

Call for Papers

English in a World of Strangers: Rethinking World Anglophone Studies

**31st Annual Conference of the Association for Anglophone Postcolonial Studies (Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien / GAPS)
Goethe University Frankfurt, 21-24 May, 2020**

In an increasingly globalized world characterized by multipolar power structures, trans-cultural flows and interlaced digital pathways, English has long since become a worldly language. A whole universe of discourse predicated on the question of who owns English has been thrown into doubt: more than a billion people worldwide 'do' English in new and often unexpected ways, and anglophone literatures and cultures all over the world have become veritable contact zones characterized by multilingualism, trans-linguaging and syncretic language practices.

As early as 2001, in his introduction to the essay collection *A New World Order*, Caryl Phillips predicted a reconfiguration of planetary communication 'in which there will soon be one global conversation with limited participation open to all, and full participation available to none', and concluded that 'in this new world order nobody will feel fully at home'. Echoing this sense of global homelessness, Anthony Appiah discussed the cosmopolitan obligation to (mostly unknown) others in his *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), while Ottmar Ette mused about 'literatures without a fixed abode' in *Writing-between-worlds* (2016). Arguably, English today also finds itself in 'a world of strangers': it has become a globally desirable medium of aesthetic expression and matters of political expediency, even for writers from traditionally non-anglophone parts of the world such as Latin America, East Asia or the Arab World. On the other hand, the grand notion of an 'anglophone world' is internally eroded by multilingual cultural configurations across the globe as well as by a revival of vernacular literatures in Africa or on the Indian subcontinent. This new dispensation arguably confronts Anglophone Studies worldwide with the challenge to address the specific role of English as both a global and local medium of expression and social interaction. It also necessitates a self-reflexive reappraisal of established disciplinary protocols in cultural and literary studies as well as linguistics: how helpful are these routines for coming to terms with what Arundhati Roy has called the 'mind-bending mosaic' of language politics - and practices - in the contemporary world in her recent essay "What is the Morally Appropriate Language in Which to Think and Write?" (2018)?

The 2020 Annual Conference of the Association for Postcolonial Anglophone Studies (GAPS) will take up the challenge of exploring the current state and future development of World Anglophone Studies. Participants are invited to address the transformation of English from a language of colonization or decolonization (and postcolonization?) to a language of new power brokers as well as strangers, minorities and asylum seekers and to scrutinize the new politics of language in which English has

become entangled in widely differing historical, political and cultural contexts across the planet. Participants are also encouraged to critically engage with the debate among authors such as Gaurav Desai, Akshya Saxena and Rebecca L. Walkowitz seeking to demarcate 'World Anglophone Studies' from 'World Literature' that emerged in the journal *Interventions* in 2018, with the call to heed the importance of global South-South relations for world literature studies in recent contributions such as Satya P. Mohanty's "From Indian Literature to World Literature" (2012) and Mukoma wa Ngugi's "Rethinking the Global South" (2012), and with the renewed general debate on 'World Literature' that has had a major impact on literary studies worldwide in recent years. Participants are further welcome to tackle the emergence of new readerships and new anglophone literatures in non-anglophone parts of the world. And they are, finally, called upon to focus on the role of global Englishes as a medium of exclusion and homogenization, but also of fractures, fissures, plurality and resistance.

We invite contributions exploring the conference theme in areas such as:

- World Englishes vs. Global Englishes
- Doing and thinking language beyond the nation state
- Language and power: The complex social habitats of global Englishes today
- English in the contact zone: Linguistic border-crossing in anglophone literature, film and other media
- Travelling memories in anglophone literatures and cultures
- Debating World Anglophone Studies
- World literature and postcolonialism: antagonism, benign neglect, synergies?
- The New Anglophones: English-language writing in the Arab world
- Old and new South-South relations in anglophone studies
- Creolization: Mixed languages as cultural and literary resource
- Indigenous Englishes and the politics of sovereignty
- Teaching complexity: Global Englishes as a challenge to pedagogical practice
- Marketing diversity: Publishing Anglophone literatures and cultures
- Franco-, hispano- and anglophone literatures in comparative perspective

Work in progress in anglophone postcolonial studies – including M.A./M.Ed., PhD and Postdoc projects as well as ongoing research projects in general – can be presented in the "Under Construction" section, for which poster presentations are also welcome.

**Deadline for panel suggestions along with names of proposed speakers (minimum 3):
November 01, 2019**

Deadline for individual abstracts: December 31, 2019

Please note that all speakers except invited guests and students must be members of GAPS by the time of the conference and that a limited number of travel bursaries for emerging scholars is available.

For submission guidelines and all further details, please check the conference website:

www.gaps2020-frankfurt.com

Conference convenors: Dr. Pavan Kumar Malreddy and Prof. Dr. Frank Schulze-Engler, Institute for English and American Studies, Goethe University Frankfurt