

Postgraduate Conference

Participation in Postcolonial Wor(l)ds

September 29 – October 1, 2022

Thursday, September 29

8.45 Conference Registration, HHU Campus
in front of lecture hall 3B

9.30 Conference Opening:
Christina Slopek & Miriam Hinz
Prof. Dr. Birgit Neumann

10.00-11.30 Keynote Speech, **Malaka Shwaikh** (University of St Andrews)
Framing Participation: Word Choice and Language(s) of Care

11.30-12.30 Coffee Break (+ travel to House of University, Schadowplatz 14)

All panels are held at House of University!

12.30-1.30 Panel I: Indigenous Literatures and Criticism – Chair: Lucas Mattila

Britta Colligs (University of Trier)

“land does not belong to people”: Maori Narratives and Environmental Activism

Bettina Burger (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf)

Participation in Possible Futures: Technology in Aboriginal Australian Speculative Fiction

1.30-3.00 Lunch Break



Thursday, September 29

3.00-4.30 Panel II: Shaping Participatory Futures – Chair: Bettina Burger

Fatima Seck (University of Maryland)

**A Pedagogical Approach to Teaching African Literature:
Layered Literacies**

Elizabeth Abena Osei (University of Ghana)

**New Urbanities and Utopian Desire in Akwaeke Emezi's
Afrofuturist Novel, *Pet***

Burak Sezer (University of Cologne)

**The Afronauts of the Future. Black Speculative Fiction as
More than Postcolonial Participation?**

4.30-6.00 Break

6.00 Dinner (optional, self-pay)

Venue: To1980 Vegan (Immermannstraße 46)

Friday, September 30

9.30-10.30 Panel III: Strategies for Postcolonial Empowerment – Chair: Miriam Hinz (online)

Amanda Marsh (University of Texas at Arlington)

Science Fiction, Chicano Literature, and Critiquing Postcolonial Attitudes

Tania Chissano (University of Huddersfield)

Decreasing Domestic Violence against Women through Women's Entrepreneurship Training in Mozambique: A Postcolonial and Feminist Critique

10.30-11.00 Coffee Break

11.00-12.30 Panel IV: Digital Cultures and Politics – Chair: Eva Ulrike Pirker

Isabella Kalte (Justus Liebig University Giessen)

Forms of Unruly Participation: Dissenting to Legacies of Colonialism in Caribbean Feminist Social Media Movements

Fiona Quast (Justus Liebig University Giessen)

Digital Maroonage: The Case of Colectivo Ilé from Puerto Rico. Afro-Diasporic Self-Representation, Participation and Education through Digital Media

Pierre Mourier (University of Lyon)

Race Impact in the 2016 American Presidential Election

12.30-2.00 Lunch Break

Friday, September 30

2.00-3.30 Panel V: Writing and the Publishing Industry – Chair: Kristina Ahrens

Gabriela Alexandra Banita (University of Bologna & Sorbonne Paris North University)

Literature from the Margins: Between Commercialization and Spaces of Freedom

Mohammed Muharram (University of Bremen)

Postcolonial Arabic Fiction and the Publishing Industry: A Re-Assessment

Touhid Ahmed Chowdhury (Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg)

Postcolonial Participation and Bangladeshi Writing in English

3.30-4.30 Break

4.30-6.00 **Reading and Q&A with Elizabeth Chakrabarty** (London)

Lessons in Love and Other Crimes (2021)

Foyer D'haus Düsseldorf (Gustaf-Gründgens-Platz 1)

7.30 Conference Dinner

Venue: Wilma Wunder (Martin-Luther-Platz 27)



Saturday, October 1

10.00-11.30 Panel VI: Critical Outlooks – Chair: Christina Slopek

Rita Maricocchi (University of Münster)

Participation and Performance in the Graphic Novel: Birgit Weyhe's Narrative Strategies

Nii Nai Adjei-Mensah (Heinrich-Heine-University)

Profit or Loss? The Cost of Postcolonial Participation in Jennifer Makumbi's "Let Us Tell this Story Properly"

Lucas Mattila (Heinrich-Heine-University)

Serial Killing, Smiling Back and Why Participation Is Not Enough: Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer*

11.30-12.30 Lunch Break

12.30-2.00 Workshop with **Lena Mattheis** (University of Surrey)

