Workshop
Feminist Postcolonial and/or Decolonial Approaches towards the performativity of gendered, racialised and classed subjectivities

December 1st 2016: 10am-4pm
University of Vienna, Department of African Studies

organised by Hanna Stepanik and Katharina Fritsch

Invited guest lecturer: Dr. Shirley Anne Tate (University of Leeds)

Judith Butler’s concept of performativity has become crucial in shaping feminist debates on embodiment and subjectivities. Butler’s work focuses on gendered and sexed bodies. Postcolonial and/or decolonial feminist scholars, however, have emphasised the performativity of racialised forms of embodiment and its intersections with other categories of difference, especially with class and gender.

In this workshop, we aim at thinking through the concept of performativity by engaging with feminist postcolonial and decolonial perspectives. These very approaches do not only emphasise the importance of intersectionality, they also challenge Eurocentric conceptions of identity and belonging in terms of Self-/Other-binaries. Consequently, postcolonial and decolonial perspectives invite us to reconceptualise Europe as postcolonial space shaped by post-/colonial migratory, diasporic and exile movements.

To this effect, we aim at understanding the production of counter-narratives within performatve practices as well as processes of co-optation in the face of neoliberal discourses on ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’. The workshop shall thus reflect on the subversive potential of the concept of performativity as well as its limits and challenges.

The daylong workshop, facilitated by Associate Professor Shirley Anne Tate, is divided into two parts: The first part is intended for the discussion of one of Tate’s articles (sent to participants in advance). The second part will entail group work and discussions with the possibility to engage with one’s own research, activism, and/or work. The workshop addresses graduate students, early career researchers as well as activists and cultural workers. The workshop will take place at the Department of African Studies, University of Vienna.

Shirley Tate will hold a keynote on November 30th, in the Alois-Wagner-Saal, Centre for International Development, 6.30 p.m. The talk is organised in cooperation with the Gender Research Office and is part of the Gender Talks series.

Possible relevant topics of the workshop
- performativity and aesthetics
- performativity and subjectivities
- performativity and spaces
- performativity and notions of postcolonial and/or diasporic ‘community’
- performativity and artistic performances/popular culture practices
- performativity of research (practices)
Some questions to be addressed in the workshop:
What are the dimensions of performativity at stake in our own research/work context? What are the challenges and/or limits we are facing in translating the concept of performativity within our own research/work contexts? What are the challenges of performativity approaches in the context of neoliberalism and postcolonialism, among others?

Interested participants should submit a one-page abstract including information about themselves as well as their interest in the workshop, if possible with specific foci. Abstract shall be sent to hanna.stepanik@univie.ac.at, by October 24th 2016.