

CALL FOR PAPERS

Rethinking the History of Modern Political Concepts: Race and Division of Labor in Global Western Empires, 1791-1888

Graduate Conference of the Institute of the Humanities & Global Cultures, and the
Academy of Global Humanities and Critical Theory
(University of Virginia, University of Bologna, Duke University)

**INSTITUTE OF THE HUMANITIES & GLOBAL CULTURES
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**

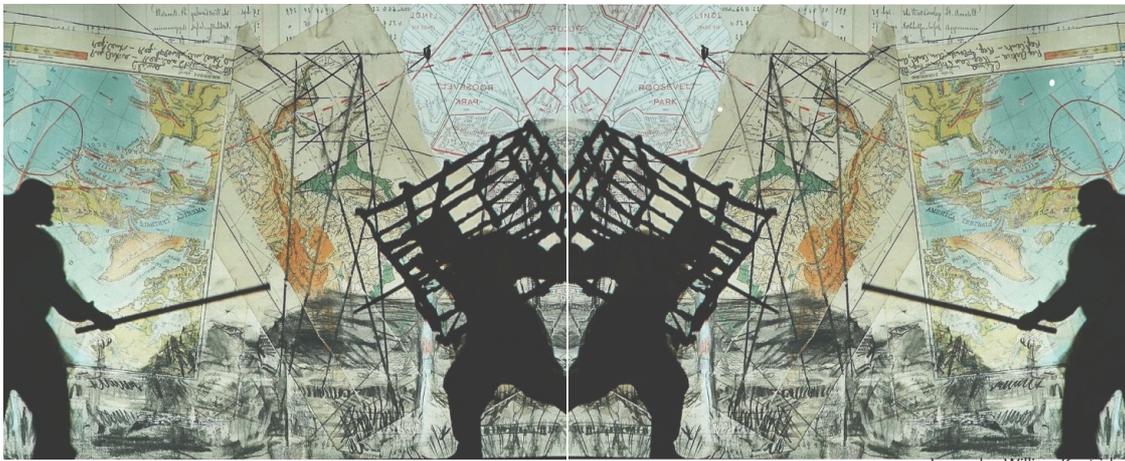


Image by William Kentridge

March 16-18, 2018

Keynote address: Prof. Edward E. Baptist (Cornell University)

This conference aims to rethink the history of political thought by “provincializing” its Eurocentric canon. We invite contributions that rethink the (re-)formation of modern political concepts, particularly in relation to race and division of labor, during a dynamic 19th century. Drawing on global history and the history from below, the conference will focus on the worldwide metamorphosis of European empires and the U.S. beginning with the Haitian Revolution (1791) until the abolition of slavery in Brazil (1888).

The ideological innovations and political transformations brought by the “Age of Revolutions” pushed global empires to reformulate the authority/obedience relationship within a new conceptual framework of formal liberty and equality among citizens. On the one hand, the first

abolition of slavery achieved by enslaved Africans in Haiti compelled European powers to rethink the division of labor. On the other hand, the notion of “race” emerged as a historically specific lens through which empires rearticulated conceptions of “liberty”, “equality”, “citizenship”, and “humanity” and laid the foundations of European theories of sovereignty. Calling into question the binary opposition between European rule of law and its colonial exception, as well as examining the liberal myth of violence as a mere “colonial” technique of government, the conference welcomes contributions focused on norms acting both within and outside the metropolises of globally extensive empires, and investigate the ways in which a racial division of labor worked on a global scale with varying modes of operation in specific contexts.

The conference also aims to highlight conflict and change, and explore emergent political challenges from below that forced administrative authorities and emerging political subjects to reformulate political concepts at a time of political transformation.

Moving from the colonial interplay between racialization and division of labor, we intend to host a dialogue on the theoretical relevance of “imperial history” and “global labor history” for a critical theory of modern political concepts. History of political concepts still appears detached from the material dimension implied in the concrete practices of imperial administration as well as from innovative discourses on freedom developed by emergent and oppositional political subjects of this period of history. The roots of such an intellectual operation should rely on a dialogue between scholarly efforts and non-academic “subaltern” historiographies, carried out by political movements and traditions such as Latin American Marxism, the black radical tradition, and other anti-imperialist discourses.

We invite graduate student papers on topics including, but not limited to:

- Race, gender, and class struggle
- Colonial administration and management
- The birth of “free” labor: French and British abolitionist debates
- The Haitian Revolution
- Indigenous peoples in colonial and postcolonial Latin America
- Imperial borders and the production of space
- Control, policing, and profiling on/of workers’ mobility
- Labor and citizenship
- Genealogies of global governance, finance, and division of labor
- Provincializing the Atlantic: slavery and forced labor in the Indian and Pacific oceans
- Conceptions of race and labor before and after the U.S. Civil War
- Reframing the archives: subaltern historiographies

Organizing committee:

Matilde Cazzola (Unibo)
Swati Chawla (UVA)
Martino Sacchi (Unibo - Paris 1)
Can Evren (Duke)
Lorenzo Ravano (Unibo)

Advisory board:

Raffaele Laudani (Unibo) Lawrie Balfour (UVA)
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Anthony Bogues (Brown) Verónica Gago (UNSAM)

Interested graduate students are required to complete and submit the **application form** and upload an **abstract** (max. **300 words**) for a 20-minute presentation along with a **short CV** (max. 2 pages):
<http://aghct.org/gradconf2018>

The deadline for submission is December 10, 2017 at 3.00 pm (GMT +1)

Selected applicants will be notified by December 31, 2017.

Limited **grants** are available to assist presenters with travel, room, and board. Please mention in your application if you wish to be considered for a travel bursary, and if your participation is contingent upon receiving one.

For further information: lorenzo.ravano2@unibo.it