

Call for papers

South African Intersemiotic Research Project

Neocolonialism and the Global South: Multidisciplinary perspectives on meaning and matter

University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 26 November 2015

Pope Francis recently denounced capitalism as neocolonialism, urging mankind to rid itself of the “idolatrous economy” of exclusion and inequality that has come to dominate global exchanges. Religious discourse apart, it can be argued that in the current state of affairs, the globalized corporate economy has effectively replaced colonial imperialism.

From privatization to exploitation and from the systematic disenfranchisement of workers and minorities to the emergence of free-market capitalism, the new global paradigm, supported by “flat-earth” technologies, has brought about new dynamics, creating new systems of meaning and power.

Neocolonialism is remarkably similar to the old versions of colonialism when it comes to the rules of the game, but also the players: the winners and losers of the global economy remain roughly the same. The Global South is, of course, particularly vulnerable to these dynamics. One of the most interesting aspects of this is perhaps the moral standing that economy issues have come to both represent, as a value system, and take up, as status.

We suggest various theoretical approaches to topics as diverse as climate change, language, and the banking systems. We solicit contributions from the fields of critical theory, ethics and political thought as well as translation theory, semiotics and posthumanism, in order to get a truly interdisciplinary conversation going. In particular, we would like to explore the meaning of neocolonialism, focussing on the material underpinning and implications thereof for not only humanity but earth as a whole.

We propose a hybrid conference with participants on site as well as virtually connected via videoconference technology. Presentations will be 20 minutes long with 10 minutes discussion time in between.

Please send 300-word proposals to Caroline Mangerel (mangerelc@ufs.ac.za) or Kobus Marais (jmarais@ufs.ac.za) before 18 September.