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IMPRESSUM:

ACOLIT – Newsletter der Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien
(GAPS)

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ACOLIT: from now on online only...

After 72 print runs, ACOLIT 73 is the first online only edition of the GAPS annual newsletter. In order to reduce costs, ACOLIT will no longer be printed and sent out to GAPS members by (snail) mail, but posted to you as PDF file by email. We hope that you will find the new online only version as useful as (and perhaps even easier to handle than) the previous printed copies.

The ACOLIT editors

Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien / Association for Anglophone Postcolonial Studies (GAPS)

Protokoll der ordentlichen Mitgliederversammlung vom 6. Mai 2016 an der Universität Augsburg (Hörsaal III)

Beginn: 16:05 Uhr

Eröffnung der Mitgliederversammlung durch die 1. Vorsitzende Katja Sarkowsky

TOP 1: FESTSTELLUNG DER BESCHLUSSFÄHIGKEIT DER MITGLIEDERVERSAMMLUNG

Die erste Vorsitzende stellt die Beschlussfähigkeit der Mitgliederversammlung fest. Es sind insgesamt 36 Mitglieder anwesend.

TOP 2: FESTLEGUNG DER ENDGÜLTIGEN TAGESORDNUNG

Auf Bitten mehrerer Mitglieder wird die Tagesordnung um den neuen Punkt 14 „*Forschung & Lehre (Political Correctness)*“ erweitert; der Tagesordnungspunkt „*Verschiedenes*“ wird somit zum neuen Punkt 15.

Die anwesenden Mitglieder nehmen die neue Tagesordnung einstimmig an.

TOP 3: PROTOKOLL DER MITGLIEDERVERSAMMLUNG VOM 15. MAI 2015 (MÜNSTER), VERÖFFENTLICHT IN ACOLIT 72 (SEPTEMBER 2015), S. 2-8 <[HTTP://G-A-P-S.DE/ACOLIT/ACOLIT72-GESAMTTEXT.PDF](http://G-A-P-S.DE/ACOLIT/ACOLIT72-GESAMTTEXT.PDF)>

Das Protokoll der Mitgliederversammlung vom 15. Mai 2015 in Münster wird einstimmig bei einer Enthaltung verabschiedet.

TOP 4: MITTEILUNGEN DES VORSTANDES

Die erste Vorsitzende informiert die Mitglieder über den Stand der Dinge zur Publikation der noch nicht veröffentlichten Jahrbücher aus den vergangenen Jahren sowie über zukünftige Veränderungen bei der Publikation der Jahrbücher: Das Manuskript des Jahrbuchs aus Chemnitz ist zur Prüfung beim Verlag und soll in Kürze erscheinen; das Jahrbuch aus Bayreuth soll ebenfalls noch 2016 erscheinen; das Manuskript des Potsdamer Jahrbuchs ist fast fertig – die Publikation ist für 2017 geplant; Mark Stein berichtet, dass fast alle Beiträge für den Münsteraner Band eingegangen sind und nun in den *peer review*-Prozess gegeben werden.

Aufgrund der Übernahme des Rodopi-Verlags durch Brill sind Veränderungen hinsichtlich des Formats, der Kosten und des Prozedere bei der Publikation der Jahrbücher unvermeidbar. In diesem Zusammenhang kam es im Februar zu einem Treffen der ersten Vorsitzenden Katja Sarkowsky und der zweiten Vorsitzenden Annika McPherson mit Verlagsvertreterinnen in Leiden, bei dem über technische und finanzielle Modalitäten bei der Publikation der Jahrbücher verhandelt wurde. Insbesondere konnte man sich auf folgende Punkte einigen:

- Die HerausgeberInnen der Cross/Cultures-Reihe (Bénédicte Ledent, Geoff Davis, Gordon Collier), der GAPS-Vorstand und der *technical editor* Gordon Collier haben sich auf ein Dossier geeinigt, das die Rechte und Pflichten aller am Publikationsprozess Beteiligten festlegt.
- Brill möchte, dass in Zukunft jeder Band einen Index hat; die Erstellung ist Aufgabe der jeweiligen HerausgeberInnen, kann von diesen (unter Übernahme der dabei entstehenden Kosten) aber auch an Dritte abgegeben werden.
- Außerdem sollen die jeweiligen HerausgeberInnen ein *book proposal* ihres Bandes erstellen, das sie ca. 8 Monate vor Publikation bei Brill einreichen.
- Das *peer review*-Verfahren soll wie bisher fortgeführt werden, die *reviews* müssen dem Verlag allerdings in Zukunft vorgelegt werden.
- Brill trägt die Kosten des *copy editing*; die HerausgeberInnen des jeweiligen Bandes erklären sich einverstanden, dass das Manuskript dem Verlag bereits in einer möglichst endgültig formatierten Version vorgelegt wird, so dass der Umfang des *technical editing* möglichst gering gehalten wird.
- Es wird ein vereinfachtes *style sheet* für die Jahrbücher erstellt; dabei wird auf eine enge Abstimmung mit den HerausgeberInnen der Cross/Cultures-Reihe geachtet.
- Die HerausgeberInnen der individuellen Jahrbücher erhalten ein Informationspaket mit einer Übersicht über den Publikationsprozess und den zeitlichen Ablauf.
- Die Kosten für Hardcover-Ausgaben der Jahrbücher werden in Zukunft deutlich ansteigen; Details zu den finanziellen Folgen sowie mögliche Alternativen werden unter TOP 8 diskutiert.
- Für das Jahrbuch aus Chemnitz gelten ein letztes Mal die bisherigen Modalitäten und Kosten.

