

RURAL IMAGINATIONS @ RIAS

1-2 November 2021

Roosevelt Institute for American Studies

Hofplein 16
Middelburg



George Segal, "The Rural Couple" – Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Washington D.C.

FDR: "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

Second Inaugural Address, Washington, D.C., January 20, 1937.

Monday 1 November 2021 – 14:00-17:00

Seminar I: Colonialism, Slavery and the Rural

RIAS: Domineeswoning (Zeeuws Archief, Hofplein 16)

14:00 Welcome by Maarten Zwiers & Esther Peeren

14:10 Tjalling Valdés Olmos, *Frontier or Hinterland? Genre, Desire, and Settler Colonial Haunting in Nomadland's (2020) Imagination of the Contemporary Rural US West*

14:20 Maarten Zwiers, *Race Land: The Ecology of Segregation*

14:30 Christine Mertens, *Black Freedom and Movement in the Early Republic, 1780-1830*

14:40-15:00 Discussion

15:00-15:10 Break

15:10 Marcella Schute, *Freedom Deceptions: Covert Efforts to Reopen the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Louisiana, 1830-1860*

15:20 Debby Esmeé de Vlucht, *A New Feeling of Unity: Black Power in the Dutch Atlantic, 1968 – 1973*

15:30 Anke Bosma, *Grenslanders: Imagining the Legacies of Slavery in the Dutch Rural*

15:40-16:00 Discussion

16:00-16:10 Break

16:10 Lélia Tavakoli Farsooni, *Beyond the Pastoral Paradise: Orienting Muslims in British Rural Space in Four Lions*

16:20 Celia Nijdam, *Regionalism as Relief: Hallie Flanagan, the Federal Theatre Project, and Crises in Theatre and Democracy*

16:30 Manar Ellethy, *Paying the Dues: Early African-American Documentary Film and the Quest for Truth*

16:40-17:00 Discussion

18:30 Dinner @ The Green Room, Cityhotel Wood (Achter de Houttuinen 8, Middelburg)

Tuesday 2 November 2021 – 10:00-12:00

Seminar II: Hinterlands

RIAS: De Punt (Zeeuws Archief, Hofplein 16)

10:00 Introduction to Hinterlands: A Project in the Rural, Literary and Environmental Humanities by Hanneke Stuit

10:15-11:00 Discussion of chapter drafts Esther Peeren, Tjalling Valdés Olmos & Maarten Zwiers (to be distributed in advance of the seminar)

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-12:00 Discussion of chapter drafts (continued)

12:15 Lunch @ TBA

14:00 Middelburg Walking Tour

Participants

Anke Bosma is a PhD candidate in the ERC project "Imagining the Rural in a Globalizing World" (2018-2023) at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Her area of interest is (de)colonial theory and -history in the Netherlands, which she partly developed while doing research at the Research Centre for Material Culture. She is currently doing research on how the rural is presented in mainstream Dutch imaginations, in particular in relation to globalization.

Manar Ellethy holds a Master's degree in International Relations from Leiden University with a specialization in Culture and Politics. She is currently a PhD candidate at the RIAS under the project 'Racial Democracy'. Her thesis titled 'Paying the Dues: Early African-American Documentary Film and the Quest for Truth' focuses on the nexus between African American documentary film in the 1960s and the political context of the era.

Jaap Kooijman is Associate Professor in Media Studies and American Studies at the University of Amsterdam, vice-director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), and co-supervisor, in the ERC project Rural Imaginations, of Tjalling Valdés Olmos. Jaap is the author of *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* (AUP, 2013) and his articles on American popular culture have been published in journals such as *The Velvet Light Trap*, *Postscript*, *GLQ*, *The Journal of American Culture*, *Celebrity Studies*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Popular Music and Society*, *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, *Cinema Journal*, and *Critical Studies in Television*, as well as in edited collections such as *Unpopular Culture* (AUP, 2016), *A Companion to Celebrity* (Wiley, 2016), *Revisiting Star Studies* (Edinburgh UP, 2017), *Music/Video: Histories, Aesthetics, Media* (Bloomsbury, 2017), and *Beyoncé: At Work, On Screen, and Online* (Indiana UP, 2020).

Christine Mertens is a PhD candidate in American History / American Studies at the RIAS and Leiden University on the larger research project "Racial Democracy: Challenges to Civic Democratic Ideals in American History," sponsored by the Stichting Praesidium Libertatis at Leiden University. Originally from the Netherlands, Christine received her BA History with a specialization in American History in 2016 and her MA North American Studies in 2019, both from Leiden University. Christine's research interests include slavery and politics in the early American Republic and US constitutional history. Her PhD project explores the legal constraints placed on the spatial mobility of free African Americans in the early republic, specifically in the Upper South, as well as the ways in which free blacks attempted to subvert such constraints.