How to Publish Your Dissertation

2.00-2.30 Conference Closing

Guests

Elizabeth Chakrabarty

Dr Elizabeth Chakrabarty is an interdisciplinary writer using creative and critical writing, besides performance, to explore themes of race, gender and sexuality. Her debut novel *Lessons in Love and Other Crimes*, inspired by experience of race hate crime, was published in 2021 by the Indigo Press, along with her essay, *On Closure and Crime*. In 2022 *Lessons in Love and Other Crimes* was longlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize, and also shortlisted for the Polari First Book Prize. Elizabeth was also shortlisted for the Dinesh Allirajah Prize for Short Fiction 2022, for her story 'That Last Summer' published in *The Dinesh Allirajah Prize for Short Fiction 2022: Crime Stories* by Comma Press. She was shortlisted for the Asian Writer Short Story Prize in 2016 for 'Eurovision' published in *Dividing Lines* (Dahlia, 2017). Other recent shorter work includes poetry published by *Visual Verse*, and creative-critical writing in *Gal-Dem*, *New Writing Dundee*, *Wasafiri* and the anthology *Imagined Spaces* (Saraband, 2020), and in translation by *Glänta* and *Deus Ex Machina*. She received an Authors' Foundation Grant from The Society of Authors (UK) in December 2018, to support the writing of *Lessons in Love and Other Crimes*, and she was chosen as one of the runners up for the inaugural CrimeFest bursary for crime fiction authors of colour in 2022. She lives in London.

Lena Mattheis

Dr. Lena Mattheis is a lecturer in contemporary literature at the University of Surrey, where she is currently working on queer forms and spaces. She has previously worked at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany and at the University of Namibia. Lena's work has been published in peer-reviewed journals (*Narrative*, *Literary Geographies*, and *Transnational Literature*, among others) and in her monograph *Translocality in Contemporary City Novels* (Palgrave, 2021). Lena is very pleased to be the host and creator of the Queer Lit podcast and occasionally writes blog articles on her experiences as a queer female* person in academic spaces.

To find out more, click here: <https://lenamattheis.wordpress.com/> or find Lena [@Lena Mattheis](#) on Twitter and [@queerlitpodcast](#) on Instagram.

Malaka Shwaikh

Dr. Malaka Shwaikh is an associate lecturer at the University of St Andrews. Her research is at the intersection of critical prison studies, hunger striking, and grassroots peacebuilding. She also has a lot of interest in the study of languages, accents, and translation. She published widely on prison hunger strikes, gendered relations, and resistance.

Herself a Palestinian academic from the Gaza Strip, her speech will build on the personal and contextualize and problematize three concepts that are often used in everyday conversations about the 'global south'. From 'resilience' to 'empowerment' to 'voicelessness', she will also show how the personal choices of our words are in reality political and cause more harm than we may think.

Dr. Shwaikh can be contacted at mmbs1@st-andrews.ac.uk and her Twitter account is [@MalakaShwaikh](#).

Speakers and Abstracts

Nii Nai Adjei-Mensah

Profit or Loss? The Cost of Postcolonial Participation in Jennifer Makumbi's "Let Us Tell This Story Properly"

Issues of involvement and representation have been crucial to the study of the conditions of previously colonized subjects. Attempts to decipher the place of racialized others in the context of an increasingly connected world have yielded concepts such as 'cosmopolitanism', 'diaspora', 'global south' and 'third world', which have been criticized, among other objections, as impositions of western-centered identity tags on former colonies. In "Let Us Tell This Story Properly", Jennifer Makumbi explores a dialogic interplay between immigration, identity, a sense of exclusion, and a longing for 'home'; raising questions on the meaning of participation and what it costs. Through her collage of short stories Jennifer Makumbi argues that processes of translation which enable postcolonial subjects to create spaces for participation are simultaneously marked by sacrifices which often problematize or nullify the gains of such translations (successful or not). Through a variety of characters, Makumbi contemplates the terms of Ugandan (marginal subject) participation in the economic and often naively-idealized European center as well as the factors that account for an entrenchment of the marginal position in these spaces. Makumbi's characters are often entangled in situations and choices that, while enabling them to fix themselves at the ends of British society, imbue them with a deep sense of shame these characters are not able to redeem themselves from.

Bio

Nii Nai Adjei-Mensah is a student in his final semester of HHU's MA Comparative Studies Program. Although he has wide-ranging interests, he has set his focus on postcolonial studies. Nii hopes to become a researcher and lecturer in the near future. In his free time, he likes to dabble in art projects, cook, play games, take a walk, listen to music or play the piano or guitar.

Gabriela Alexandra Banita

Literature from the Margins: Between Commercialization and Spaces of Freedom

Today, after years of being at the margins, Nigerian writers seem to finally have access to the literary marketplace – or at least a niche of it. The world-famous writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie more than anyone else epitomises this literary effervescence. However, if looked at closely, this accessibility regards mainly writers that live in the Global North, and – as some have argued – produce novels deploying specific characteristics (Huggan 2002 and Brouillette 2007). These dominant novels, considered marketable for the global literary marketplace, have been read as the "gold standard" (Adesokan 2012) and their marketability has been interpreted as a consequence of what Huggan (2020) dubbed readers' taste for the postcolonial exotic. This phenomenon is ostensibly at work in return narratives, i.e., novels where the protagonists go back to Nigeria after a period spent abroad. Through their liminal perspective that oscillates from an outsider to an insider's position, the characters give a representation of their country of origin to the Western readership and in doing that, authors might seem "complicit and compromised figure[s]" (Brouillette 2007).

Yet, although it is impossible to argue that these authors are not embedded in the capitalistic structure and in what decolonial thinking calls coloniality, they are aware of their positionality and of their requisite role as spokespeople. Through an analysis of Cole's *Every Day is For the Thief* (2007), Ndibe's *Foreign Gods, Inc.* (2014) and Habila's *Travellers* (2019), I argue that these authors maintain agency and room for manoeuvre by registering in their narrative their anxiety about the commercialization of their work.

Bibliography

- Adesokan, Akin. 2012. 'New African Writing and the Question of Audience'. *Research in African Literatures* 43 (3): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.2979/reseafrilite.43.3.1>.
- Brouillette, Sarah. 2007. 'Postcolonial Writers and the Global Literary Marketplace'. In *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*, edited by Sarah Brouillette, 44–75. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230288171_3.
- Cole, Teju. [2007] 2014. *Every Day Is for the Thief: Fiction*. Random House Publishing Group.
- Habila, Helon. 2019. *Travellers*. Penguin UK.
- Huggan, Graham. 2002. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. Routledge.
- . 2020. 'Re-Evaluating the Postcolonial Exotic'. *Interventions* 22 (7): 808–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2020.1753552>.
- Ndibe, Okey. 2014. *Foreign Gods, Inc.* Soho Press.

Bio

Gabriela Alexandra Banita is a PhD candidate in World Literature and Postcolonial Studies, undertaking a programme simultaneously at the University of Bologna and the University of Sorbonne Paris Nord. Her research interests include migration, postcolonial studies and literature as well as decolonial thinking, all of which converge in her research project focussing on the representation of the topos of return in Nigerian diasporic literature. During the summer semester 2021/2011, she taught postcolonial literature at the University Sorbonne Paris Nord and is currently working as an editorial assistant for the academic journal *From the European South* at the University of Padua.


Bettina Charlotte Burger

Participation in Possible Futures – Technology in Aboriginal Australian Speculative Fiction

Aboriginal Australian cultures have been firmly situated in the past by colonial discourse and “[f]or the greater part of the past two hundred years, white Australians believed the indigenous inhabitants doomed to extinction” (McGregor ix). It is thus unsurprising that a culture so firmly associated with history and traditional ways of life has not frequently been imagined at the forefront of futuristic technologies and progress. In fact, an Aboriginal absence is noticeable in many works of Australian science fiction, both in conventional novels and in popular movies, as if the ‘doomed race theory’ were still current held beliefs.

Aboriginal Australian speculative fiction writers, however, not only demand participation in the genre, but they assert an affinity to many of the genre’s “devices that [their] cultural stories have dealt in for millennia” (Saunders 8).

In my talk, I will explore how Aboriginal Australian writers combine their epistemologies with technologies usually perceived of as western, thus ensuring their ongoing participation in imagining the future.



Ambelin Kwaymullina's machine-spirits, spaceships "designed by Indigenous scientific literacies" (239), Claire G. Coleman's Aboriginal space opera *The Old Lie* and its Aboriginal protagonists' complicated participation in intergalactic war and travel as well as Kathryn Gledhill-Tucker's post-human future will serve as examples of technological participation in Aboriginal Australian Speculative Fiction.

References

- Kwaymullina, Ambelin. "Message From the Ngurra Palya." In *After Australia*, edited by Michael Mohammed Ahmad. South Melbourne: Affirm Press, 2020.
- McGregor, Russell. *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939*. Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1997.
- Saunders, Mykaela. "Overture." In *This All Come Back Now. An Anthology of First Nations Speculative Fiction*, edited by Mykaela Saunders. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2022.


Bio

Bettina Charlotte Burger is a research assistant and lecturer at the Heinrich-Heine University of Dusseldorf in the field of English Studies. Their dissertation argues that fantasy literature ought to be considered as world literature in its scope and that world literary readings of individual examples of world fantasy are highly productive as well as necessary. They have co-edited a collection on *Nonhuman Agencies in The Twenty-First-Century Anglophone Novel* as well as several articles in the field of speculative fiction. Additionally, they have been a Digi Fellow and project co-leader for "Charting the Australian Fantastic" in 2021, for which they still produce Open Educational Resources.

Tania Chissano

Decreasing Domestic Violence against Women through Women's Entrepreneurship Training in Mozambique: A Postcolonial and Feminist Critique

Domestic violence against women (DVAW) is a global health phenomenon that has gained the attention of international organizations and academic literature. Entrepreneurial training has been an acclaimed strategy used for domestic violence melioration specifically for women in developing countries (Bulte & Lensink, 2019; World Health Organization, 2015). The primary purpose of this paper is to evaluate the use of entrepreneurship trainings aimed towards women who face domestic violence in developing countries, particularly Mozambique. It sets out to critically examine the claims of "women empowerment" through entrepreneurship, looking at how entrepreneurship is constituted as a way to reduce domestic violence. Therefore, the question arises: 'Does women's entrepreneurship training decrease domestic violence against women in Mozambique?' This examination will be done using postcolonial and feminist perspectives. Feminist critiques (within postcolonial perspective) have raised concerns about the constant portrayal of victimization of African women, which overshadows their real experiences. International bodies (i.e., UNPD, UN, WHO) take the responsibility to save the "native women from the barbarian men" (Otto, 2006). Approaching women with such assumption can (a) ignore how women exercise power in their societies, (b) overlook how women actively participate (encourage) sexist norms and (c) deny the women the agency to help themselves.



A postcolonial and feminist lens in this study is utilized to examine the extent that 'entrepreneurship' reflects neo-colonialism, why 'well-being' is driven by empowerment through entrepreneurship and challenges causalities formed between entrepreneurship and domestic violence in literature.

Bio

Tania Chissano is a third year PhD candidate at the university of Huddersfield, UK. She is naturally from Mozambique, and has lived and studied in countries such Switzerland and Ethiopia. Thus, she been exposed to different ways of culture, although she has noticed the schools she attended have the same ways of 'knowing' and use a similar lens through which the world is interpreted. Thus, her areas of interest centres around postcolonial theories, postcolonial feminism theories and decolonialization. Tania believes that her background plays to her advantage, as well as having been exposed to the 'western' world. Although there is a high probability that Tania might be viewed as an 'outsider' when doing research on the 'other', she believes that her cultural background and nationality might help minimise her position of privilege in the field. In summary, Tania hopes to see an academic world that is not dominated by the 'global north' nor 'the global south', although it may seem unrealistic, she believes that all 'knowledge' can be celebrated.

Touhid Ahmed Chowdhury

Postcolonial Participation and Bangladeshi Writing in English

When it comes to postcolonial anglophone literature, in general, and postcolonial South Asian literature, in particular, one can come up with, if not thousands but at least a few hundred names of the novels and novelists hailing from India or Pakistan. This, in short, points to the fact that a major part of the post-partition and post-colonial literature on South Asia has been done by Indian or Pakistani writers, and they proved their worth. The writings by such figures as Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, and Arundhati Roy are well circulated in the English-speaking world. Slowly but gradually, a stream of writers writing in English emerged on the Bangladeshi literary scene. In recent decades, Bangladeshi Writing in English (BWE) got attention because of the success of the writers – such as Kaisar Haque, Monica Ali, and Tahmima Anam – both in Bangladesh and the English-speaking world. Considering the rich literary history, complexity it represents, and the huge potential of Bangladeshi Writing in English, in this paper, I argue that this new group of writers are actively participating in the postcolonial discourse by telling and retelling stories from Bangladeshi perspectives, which for many years remained unnoticed or left out in the periphery of Indian/Pakistani Writing in English. This paper will also argue that Bangladeshi Writing in English (BWE) questions the existing inherent power relations within different strands of postcolonial South Asian literature.

Bio

Touhid Ahmed Chowdhury is a Research Assistant and teaches English literature at the University of Bamberg, Germany. His research interests primarily include migration literature, postcolonial literature, identity studies, and South Asian literature and culture. In his PhD project, titled "(Un)told Stories: Immigrants' Pain in Adapting to New Life," Mr Chowdhury is analysing the aesthetics and representation of pain in the writings of Timothy Mo, Abdulrazak Gurnah and *Refugee Tales* edited by David Herd.

Britta Colligs

“land does not belong to people”¹: Maori Narratives and Environmental Activism

For centuries, humanity has drastically altered the face of the Earth and so severely disturbed its environment. However, the oversimplification and creation of a generic human culpability is highly criticised by indigenous authors and scholars. Arguing that the global North is primarily responsible for the continuing environmental crisis, indigenous scholars state that “[n]ot all humans are equally implicated in the forces that created the disasters driving contemporary human-environmental crises” (Todd 244). Todd highlights colonial parameters by pointing out that indigenous scholars and indigenous knowledge are disregarded in the global discussion on how to tackle environmental crisis and promotes an inclusion of an indigenous understanding of the environment and human’s position within it. Indigenous people all over the globe speak out for environmental justice, the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, ...” (EPA), protesting the capitalistic exploitation of nature. This paper will investigate an indigenous understanding of the land and the aspiration for an environmental justice in Patricia Grace’s (*Potiki*, 1986) and Cathie Dunsford’s (*Ao Toa: Earth Warrior*, 2005) environmental novels. Both overtly discuss the capitalistic exploitation of the land and the correlating attacks on the tangata whenua (“the people of the land”), which evoke an active participation in environmental activism in the narratives. By providing indigenous communities who live in a reciprocal relationship with the land and participate in protests against environmental exploitation, the novels promote an environmental awareness and ask the reader to renegotiate their understanding and relationship towards the land.

¹ Grace, Patricia. *Potiki*. University of Hawai’i Press, 1995. p.110.

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“Environmental Justice.” *Environmental Justice*. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. n.d. <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>. Accessed 29.06.2022.


Bio

Britta Maria Colligs is a lecturer at the Department of English Studies at the University of Trier, Germany, with a specialisation in Ecocriticism as well as British and New Zealand Literature and Culture. Her research interests furthermore include the study of fantasy literature, with a focus on J. R. R. Tolkien’s creation and G. R. R. Martin’s world. She defended her Dissertation project “The Forests of the World: Ecocriticism and Sylvan Agency in Speculative Fiction” in February 2022 and is currently developing a postdoctoral project in indigenous narrative studies.

Isabella Kalte

Forms of Unruly Participation: Dissenting to Legacies of Colonialism in Caribbean Feminist Social Media Movements

While, in 2017, the #MeToo movement was celebrated for breaking with the silence around sexual abuse and harassment in Hollywood and for moving the discussion of gender-based violence center stage, Caribbean feminist social media movements that



Followed the same agenda and even predate the first viral tweet of #MeToo did not spark an international outcry although gender-based violence is a serious problem in the Caribbean. In this presentation, I would like to present two feminist social media activist groups based in the Anglophone Caribbean, *Life In Leggings: Caribbean Alliance Against Gender-based Violence* founded by Ronelle King and the *Tambourine Army* initiated by Nadine Spence, Latoya Nugent and Rochelle McFee, that are committed to raising awareness for and fighting against forms of gender-based violence in the region. I will discuss the strategies employed by the two groups of participating in feminist activism and compare the reception of their actions to the way the U.S. based #MeToo movement was met by the general public in order to show that legacies of colonialism still influence contemporary constructions and representations of female subjectivity as well as determine which women are seen as valid participants of feminism and which women are denied participation and considered as agitators.

Bio

Isabella Kalte received her Master's Degree from Potsdam University in anglophone literature and culture. She is currently a PhD candidate at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen. In her doctoral project, titled "(Self-)Representing the Unruly Woman: Strategies of Dissent and Legacies of Colonialism in Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Caribbean Feminist Social Media Movements," she explores constructions and (self-)representations of female Caribbean subjectivities as well as female practices of resistance in literary works and digital activism. Isabella is publications coordinator at the GCSC, an editorial team member of the open access peer-reviewed academic journal *On_Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture* as well as executive editor of *KULT_online*, an interdisciplinary online review journal based at the GCSC.

Rita Maricocchi

Participation and Performance in the Graphic Novel: Birgit Weyhe's Narrative Strategies

Recent winner of the 2022 Max and Moritz prize for the best German-language comic artist, white German-born author Birgit Weyhe has produced comics on personal and collective histories, migration, race, and belonging, often informed by her childhood experiences in Uganda and Kenya. Weyhe's unique and not unproblematic position as narrator intersects with contemporary discussions on postcolonialism and participation in Germany. Particularly interesting in Weyhe's corpus is her use of heavily foregrounded self-reflection to tell the stories of others. One can see this at work in one of Weyhe's best known works *Madgermanes* (2016), which tells the often-forgotten history of the roughly 20,000 individuals who came as contract workers from Mozambique to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the late 1970s, translating interviews conducted with those who experienced this history into fiction, as well as in her most recent publication *Rude Girl* (2022), which depicts the life story of Black American German Studies professor Priscilla Layne, including conversations with and corrections by Layne throughout the text. Drawing on Dominic Davies' (2017) observation of self-reflexivity in what he calls postcolonial comics, this paper will explore Weyhe's narrative techniques both within and outside the text, considering aspects of self-representation, participation of the individuals she is writing about, and the ways this is performed in paratextual elements such as interviews and live readings.

In doing so, I ask whether and how such narrative strategies afford agency to the narrated subjects and may offer frameworks for participative postcolonial storytelling in the German context.

Bio

Rita Maricocchi is a research assistant and PhD student at the Chair of English, Postcolonial and Media Studies at the University of Münster. A graduate of the National and Transnational Studies MA program in Münster, she wrote her thesis on the topic of German identity and postcolonial entanglements in Birgit Weyhe's graphic novel *Madgermanes*. Her PhD project focuses on intersections of the Anglophone and Germanophone in the postcolonial German literary and cultural sphere. She is currently preparing to co-teach an interdisciplinary course entitled "Black German Studies: Transatlantic Perspectives" in Winter Semester 2022/23.

Amanda Marsh

Science Fiction, Chicano Literature, and Critiquing Postcolonial Attitudes

The Chicano Movement created a space for people descended from the native peoples of the southwestern United States and Latin America to engage with a postcolonial world. Chicanos have been marginalized like all groups whose ancestors were colonized and brutalized by European invaders and began pushing back against them through various means. Literature is one weapon in their arsenal of tools that has been used in protests and has been effective telling their stories to a wider audience. Different genres of literature have been used to critique social issues in a multitude of ways. The science fiction genre allows an author to perform a critique while creating distance between the commentary and the reader so that they may not feel attacked and therefore gaining a new perspective. One Chicano author who made use of this genre is Alejandro Morales in his book *The Ragdoll Plagues*, in which he describes the sickness that spreads through a poor and marginalized community in Mexico City and Southern California through the eyes of three doctors. Through this project I will argue that by using elements of science fiction Morales was expressing his sense of agency while reacting to and pushing against post-colonialism's treatment of Chicanos and their homeland.


Bio

Amanda Marsh is a student of English Literature and Anthropology who earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in both areas of study from Texas Christian University in 2020 and a Master of Arts in English Literature from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2022. Her final portfolio encompassed the issues relating to the environmental impact Viking sagas have had on wolf populations in Western societies.

Lucas William Mattila

Serial Killing, Smiling Back and Why Participation Is Not Enough: Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer*

Participation in postcolonial worlds might come in the form of a shortlist for the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2019, or being longlisted for the Booker in the same year, but Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, The Serial Killer* is more concerned about the problems of participation than an adherence to existing neocolonial principles.



Taking up and taking on the tropes of a typical mystery novel, *My Sister the Serial Killer* rigorously opposes notions of participation in concepts of patriarchal orders, global commerce and the capital-centric desire for more. In my talk, I will explore the ways in which *My Sister the Serial Killer* thwarts questions of participation for postcolonial literatures, proffering its own specificities in their place. Drawing on the detective fiction tradition of the whydunnit, the narrative's focus departs from attempts to constitute the dual narrative structure associated with such novels. Instead of upholding or restoring order, the text argues for a kinship that moves beyond legality or so-called conventional concepts of morality. The sisters choose *not to* participate in 'socially acceptable' relationships – sticking together in their murderous ways and undoing the rigid binds of empirical knowledge and neocolonial systems.

Bio

Lucas Mattila is a research assistant, lecturer, and doctoral candidate at the Heinrich-Heine University of Dusseldorf. His dissertation deals with Stimmung in Contemporary Anglophone Literature. Additionally, he is a Digi Fellow and project co-leader for "Charting the Australian Fantastic". His work has been published in *ZAA (Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik)* and in the *Journal of Science Fiction*. He also guest edited a special issue of *GenderForum* on Australian Speculative Fiction.


Pierre Mourier

Race impact in the 2016 American Presidential Election

In 2016, the United States elected Donald Trump as President after a dividing campaign on several issues, such as gender, but also race. The then-candidate entered the political field in 2011 by reviving an old conspiracy theory, implying that then-President Barack Obama's birth certificate was a fraud. During the beginning of the campaign, he proposed the Muslim travel ban, a proposal to ban all travel from a specific list of countries that he would enact in his first 100 days of his presidency. His endorsement by the infamous David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, has only fortified his political positioning as a white supremacist. Race is one of the most influential factors enabling or disabling participation through voting in the United States. The use of dog-whistling has been documented during various political campaigns in the United States, starting with Barry Goldwater and his Southern Strategy. Race has been an issue to tackle for the Trump campaign as a deterrent strategy against African-Americans was put into place. Both rhetorical and practical, its aim was to widen the racial divide but also to lower the voter turnout as it turned out that African-American voters were more likely to vote in favor of Hillary Clinton. Both the former and the latter have been used for and by Trump's 2016 campaign as reported. Using data provided by the National Election Pool exit polls and the American National Election Studies, we can examine the correlation between race and participation. A discursive analysis would help us to examine the rhetorical devices used during the 2016 campaign, and the first 100 days of Donald Trump's presidency.

Bio

Member of the DICE network, Pierre Mourier is a doctoral student at the University of Lyon. His thesis dissertation aims at understanding the links between Donald J. Trump's campaign and 100 days of his presidency and the Alt-Right movement with a focus on racial issues as it is a major factor shaping social group interactions in the USA.



Doctoral Fellow at CARR (Center for the Analysis of the Radical Right), his research field is focused on the Alt-Right movement as well as race relations in the United States. His recent communications include a focus on Trump's wall as a rhetorical tool as a powerful symbol of division within American society. He also produced an overview of the Identitarian Fear strategy as developed by the digital company Cambridge Analytica during the Trump Era.

Mohammed Muharram

Postcolonial Arabic Fiction and the Publishing Industry: A Re-Assessment

This paper attempts to re-read an article I wrote ten years ago in *The Minnesota Review* on the publishing industry in the West which marginalizes postcolonial Arabic fiction. The article, "The Marginalization of Arabic Fiction in the Postcolonial and World English Curriculum: Slips? Or Orientalism and Racism?" argues that because publishers refuse works that include the Arab and/or the Muslim, postcolonial Arabic fictions (written primarily in English or translated into English) were excluded from postcolonial textbooks and anthologies which paradoxically call for equality of participation and inclusion. The main five marginalizing texts are: *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin; *Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction: An Anthology* (1999) edited by Robert Ross; *The Arnold Anthology of Post-Colonial Literatures in English* (2009) edited by John Thieme; *An Anthology of Colonial and Postcolonial Short Fiction* (2007) edited by Dean Baldwin and Patrick Quinn; and *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English* (2007) by Adrian Hunter. I now discuss the recent editions of such texts and their inclusion and exclusion of postcolonial Arabic fiction. I also examine similar voices which deal with the difficulties faced by Arab writers who wish to have their work taken up by Western publishing houses, such as Edward Said, Geoffrey Nash, Wail Hassan, and Mohja Kahf. The paper ends with an attempt to account for why such houses exercise these exclusionary practices and what Arab writers can do to tackle this form of exclusion.

Bio

Dr. Mohammed Muharram is Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral researcher at the Department of English, the University of Bremen. He is an associate member of the interdisciplinary research network *Fiction Meets Science*, and his research interests include postcolonial studies and the blue humanities. He is the author of the recent book, *The Arab Writes Back: Orientalism, History and the Canon*. In 2019 Dr. Muharram was a visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Philadelphia University, Jordan on a fellowship sponsored by the Scholar Rescue Fund program of the International Institute of Education, New York. Before that, Dr. Muharram taught in many public and private universities in Yemen and worked as the head of two English departments and the director of Tamar University Center for TOEFL and Translation. He received his MA and PhD from the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India.

Elizabeth Abena Osei

New Urbanities and Utopian Desire in Akwaeke Emezi's Afrofuturist novel, *Pet*

The aim of this paper is to examine Akwaeke Emezi's *Pet*, which follows the life of 15 year old Jam; a transgender girl in a post-apocalyptic world which is free from all forms of oppression and violence, as a creative innovation of an Afrofuturist urban community. In *Pet*, Emezi imagines what could be a futurist projection of an Afrocentric community of Lucille, where there are "monsters" who represent all the evils of the narrative's past. These include systemic inequalities, and injustice against the marginalized that exist in our present society. In this future space, children are taught that "angels" rid the nation of Lucille of monsters leaving the world completely safe. These "angels" represent the revolutionaries who abolished prisons, prosecuted and rehabilitated corrupt police officers, and removed statues of slave-owners and racists. Anti-gay and anti-trans hatred as well as racism are now relics of the past. In this vein, I will examine this novel in light of Afrofuturism, examining how Emezi channels their adversity as non-binary and black person to create what can be suggested as a utopian future projection of African communities. In the end, this paper will explore how in its treatment of the speculative Afrofuturist urban space, Akwaeke Emezi's *Pet* indeed exhibits features that identify the text as an Afrofuturist utopian projection.


Bio

Abena Osei holds an MA in Comparative English Studies, Literature and American Culture from Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf, and is currently pursuing an MPhil in English Literature at the University of Ghana. She has published on Black Speculative fiction, specifically Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism, in peer reviewed journals. She is also the winner of the Best Graduate Student Essay award, organized by the prestigious African Literature Association conference. When she is not conducting research, she is singing simple English Songs with her Kindergarten students.

Fiona Quast

Digital Maroonage: The Case of Colectivo Ilé from Puerto Rico. Afro-Diasporic Self-representation, Participation and Education Through Digital Media

In modern Latin American and Caribbean societies, ethnic hierarchies from colonial times continue to exist (see Telles 2014: 2). Amongst other things, this results in the persisting socio-economic exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination of Afro-descendant individuals and communities. For centuries, Afro-descendants in the region have been denied basic human rights and participation in society. Recently though, digital media provide opportunities for Afro-diasporic self-representation (Arriaga 2021) that subvert exclusionary discourses and narrative authority (Beverly 2008) which are embedded in dominant culture (Hall 2009). Social media platforms, but also other digital media, such as e-magazines, internet radio or web-series, represent a way to generate and disseminate Afro-diasporic counterpublic narratives (Jackson and Welles 2015). Digital cultures and cultural practices enable marginalised subjects in postcolonial worlds to participate, (re)gain agency and to reinstate their humanity. Afro-Colombian scholar Eduard Arriaga terms this "digital maroonage" – a cultural practice that relies on digital tools in order to develop counter-hegemonies "to defy orders that have dehumanised black subjects" (Arriaga 2021: 28). This concept raises a key question:



What strategies and forms of mediatic representation do Afro-diasporic subjects employ to represent themselves, educate others and participate in society? With the case study of Puerto Rican *Colectivo Ilé* – a group of Black women who engage in antiracist work – I seek to shed light on this question. The aim of my presentation is to outline in what ways Black women on the island appropriate digital spaces – through their podcast *Negras* (2019) and e-magazine *Revista étnica* (2018) – to effectively reach a broader public.