Des Weiteren informiert der Vorstand darüber, dass die GAPS aktuell knapp 360 Mitglieder hat. Seit der letzten Mitgliederversammlung sind 37 neue Mitglieder eingetreten, die an dieser Stelle von der ersten Vorsitzenden herzlich begrüßt werden.

Zudem informiert Caroline Kögler als Schatzmeisterin über den Stand der ACLALS-Spende: Auf Initiative von Frank Schulze-Engler wurde ein von der GAPS über Spendeneinnahmen finanzierter Fördertopf eingerichtet, aus dem Reisestipendien an afrikanische NachwuchsforscherInnen vergeben werden sollen, um diesen die Teilnahme an der diesjährigen ACLALS-Tagung zu ermöglichen. Das genaue Vorgehen hierbei sowie die etwaige Einrichtung eines ‚GAPS-Panels‘ bei dieser ACLALS-Tagung soll noch mit den OrganisatorInnen der Tagung in Stellenbosch abgesprochen werden. Von den für den Fördertopf avisierten 3000 € sind bisher ca. 1675 € als Spenden eingegangen [Nachtrag: Endsumme der Spende € 5.250 (Stand 01.07.2016)].

TOP 5: ENTGEGENNAHME UND GENEHMIGUNG DES GESCHÄFTS- UND KASSENBERICHTS 2015/2016

Die Schatzmeisterin Caroline Kögler verteilt den GAPS-Finanzbericht 2016 mit der Bilanz des Kalenderjahrs 2015 sowie eine Zwischenbilanz für das Jahr 2016 und stellt diese Bilanzen vor.

Bei der Zwischenbilanz sind die erhöhten Einnahmen durch Mitgliedsbeiträge im Jahr 2016 positiv hervorzuheben, sodass der Stand der Einnahmen hier bereits zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt auf dem Niveau des Vorjahrs ist. Die verzeichneten sonstigen Ausgaben entsprechen dem üblichen Umfang.

TOP 6: BERICHT DER KASSENPRÜFER

Katrin Berndt verliert in Vertretung den Bericht der beiden abwesenden Kassensprüfer, Jörg Heinke und Tobias Schlosser: darin gibt es keinerlei Beanstandungen an den Buchungsvorgängen und den Abrechnungen. Frank Schulze-Engler schlägt daraufhin die Entlastung des Vorstands vor.

TOP 7: ENTLASTUNG DES VORSTANDES

Die Entlastung des Vorstands erfolgt einstimmig bei 6 Enthaltungen.

TOP 8: FINANZIERUNGSFRAGEN: JAHRBUCH UND FINANZPLAN 2017/18

8.1 SUBSKRIPTIONS- UND PREISGESTALTUNG BRILL

Wie bereits unter TOP 4 angekündigt ergeben sich aufgrund der Verlagsübernahme von Rodopi durch Brill Konsequenzen für die Kosten der Jahrbücher. Es wird eine Vorlage verteilt, welche die Angebote von Brill sowie eine Übersicht über die voraussichtlichen Auswirkungen der verschiedenen Modelle auf die Bilanz der GAPS (vgl. Punkt 8.2) enthält.

Die erste Vorsitzende stellt die von Brill angebotenen Optionen (vgl. TOP 4) kurz vor. Diese Varianten beziehen sich nur auf die Subskriptions-Jahrbücher – im Handel werden die Jahrbücher auch in Zukunft als Hardcover erhältlich sein. Es liegen drei grundsätzliche Optionen für die Publikation der Subskriptions-Jahrbücher vor:

- (1) Druck als Paperback (sogenannte ‚Mybook‘-Variante): Im Wesentlichen ist das Paperback eine *print on demand*-Ausgabe des E-Books, die alle Jahrbuch-SubskribentInnen erhalten. Preislich läge diese Variante bei 25 € plus Mehrwertsteuer (Versand inbegriffen) und wäre damit in etwa genauso teuer wie die bisherigen Hardcover-Jahrbücher. GAPS müsste in diesem Modell für die Paperbacks ca. 2900 € zahlen (für 116 Jahrbücher basierend auf den Bestellzahlen 2015), die durch die Mitgliedsbeiträge der SubskribentInnen abgedeckt sind. Diese Variante wäre ohne Erhöhung der Mitgliedsbeiträge finanzierbar. In der anschließenden Diskussion wird präzisiert, dass der Preis für die Mybook-Option eine Pauschale ist, mit der bis zu 350 Seiten Umfang problemlos möglich sind; Farbabbildungen sind zum genannten Preis in den Mybooks allerdings nicht möglich. Auch die Gestaltung des Titeleinbands bei den Mybooks wäre zwar innerhalb gewisser Rahmenbe-

dingungen verhandelbar, würde aber von den bisherigen Hardcover-Bänden abweichen.

