

Lecture Series ERRANS, in Time – Saturday, 8 April 2017, 19:30, in English

Our world is going through a peculiar moment, one for which there doesn't seem to be a proper name yet. Since naming our time is part of what is at stake, Achille Mbembe will suggest that in the midst of the current dread and confusion, one thing at least is clear: ours is a time of planetary entanglement. But entanglement is not all that characterizes the now. As it happens, times of planetary entanglement are propitious for all kinds of escalations, the renewed production of things, forms, and events both baroque and dystopian, if only because such events generally strive to generate their own actuality through sheer excess and stupefaction. The lecture will focus on one such modality of the now, negative messianism, and its relation to the politics of pure violence.

The lecture will be followed by a discussion with Sarah Nuttall. The event will be moderated by Russell West-Pavlov ('Literary Cultures of the Global South', Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen).

Achille Mbembe is research professor in history and politics at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He has taught at Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California, Berkeley, Harvard University, and at Yale University. He has written extensively on African history and politics, including *La naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun* (1996). *On the Postcolony* was published in 2000 in French, in English in 2001. His *Critique de la raison nègre* appeared in 2013, with a German translation in 2014, the English translation this year, and *Politiques de l'inimitié* in 2016, with the German translation due in 2018.

Sarah Nuttall is the director of the Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She has held teaching positions at the University of Stellenbosch, Yale University, and Duke University. She has edited multiple volumes and her monograph *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-apartheid* explores mutuality, transgression, and embodiment in contemporary South Africa.

ICI Lecture Series ERRANS, in Time Conceptions of time and temporal experience seem more at odds now than ever. Hamlet's hunch that 'the time is out of joint' has turned into an evergreen of critical discourse. Admittedly, ideas of physical, social, revolutionary time, internal time consciousness, or historical experience are far from settled in their respective discourses and practices. Yet attempts to harmonize or correlate the understanding of time and temporal phenomena generated in different disciplines all-too quickly – and largely with violent effect – resort to normative, if not teleological ideas of progress, efficiency, narrative sense-making, or experiential plenitude. The ICI's current Lecture Series **ERRANS, in Time** asks whether the heterogeneous relations between discordant conceptions of time and temporality can be understood as being 'erratically' structured, that is, as marked by inherent misapprehensions, a dissonance that defies regulation, and an unexpected variability.

An ICI Berlin event, in cooperation with the BMBF/DAAD Thematic Network 'Literary Cultures of the Global South'

Achille Mbembe

Time on the Move



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