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# **DENISE FERREIRA DA SILVA**

**Professor, Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and  
Social Justice, University of British Columbia  
on**

## **UNPAYABLE DEBT**

**12TH AUGUST, 2022,**

**8:30-9:30 PM IST/ 8:00-9:00 AM PDT**

**Meeting ID: [889 6949 0397](#)**

**Passcode: [lecturedis](#)**

**Youtube Live: Department of English, Jamia  
Millia Islamia**

**SIMI MALHOTRA  
HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
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### **Bio-Note of Denise Ferreira da Silva**

Denise Ferreira da Silva is Professor and Director of the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. She is also a Visiting Professor at the School of Law at Birkbeck, University of London. As an academic and practicing artist, through her works, she addresses the ethico-political challenges of the global present. She is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (2007), *Unpayable Debt* (2021), co-editor (with Paula Chakravartty) of *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime* (2013), the principal editor for the Routledge/Cavendish book series *Law, Race, and the Postcolonial* (with Mark Harris and Brenna Bhandar). Her articles have been published in leading interdisciplinary journals, such as *Social Text; Theory, Culture & Society; Social Identities; PhiloSOPHIA; Griffith Law Review; Theory & Event; The Black Scholar*, to name a few. Her writings have been translated into several languages, including Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Swedish, and Danish.

Her artistic works includes the films *Serpent Rain* (2016) and *4Waters-Deep Implicancy* (2018) in collaboration with Arjuna Neuman; and the relational art practices *Poethical Readings and Sensing Salon* in collaboration with Valentina Desideri. She has exhibited and lectured at major art venues, such as the Pompidou Center (Paris), Whitechapel Gallery (London, MASP (São Paulo), Guggenheim (New York), and MoMa (New York). She has also written for publications for major art events (Liverpool Biennale, 2017; Sao Paulo Biennale, 2016; Venice Biennale, 2017; and Documenta 14) and featured in art publishing venues such as *Canadian Art, Texte Zur Kunst*, and *E-Flux*.

Her research areas include Critical Racial and Ethnic Studies, Feminist Theory, Critical Legal Theory, Political Theory, Moral Philosophy, Postcolonial Studies, and Latin American & Caribbean Studies. Her theoretical work — which is informed by research on themes such as Female Genital Cutting, Police Brutality, and Black Political Mobilization,

and the rhetoric of the “War on Terror” — consists primarily in the formulation of a critical strategy, global/historical analysis, which highlights the centrality of raciality in modern (post-Enlightenment) thought. Drawing from post-structural and feminist theory and psychoanalysis, it is offered as a critique of liberal and contemporary critical theorizing, as it seeks to capture how raciality – as a scientific (sociological and anthropological) signifier of human difference which institutes globality as an ontological horizon – operates in the present global (juridical, economic, and symbolic) configuration. And, in doing so, it seeks to open up new venues for theorizing global justice. This concern results not only from her interdisciplinary training (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, History, and Philosophy) but also from many years of political activism in working-class neighborhood associations (in Rio de Janeiro ) and in the black Brazilian movement.

In her most recent work, *Unpayable Debt* she examines the relationships among coloniality, raciality, and global capital from a black feminist “poethical” perspective. Inspired by Octavia E. Butler's 1979 sci-fi novel *Kindred*, in which an African-American writer is transported back in time to the antebellum South to save her owner-ancestor, *Unpayable Debt* relates the notion of value to coloniality—both economic and ethical. Focusing on the philosophy behind value, Denise Ferreira da Silva exposes capital as the juridical architecture and ethical grammar of the world. Here, raciality—a symbol of coloniality—justifies deployments of total violence to enable expropriation and land extraction.

Prof. Denise Ferreira da Silva is also a member of several boards including Haus de Kulturen de Welt (Berlin), International Consortium for Critical Theory Programs and the journals *Postmodern Culture*, *Social Identities*, and *Dark Matter*. Two of her upcoming books are: *Law, Race, and the Postcolonial – A Handbook* with Mark Harris (Routledge) and *Indigenous Peoples & the Law – A Handbook* with Mark Harris (Routledge).