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Bio

Fiona Quast is a first-year PhD candidate at the Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) and with the International PhD Programme in Literary and Cultural Studies (IPP) at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen. She received a bachelor's degree in translation studies (English, Spanish and French) from University of Mainz and the master's degree "Cultures of the Global South" from University of Tübingen. In her doctoral research, she focuses on Black and Afro-diasporic communities of Spanish-speaking Latin America and the Caribbean. Through an interdisciplinary lens she examines Afro-diasporic narratives and self-representations in and through various digital media, such as web-series, e-magazines, podcasts and internet radio, from Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Puerto Rico. Her areas of interest are cultural studies, critical digital humanities, Afro-diasporic cultural productions and linguistics. Apart from her academic background, she has worked as translator with University of Mainz and with cultural institutes, such as Goethe-Institut and Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.

Fatima Seck

A Pedagogical Approach to Teaching African Literature: Layered Literacies

The scholarship has shown us the dangers of approaching African Literature from a monolithic lens, mainly through the highly esteemed view of the Euro-Western framework. This mode of approaching African Literature undoubtedly replicates the colonial framework in its attempt at civilizing the Other(s). Although criticism of this regard has been expressed in the scholarship, not much study has been done on how to rectify this mode within academia beyond going past a binary perspective. To that end, I propose a teaching pedagogy for non-African/non-Black scholars on how to teach and incorporate African Literature in their classroom in a way that does not silence the author and allows their message to be heard. In this decolonial methodology, I suggest using layered literacy as method of unveiling the intertwining facets that exist in these texts

from their colonial history, political history, cultural knowledge, linguistic hybridization and socioeconomic status; all features that are critical to a wholistic comprehension of the themes presented in these novels. Using this method is a way to give agency to these postcolonial authors. Best of all, introducing more teaching pedagogies on how to approach third world literatures allows us to understand that we are all more connected and alike than we think. Using Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*, I demonstrate how we can teach this novel in the 21st century by way of layered literacy.

Bio

Fatima Seck is a PhD student in the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Maryland – College Park. Her M.A. was in French and Francophone Studies at George Mason University.

Burak Sezer

The Afronauts of the Future. Black Speculative Fiction as More Than Postcolonial Participation?

Upon a short glance at the original *Star Wars* (1977), we realize that the film features remarkably human-like entities in a “galaxy, far far away;” yet one still registers “the obvious absence of people of color in the fictitious future/past” (Womack 2013: 11), so that even Carl Sagan, an astrophysicist of all things, criticizes the film’s premise that “they’re all white” (1978: 2:07). This example underscores that such futurisms are by no means divorced from neo-colonial structures inherent in the present. In fact, in her 1975 essay “American SF and the Other,” novelist Ursula K. Le Guin had already anticipated that “most SF has been incredibly regressive and unimaginative” in that they are “taken straight from the British Empire” and exhibit the “White Man’s Burden all over again” (209). Against the backdrop of such colonial futurisms in which hegemonial imaginations take precedence, the genre of “Afrfuturism” emerges, seeking to establish a counterpoint to what Le Guin calls “regressive and unimaginative” SF. I argue that afrfuturism should thus be labelled *counter-hegemonical* SF: in light of overwhelmingly white future SF scenarios, black SF critiques this racial bias and hegemony precisely by a black cosmopoesis, a black worldmaking, that envisions black protagonists in key positions in future developments. Thus, afronauts, protagonists of afrfuturist scenarios, do not merely “participate,” they command, they steer; they embody an “alternative hegemony” (Pratt 2004: 329). I will draw briefly on Antonio Gramsci’s theory of counter-hegemony and adopt critic Giles Mohan’s (2001) terminology to put the term “participation” into a black SF and afrfuturist context, which I then apply to selected works by Colson Whitehead, Octavia Butler, and Samuel R. Delany.

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**Bio**

Burak Sezer (born 1992) graduated from the University of Rochester in 2015 with an MA in Comparative Literature, and from the University of Cologne in 2017 with a Staatsexamen in English, Mathematics, and Educational Sciences. Based at the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne as a scholarship holder, he completed his PhD in January 2022 with a dissertation on Thomas Pynchon's poetics of mathematics.