



# NELK Research Colloquium

## Guest Lecture

Thursday, June 7  
6-8 pm | Room IG 4.201

Leonie John (University of Cologne)

### “The negotiation of (im)mobility in Anglophone Maori short stories”

Where, how and why can indigenous characters move in contemporary Anglophone Māori short stories? Focusing on the continuum of mobility and immobility, I intend to reveal different forms, understandings and implications related to this conceptual pair, which includes a close examination of physical and spatial as well as social and cultural aspects. Domains of particular interest are travel and global movements, rural and urban life, poverty, addiction and violence, as well as issues of age and disease. Drawing on diverse academic fields, such as indigenous theories, mobility studies and postcolonial theory, my paper is designed to fill several research gaps in the area of Māori literary studies. The analysis will be deliberately exploratory and reciprocal, allowing both primary works and academic theory to provide directional cues and fertilise one another. An overarching aim is to adopt a culturally sensitive and ethically adequate position, which allows for the inclusion of Māori concepts and terms. Indeed, such concepts will be incorporated on a methodological, structural and analytical level. Establishing and maintaining close connections to indigenous experts from Aotearoa/New Zealand will also be of great importance for the project. Overall, considering selected works against a larger corpus of Māori literature, the dissertation will demonstrate how the concept of (im)mobility reveals thematic and structural interweavings, culturally specific interpretations of movement as well as the general complexity, richness and versatility of Māori literature.

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