Celia Nijdam is a PhD candidate at Leiden University; she works on the relationship between American politics and culture. She is especially interested in American literature

written during the 1920s and 30s. Her current project explores the relationship between regionalism, theatre, and politics in the New Deal's Federal Theatre Project (FTP) and how this relationship was employed to manage the crises of the Great Depression by the FTP's director, Hallie Flanagan. Celia received her BA in Media and Culture with a specialization in television studies in 2013 and her MA in American Studies in 2014, both from the University of Amsterdam. In 2016 she received a Diploma in American Studies from Smith College in the United States, where she focused in particular on African American and Jewish literature.

Esther Peeren is Professor of Cultural Analysis at the University Amsterdam and Academic Director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). She directs the ERC-funded project "Imagining the Rural in a Globalizing World" aka Rural Imaginations (2018-2023). Her publications include *The Spectral Metaphor: Living Ghosts and the Agency of Invisibility* (Palgrave, 2014) and the edited volumes *Peripheral Visions in the Globalizing Present* (Brill, 2016, with Hanneke Stuit and Astrid Van Weyenberg), *Global Cultures of Contestation* (Palgrave, 2018, with Robin Celikates, Jeroen de Kloet and Thomas Poell) and *Other Globes: Past and Peripheral Imaginations of Globalization* (Palgrave, 2019, with Simon Ferdinand and Irene Villaescusa-Illán).

Marcella Schute is a first-year PhD candidate in American History at the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies. Her research focuses on the efforts by the state of Louisiana to reopen the transatlantic slave trade, which forms part of the broader research project "Racial Democracy: Challenges to Civic Democratic Ideals." Marcella received her MA in American Studies from the University of Amsterdam and her BA in Liberal Arts & Sciences from University College Roosevelt (Utrecht University).

Hanneke Stuit is Assistant Professor of Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam and a researcher at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). She is a postdoc in the Rural Imaginations project, focusing on the South African context. Her publications include *Ubuntu Strategies: Constructing Spaces of Belonging in Contemporary South African Culture* and the edited volume *Peripheral Visions in the Globalizing Present: Spaces, Mobilities, Aesthetics*.

Lélia Tavakoli Farsooni is a PhD Candidate researching representations of the British rural in contemporary popular culture as part of the Rural Imaginations Research Team at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. Lélia is particularly interested in the spatio-temporal and affective underpinnings of rural life and geographical imaginations in the UK. Drawing on feminist and queer theory as well as decolonial approaches, her research explores how cultural imaginations of the countryside in the UK merge specific landscapes with certain bodies and values.

Tjalling Valdés Olmos is a PhD Candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), University of Amsterdam (UvA). His research within the ERC-funded project 'Rural Imaginations' examines what aspects of US rural life become in/visible in prominent rural imaginations (literature, television, and film), what kind of affective management these

imaginings perform, and what politics these imaginings support. Their work specifically engages imaginings of the US rural that pay particular attention to the queer rural, the black rural, and the indigenous rural. His most recent publication, "The Coloniality of Benevolence," can be found in *Collateral: Online Journal for Cross-Cultural Close Reading* (2020) as part of a special issue on the rural colonies of Veenhuizen.

Debby Esmeé de Vlucht is a third year PhD Candidate at the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies and Leiden University. Her PhD project, entitled *A New Feeling of Unity: Black Power in the Dutch Atlantic, 1968-1973*, explores the transnational history of the Black Power movement in the former Netherlands Antilles, Suriname, and the Netherlands. Debby Esmeé has a master's degree in US History from the University of Oxford and is currently active as editor-in-chief of the Netherlands American Studies Review.

Maarten Zwiers is Assistant Professor of American Studies and Contemporary History at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. He specializes in rural studies and U.S. southern studies. In 2015 his monograph about planter-politician James Eastland came out with Louisiana State University Press. Maarten is the co-editor of *Profiles in Power: Personality, Persona, and the U.S. President* (Brill 2020). He published in *Southern Cultures* and the *Southern Quarterly* and contributed to the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*. In 2020 he received an ERC Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellowship for his project "Race Land: The Ecology of Segregation" (2021-2024). At the moment he is a visiting fellow at the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies.