contemporary Australian Literary Texts in 'Digging Up' the Past

10.20 Dolores Herrero
(University of Zaragoza)
Lights and Shadows in 'Multicultural' Australia: Refugees/Asylum Seekers and Shame

11.10 Coffee break

11.30 Annalisa Pes
(University of Verona)
Different Shades of Shame. The Responsibilities and Legacies of a Shameful History in Australian Fiction

12.00 Discussion and Closing Remarks