- (2) Hardcover-Ausgabe: Um Planungssicherheit zu garantieren, würden die Kosten auf 5 Jahre bzw. Jahrbuch-Ausgaben festgelegt. Beispielhaft werden zwei Varianten vorgestellt:

2a) Hardcover im Umfang von 250 Seiten zu 35 € pro Buch, d.h. bei der zu erwartenden Abnahme von 116 Büchern Gesamtkosten von 4060 €.

2b) Hardcover im Umfang von 300 Seiten zu 39 € pro Buch, d.h. bei der zu erwartenden Abnahme von 116 Büchern Gesamtkosten von 4525 €.

Es wird zu bedenken gegeben, dass die Jahrbücher in der Vergangenheit teils deutlich umfangreicher als 300 Seiten waren. Bei allen Hardcover-Optionen müssten die Mitgliedsbeiträge für Jahrbuch-SubskribentInnen erhöht werden.

- (3) Publikation im Open-Access-Format: Der Brill-Verlag bietet diese Option für den Pauschalbetrag von derzeit 5150 € pro Jahrbuch an. Eine Kostendeckung könnte hier angesichts des daraus resultierenden Wegfalls des Subskriptionsmodells durch eine Neugestaltung der Mitgliedsbeiträge erzielt werden (vgl. Punkt 8.2). Nach Rückfragen von Mitgliedern wird erklärt, dass die hohen Kosten für Open Access gängige Praxis bei allen Verlagen sind und für die Freigabe der Rechte durch den Verlag entstehen. Außerdem wird klargestellt, dass es keine Möglichkeit gibt, die Kosten durch eine verzögerte Freischaltung zu senken.

In der Diskussion des Open Access-Modells wird auch zu bedenken gegeben, dass dies insbesondere auch ForscherInnen außerhalb Europas den Zugriff auf die im Rahmen von GAPS-Tagungen vorgestellte Forschungsarbeit signifikant erleichtern würde.

Eine detaillierte Diskussion der möglichen Optionen sowie der Möglichkeit einer Open-Access-Eigenveröffentlichung (z.B. auf den Servern einer Universitätsbibliothek) soll auf der Mitgliederversammlung 2017 stattfinden.

8.2 VORSTELLUNG VERSCHIEDENER BEITRAGSMODELLE UND DEREN DISKUSSION IM KONTEXT DES FINANZIERUNGSPLANS

Da im Rahmen der vorliegenden Tagesordnung über eine Anpassung der Beitragsstruktur nicht entschieden werden kann, schlägt die erste Vorsitzende vor, für die derzeit bereits in Arbeit befindlichen Bände (die Jahrbücher aus Bayreuth und Potsdam) die Hardcover- und Paperback-Optionen zu diskutieren und darüber abzustimmen, in welchem der beiden Formate diese beiden Bände publiziert werden sollen. Zusätzlich wird für die Zukunft die Open-Access-Variante diskutiert und es werden mögliche Beitragsmodelle zur Finanzierung vorgestellt.

In der Folge stellt die Schatzmeisterin Caroline Kögler die Finanzierungsoptionen für die verschiedenen Publikationsmodelle vor. Dabei weist sie zunächst darauf hin, dass aufgrund von in der Vergangenheit beschlossenen Maßnahmen (Dissertationspreis, Bursaries und Summer School) für die nächsten Jahre Verluste von ca. 1000 € pro Jahr zu erwarten sind. Entsprechend ist es auf Dauer nicht

möglich, die Mehrkosten für die Hardcover-Ausgaben der Jahrbücher ohne eine Anpassung der Mitgliedsbeiträge zu tragen. Selbst bei einer Anpassung der Beiträge für Jahrbuch-SubskribentInnen wären diese Maßnahmen weiterhin mit Verlusten verbunden. Über eine gegebenenfalls nötige Anpassung der Maßnahmen wird unter TOP 9 gesondert diskutiert.

Bei Umstellung der Jahrbücher für SubskribentInnen auf das Mybook-Format wäre keine Veränderung des Mitgliedsbeitrags nötig. Bei den Hardcover-Varianten wäre für Jahrbuch-SubskribentInnen eine Erhöhung des Mitgliederbeitrags um 9 € (Version 2a) bzw. 13,50 € (Version 2b) nötig. Bei einer Umstellung auf Open Access wäre eine neue Beitragsstruktur für alle Mitglieder notwendig. Der Vorstand hat hierfür beispielhaft ein gestaffeltes Beitragsmodell erarbeitet. Der Vorschlag wird kritisch diskutiert.

Über die Möglichkeiten der Umsetzung von Open Access bei den Jahrbüchern und die notwendige Anpassung der Beitragsstrukturen soll dann auf der Jahresversammlung 2017 in Bonn abgestimmt werden. Hierfür wird dem Vorstand das Mandat erteilt, Vorschläge für Beitragsmodelle zu erarbeiten.

8.3 ABSTIMMUNGEN ÜBER DAS BEITRAGSMODELL

Es soll darüber abgestimmt werden, in welchem Format (Mybook-Paperback oder Hardcover) die beiden als nächstes erscheinenden Jahrbuch-Ausgaben (Bayreuth und Potsdam) publiziert werden. Eine Entscheidung für Mybook würde bedeuten, dass Subskriptionsmitglieder die Paperback-Version erhalten (mit anderem Cover als die Hardcovers); die TrägerInnen erhalten eine Hardcoverausgabe als Belegexemplar. Grundsätzlich müssten die Jahrbuch-Bände im Umfang auf maximal 300-350 Seiten reduziert werden. Bevor es zur Abstimmung über das Format für die beiden Jahrbücher aus Potsdam und Bayreuth kommt, soll daher festgestellt werden, welchen Umfang diese haben werden (und ob somit die Kosten aus Modell 2a oder aus 2b anfallen). Dazu werden die HerausgeberInnen kontaktiert und TOP 8.3 unterbrochen und gemeinsam mit TOP 9 hinten angestellt. Die vorgesehene Abstimmung über eventuelle Änderungen der Beitragsstruktur wird auf 2017 verschoben.

TOP 10: VORSTELLUNG DER JAHRESTAGUNGEN 2017/18 [VORGEZOGEN]

10.1 JAHRESTAGUNG 2017 BONN

Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp stellt stellvertretend für das gesamte Organisationsteam das Thema der Jahrestagung 2017, *Representing Poverty and Precarity in the Postcolonial World*, kurz vor und verteilt ein Informationsblatt. Thema der Konferenz soll *Precarity* in allen sozialen und politischen Ausprägungen einschließlich der Dimensionen von Migration und Marginalisierung sein. Dabei soll es auch Panels zu nicht-anglophonen Texten (beispielsweise aus der Frankophonie) geben. Auf Anregung von Frank Schulze-Engler wird der Titel der Konferenz zu *Representing Poverty and Precarity in a Postcolonial World* geändert.

10.2 JAHRESTAGUNG 2018

Der Vorstand berichtet, dass bisher noch kein Ausrichterteam für die Jahrestagung 2018 gefunden werden konnte. Um zeitnahe Interessensbekundungen für die Aus-

richtung wird gebeten. Da es für diese Tagung keine Unterstützung durch die DFG gibt, gestaltet sich die Suche als schwierig; es wird angeregt, unter TOP 9 eine Umschichtung von Maßnahmen zu diskutieren, um die Finanzierung der Jahrestagungen in Nicht-DFG-Jahren zu erleichtern.

Rückkehr zum TOP 8.3

8.3 ABSTIMMUNGEN ÜBER DAS BEITRAGSMODELL [FORTSETZUNG]

Laut Rückmeldung der HerausgeberInnen der Jahrbücher aus Bayreuth und Potsdam werden beide Bände voraussichtlich knapp 300 Seiten umfassen. Somit wären bei einer Entscheidung für das Hardcover-Format beide Bände von Modell 2b (39 €/Buch) betroffen und es entstünden Mehrkosten von 13,50 € pro Buch. Damit würden 1400 € pro Band bzw. 2800 € insgesamt an Minuskosten in den Haushalt einfließen.

Es stehen damit zwei Optionen zur Abstimmung: Die Beibehaltung des Status Quo für die Bände Bayreuth und Potsdam mit den entsprechenden Kosten und die Umstellung auf MyBook bei gleichbleibender Kostengestaltung, aber eventueller Rücknahme dieser Umstellung im nächsten Jahr. Es wird vorgeschlagen, den Status quo (Publikation als Hardcover) nur für die beiden aktuell betroffenen Bände beizubehalten und die langfristige Ausrichtung bei der Mitgliederversammlung 2017 zu beschließen. Katja Sarkowsky wendet daraufhin ein, dass der Verlag aus Gründen der Kostenstabilität eine langfristige Festlegung über 5 Jahre gefordert hat und der Vorstand diese Möglichkeit erst nachverhandeln müsste. Sie schlägt vor, dem Antrag den Vorbehalt hinzuzufügen, dass auf Paperback umgestellt wird, falls Brill auf einer längerfristigen Festlegung besteht. Dies findet allgemeine Zustimmung.

Bei diesen zwei Optionen wird über den weitergehenden Vorschlag zuerst abgestimmt: „Die Publikation der beiden ausstehenden Jahrbücher soll im Hardcover-Format erfolgen, unter der Voraussetzung, dass das nur für ein Jahr (also die Bände aus Bayreuth und Potsdam) möglich ist; sollte der Verlag dem nicht zustimmen, sondern eine längere Festlegung verlangen, wird auf die Paperback-Version („Mybook“) umgestellt.“ Die Abstimmung erfolgt auf der Basis der vorgelegten Kostenkalkulation für die veranschlagte Seitenzahl der beiden Bände. In der folgenden Abstimmung erhält dieser Antrag 25 Ja-Stimmen, 7 Enthaltungen und keine Gegenstimme. Er wird somit angenommen. Die MyBook-Variante wird daher nicht mehr abgestimmt.

TOP 9: ABSTIMMUNG FINANZPLAN 17/18 [WURDE ZURÜCKGESTELLT]

Aufgrund der bereits erwähnten projizierten Finanzierungslücke von ca. 1000 € pro Jahr werden auf Basis von Vorstandsvorschlägen Einsparungsmöglichkeiten diskutiert.

Folgende Änderungen werden zur Abstimmung gestellt:

- Zusammenlegung der beiden *travel bursaries* für ausländische Studierende und prekär Beschäftigte bei Beibehaltung der bisherigen Gesamtausgaben

von 1400 €. Das *travel bursary* wird unter der Maßgabe vergeben, dass es von den VeranstalterInnen der Jahrestagung aufgestockt wird.

- Streichung der 1000 € Zuschuss zur Unterstützung von Lesungen ab dem/r 2. Autor/in bei Jahrestagungen in DFG-Jahren und die nicht zweckgebundene Zuweisung dieser 1000 € an das Budget der Ausrichter-Teams in Nicht-DFG-Jahren, wodurch diesen dann 2000 € aus GAPS-Mitteln zur Verfügung stehen. Dabei erfolgt der Zuschuss zu Jahrestagungen in Nicht-DFG-Jahren mit dem ausdrücklichen Hinweis, dass weiterhin mindestens zwei Lesungen pro Tagung stattfinden sollen.
- Reduktion des Dissertationspreises auf 1500 € (plus 300 € Reisekosten), von denen die GAPS 1000 € direkt zur Verfügung stellt und versucht, die restlichen 500 € durch zweckgebundene Privatpenden einzuwerben, die wiederum von der GAPS durch eine Ausfallbürgschaft abgesichert sind.
- *ACOLIT* wird in Zukunft nicht mehr als print-Version an die Mitglieder versandt, sondern als pdf-Version auf der Homepage veröffentlicht (Einsparung von 900 €).

Die Maßnahmenanpassungen werden einstimmig ohne Enthaltung verabschiedet.

Die Bitte von Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp um Zusammenlegung der *travel bursaries* und der Unterstützung für prekär Beschäftigte bereits für die Jahrestagung 2017 wird ebenfalls einstimmig befürwortet. Die Umstellung der Publikationsform von *ACOLIT* gilt bereits ab der nächsten Ausgabe. Alle weiteren Änderungen treten erstmals für die Jahrestagung 2018 in Kraft.

TOP 11: SUMMER SCHOOL 2017

Timo Müller stellt den Stand der Dinge hinsichtlich der Summer School 2017 vor: Bisher gibt es leider noch keine Interessenten für die Ausrichtung; Vorschläge für die Ausrichtung werden erbeten. Als möglicher Grund für die Probleme mit dem Format der Summer School, v.a. für die teils geringere studentische Nachfrage, werden die veränderten Studienstrukturen diskutiert. Grundsätzlich sind Anregungen und Vorschläge zur Veränderung des Formats der Summer School willkommen.

Anschließend diskutieren die anwesenden Mitglieder die mögliche Abschaffung der Summer Schools bzw. ihre Überführung in ein anderes lehrbezogenes Format zur stärkeren Eingliederung in die modularisierten Studiengänge (beispielsweise über das Instrument der Anrechnung der Konferenzvorbereitung als Praktikum). Dabei wird sowohl eine Internationalisierung des Formats (in Kooperation mit Universitäten im Ausland) als auch, in Anlehnung an das sehr erfolgreiche Format der *Postcolonial Narrations*, eine Ausrichtung als Nachwuchsforum erwogen. Annika McPherson betont die Wichtigkeit einer Flexibilisierung des Formats der Summer School und bittet um ein Mandat an den Vorstand, das es ermöglicht, die Finanzmittel für 2017 flexibel für lehrbezogene Alternativprojekte einzusetzen. Als Alternative wird auch vorgeschlagen, die Summer School 2017 auszusetzen und erst 2018 in einem dann neuen Format fortzuführen. Es wird

festgestellt, dass das Thema Summer School einer grundsätzlichen Diskussion bedarf, die auf der Jahrestagung 2017 geführt werden soll.

In der Folge wird über den Vorschlag von Annika McPherson abgestimmt, dem Vorstand die flexible Handhabung der für die Summer School 2017 zur Verfügung stehenden Finanzmittel zu gewähren, falls sich andere lehrbezogene Formate realisieren lassen. Sollte kein Alternativprojekt gefunden werden, wird die Summer School für 2017 ausgesetzt und auf 2018 verschoben. Bei der Abstimmung stimmen 24 der anwesenden Mitglieder für diesen Vorschlag, es gibt 1 Gegenstimme und 5 Enthaltungen. Der Vorschlag ist somit angenommen. Die Mitglieder werden aufgefordert, sich bezüglich möglicher Ausrichtungsorte für die Summer School 2017 bzw. Ideen für andere lehrbezogene Formate an den Vorstand zu wenden.

TOP 12: NACHWUCHSFORUM POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIONS

Elena Furlanetto berichtet über die Arbeit im Rahmen des Nachwuchsforums *Postcolonial Narrations*. Es handelt sich um ein produktives und erfolgreiches Format, bei dem sich bereits feste Arbeitsstrukturen und Kooperationen unter NachwuchswissenschaftlerInnen herausgebildet haben. Am Forum 2015 in Essen nahmen ca. 30 Personen teil. Als besonders erfolgreich erwies sich dabei das Career-Coaching-Angebot. Einzig die mangelnden finanziellen Mittel zur Reisekostenförderung waren problematisch. Auch für das Postgraduate Forum 2017 wurde mit Erfurt bereits ein Veranstaltungsort gefunden. Antonia Purk übernimmt die Organisation der Veranstaltung.

Im Weiteren stellt Laura Zander das Postgraduate Forum 2016, das im Oktober 2016 in München stattfindet, vor. Thema ist *Expressing the Postcolonial* und es besteht bereits ein großes studentisches Interesse.

TOP 13: HOMEPAGE

Hanna Straß stellt die Entwicklungen hinsichtlich der seit letztem Jahr bestehenden neuen Homepage der GAPS vor. Die Homepage soll auf ein Content Management System (CMS) umgestellt werden, um beispielsweise die Darstellung der GAPSmap zu verbessern. Die Umstellung auf ein CMS soll im Rahmen eines Werksvertrags, der noch ausgeschrieben werden muss, durch eine studentische Hilfskraft erfolgen. Die Facebook-Seite der GAPS hat inzwischen rund 390 ‚Likes‘ und erreicht mit dort veröffentlichten Beiträgen regelmäßig zwischen 170 und 360 Nutzer.

TOP 14: COVER DER LETZTEN *FORSCHUNG & LEHRE* (POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, AUSGABE 4.16) [NEU]

Auf Bitten mehrerer Mitglieder wird die April-Ausgabe 4.16 der Zeitschrift *Forschung & Lehre* des Deutschen Hochschulverbands diskutiert (online abrufbar ist diese Ausgabe unter <http://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/wordpress/Archiv/2016/ful_04-2016.pdf>). Mit einem Schokokuss als Coverbild debattierte die Ausgabe das Thema „political correctness“. Es wird auf die kritische Replik von

Lars Eckstein hingewiesen (am 3. Mai 2016 online auf dem Blog *Postcolonial Potsdam* veröffentlicht, <<https://postcolonialpotsdam.wordpress.com>>) und die Frage gestellt, ob die GAPS als Verband zu dieser Ausgabe der *Forschung & Lehre*, die als Organ des Hochschulverbands die Gesamtheit der deutschen HochschullehrerInnen vertritt, offiziell Stellung nehmen soll. In der folgenden Diskussion tritt das klare Meinungsbild unter den Anwesenden zutage, dass eine deutliche kritische Stellungnahme der GAPS nötig und im Sinne des in der Satzung formulierten Vereinszwecks (§2, 1. a) und b)) ist. Dem GAPS-Vorstand wird das Mandat erteilt, eine solche Stellungnahme zu erarbeiten und dabei, soweit möglich, auch auf eine gemeinsame Positionierung mit anderen Verbänden (DGfA, GKS, Anglistenverband) hinzuarbeiten.

TOP 15: Verschiedenes

Es wird an die Vorstandswahlen im nächsten Jahr erinnert. Interessenten für Posten in Vorstand und Beirat sind willkommen und können sich mit Fragen gerne an aktuelle Vorstands- und Beiratsmitglieder wenden.

Daraufhin schließt die erste Vorsitzende die Mitgliederversammlung um 19:15 Uhr.

Gezeichnet:

Prof. Dr. Katja Sarkowsky (1. Vorsitzende)

Martin Riedelsheimer (Protokollant)

Offener Brief

des Vorstands und Beirats der Gesellschaft für Anglophone
Postkoloniale Studien zur Ausgabe der *Forschung & Lehre* des
Deutschen Hochschulverbands, April 2016

Das Aprilheft 2016 von *Forschung & Lehre* befasst sich im Schwerpunkt mit dem gesellschafts- und kulturpolitisch wichtigen und außerordentlich kontrovers diskutierten Thema ‚Political Correctness‘. Während die Themenwahl angesichts der Debatten insbesondere der letzten beiden Jahre prinzipiell zu begrüßen ist, so sind die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien entsetzt und empört über die Einseitigkeit und Voreingenommenheit der Thematik gegenüber, die sich vor allem in der fehlenden Berücksichtigung zentraler Aspekte und befürwortender Perspektiven, der tendenziösen Fragestellung in den Interviews sowie in der völlig unangemessenen Bebilderung niederschlägt.

Insbesondere bei einer Debatte um Political Correctness kann – wenn eine der Komplexität der Sache angemessene Auseinandersetzung das Ziel ist – die Berücksichtigung unterschiedlicher Positionen erwartet werden. Dies betrifft zum einen unterschiedliche disziplinäre Standpunkte. Die wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit Fragen von Repräsentation, Marginalisierungs- und Ausschlussmechanismen und epistemischer Gewalt ist spätestens seit den 1990er Jahren auch in Deutschland fest etabliert, beispielsweise in den *Postcolonial Studies*. Es kommen in dieser Ausgabe jedoch keine Vertreterinnen und Vertreter dieses Forschungsfeldes zur Sprache – stattdessen werden die Aufsätze aus der Geschichtswissenschaft, der Politikwissenschaft und der Linguistik durch unangebrachte Polemik ergänzt.

In der Frage der Zusammenstellung wären zum anderen insbesondere auch unterschiedliche Sprechpositionen zu berücksichtigen gewesen. Von sieben der sich mit dem Thema ganz oder teilweise beschäftigenden Texte kommt nur in einem eine Frau zu Wort und in keinem diejenigen Personengruppen, deren Forderung nach respektvoller sprachlicher Behandlung für die Debatte von Anfang an zentral war. Dies ist eine Auslassung, die nicht nur der Ausgewogenheit der Zusammenstellung des Schwerpunktthemas signifikant schadet, sondern, wichtiger noch, genau die Ausschlussmechanismen reproduziert, die von Befürworterinnen und Befürwortern eines sensibilisierten und differenzgerechten Sprachgebrauchs kritisiert werden. Auf den Punkt gebracht: Es wird – wieder einmal – über ‚Minderheiten‘ gesprochen, ohne dass Zugehörige marginalisierter gesellschaftlicher Gruppen aktiv an der Diskussion beteiligt werden und ihre Positionen darlegen können.

Der Eindruck fehlenden Willens zu einer differenzierten Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema Political Correctness wird durch die tendenziösen Fragestellungen in den Interviews sowie die inakzeptable Bebilderung unterstrichen. Bereits das Titelbild evoziert und verharmlost rassistischen Alltagssprachgebrauch. Solche Illustrationen mögen ironisch oder provokativ gemeint sein, reproduzieren aber unhinterfragt rassistische Vorstellungsmuster. Dies suggeriert eine Voreinge-

nommenheit gegenüber dem Thema, die durch die weitere Auswahl des visuellen Materials durchgängig bestätigt wird. Als besonders deutliches Beispiel hervorzuheben ist das zur Illustration von Alexander Graus Polemik gewählte Schachbild: die weiße Königin umgeben von schwarzen Läufern, Türmen und Bauern. Kongenialer könnte die Angstfantasie von der „Zerstörung der europäischen bürgerlichen Welt“ (Grau), die durchgehend als weiß konnotiert wird, durch Political Correctness kaum illustriert werden.

Die Auslassungen und Bebilderungen verhindern in ihrer Voreingenommenheit die diskursgeschichtliche, gesellschafts- und wissenschaftspolitische Kontextualisierung von Political Correctness und somit eine differenzierte Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema. Dies ist insofern besonders problematisch, als zentrale Begriffe wie ‚Wissenschaftlichkeit‘ und ‚Wahrheit‘ in einigen Beiträgen ohne weitere Reflexion ihrer Rolle in der Etablierung von Rassismus, Kolonialismus und diskriminierender Denk- und Sprechweisen verwendet werden. Anstatt die wichtige Debatte über Fragen der gesellschaftlichen Teilhabe und den Abbau struktureller Diskriminierung auch in der Wissenschaft zu ermöglichen – in deren Rahmen natürlich auch kontroverse Aspekte der gegenwärtigen Auseinandersetzungen thematisiert werden können und müssen – wird vor allem das Schreckgespenst der ‚Denk- und Sprechverbote‘ projiziert.

Universitäre Bildung und Forschung stehen in der größeren gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung, marginalisierenden Kräften entgegenzuwirken. Der Hochschulverband vertritt einen Berufsstand, zu dessen Aufgaben eine kritische und differenzierte Auseinandersetzung auch und insbesondere mit kontroversen Themen ebenso gehören wie eine konstante Reflexion seiner Begrifflichkeiten. Einer solchen Auseinandersetzung Raum zu bieten sollte auch Aufgabe des entsprechenden Publikationsorgans sein. *Forschung & Lehre* wird diesen Aufgaben alles andere als gerecht.

Für den Vorstand und Beirat

Prof. Dr. Katja Sarkowsky und Prof. Dr. Annika McPherson

GAPS Graduate AWARD 2016 Citations

This year's GAPS Graduate Award goes to

Yann LE GALL

for his Master's thesis, with the title:

"If these skulls could talk...": Subjectification and Memory Practice in Repatriation and Reburial of Colonial Human Remains" -

submitted within the framework of the MA Programme:

"Anglophone Modernities in Literature and Culture" at the University of Potsdam

First supervisor: Prof. Dr. Lars Eckstein

Second supervisor: Dr. Anke Bartels

Yann LE GALL's thesis is in a class of its own, a truly 'magisterial' piece of work, not just outstanding from the point of view of academic excellence (with among many other virtues its detailed and discerning footnoting on finely nuanced questions of terminology) but - over and above that - groundbreaking, innovative and original. This thesis is poised right at the cutting-edge of research (and is itself actively involved in the cutting) and has considerable overlap with those neighbouring disciplines (anthropology, museum studies, material cultures, memory studies, and theories of the body) involved in the complex issue of repatriation claims - thereby doing full justice to the overall GAPS remit. The thesis is very solidly grounded both in researched material on repatriation and in first-hand knowledge of work done in the field. Yann Le Gall is both scholar *and* activist - with personal contact to, and involvement in, various hand-on projects such as Berlin Postcolonial e.V. and the Charité Human Remains Project. This enables him to engage in an informed and persuasively argued transnational critique of the various Western epistemologies involved. His is a bold and radical enterprise, adventurously leaving the trodden paths of more orthodox research work and ready to take risks in tackling sensitive and still relatively unploughed terrain, with the requisite combination of empathetic tact and moral courage to call a skull a skull and its violation a violation. (This is PoCo with the gloves off!) Yann Le Gall's commitment to the cause of postcolonial justice (the theme of our 2014 Potsdam/Berlin conference, which can lay claim to partial parentage of his paper) is anything but abstract, whilst despite the personal humanitarian impetus that inspires and inspirits his investigation he manages to avoid the tendentiousness trap: All his points (he cites specific concrete instances from a wide range of cultures, mainly but not exclusively in the Global South: Aboriginal Australian, Maori, Polynesian, Namibian; Third-Reich German) are meticulously documented

and thoroughly theorized. He marshals the facts – and then lets them speak for themselves.

From the outset, Yann sounds the keynote for the whole study by starting with a compellingly graphic juxtaposition of the highly (and increasingly topical) issue of migration to Europe. He foregrounds the activist project initiated by the Centre for Political Beauty of giving the bodies of refugees who had drowned before reaching the southern outer borders a dignified burial on European soil (in Gatow, West Berlin) – as a symbolic counterweight to those other bodies that in a feverish collection mania characterized by Douglas Cole as the “scramble for skulls and skeletons” had been snatched by colonialists from indigenous graves, hospitals and prisons and brought as exhibits and curios to the museums and laboratories of major European cities (including, of course, Berlin) in the spurious pseudo-scientific interests of “objective” anthropological and medical research.

Yann recognizes that in any attempt to compensate, however inadequately, for such ghoulish commodification, human remains need to be given the human – humane – treatment that they so deeply deserve but that in the context of colonialism they so rarely experienced. The dead cannot of course be literally brought back to life, but a sensitive and imaginative scholarly approach may perhaps succeed in infusing new life into them. After all, if documents can ‘speak’ of historical facts, surely skulls even more so?

Yann Le Gall’s thesis is instrumental in giving many unnamed victims an appropriate and dignified metaphorical burial and in lending their skulls the voice of which they have been deprived. This constitutes a significant step in the process of reconciliation, which in Yann’s hopeful vision might be furthered by what he terms “increased joint enterprises”, binding together the ostensibly incompatible – namely Western anthropological and cultural science on the one hand, and indigenous practices (Australian Aboriginal keeping places, for instance) on the other – in the project of constructively redressing past wrongs by revisiting them rather than rehearsing and reiterating past conflicts.

The exploratory impetus of Yann Le Gall’s thesis performs a twofold service: To scholarship – and to those whom he has posthumously honoured by producing this exceptional thesis.

Secondly, a **recognition prize** goes to **Hannah Maria PARDEY** for *her* Master’s thesis, with the title:

“Historiographic Metafiction from the Nigerian Diaspora”

submitted within the framework of the programme:

“Advanced Anglophone Studies”

at Leibniz University, Hanover

First supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jana Gohrisch

Second supervisor: Dr. Ellen Grünkemeier

Hannah PARDEY's thesis is of a very high scholarly standard – especially in terms of its powers of crystal-clear exposition and the author's confident grasp of the literature (primary and secondary sources) – whether in the close reading of the novels analysed or the judicious evaluation of their reception.

Both in matters of detail and in the painting of the big picture, Hannah is a convincing and eloquent, well-informed participant in cultural, narratological and materialist critique. Her thesis offers a mature and incisive look at important, post-colonial aspects of the reception of, and reader response to, the works examined. Under the provocative heading "Postcolonial goes popular", the author homes in on two novels, namely: Chinamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* of 2007 – both "third-generation" Nigerian writers, who as a result of their international recognition have almost by definition additionally acquired the status of diasporic writers and intellectuals straddling two worlds – the former colonial African and the metropolitan European.

Taking these two works as representative, Hannah engages with the fraught question of how and why certain works of postcolonial literature in English can possibly appeal to such widely different readerships. The machinations of the global market are clearly a central factor in the emergence of this phenomenon. (Hannah's focus on the very material dimensions of book production, consumption and marketing of postcolonial literature embedded – if not to say, entangled – in the metropolitan world has, of course, a direct bearing on the theme of the present conference.)

Drawing on, among other sources, Graham Huggan's *Postcolonial Exotic* on the one hand, and making productive use of Ansgar Nünning's "applied cultural narratology" approach on the other, Hannah demonstrates how the two novels under consideration at the same time resist and comply with – are indeed complicit with – the demands and exigencies of this market. Apart from earning the approval of academics and "professional readers" for their critical account of the colonial legacy to which the authors may be "writing back" or their subversive use of sophisticated narrative or metahistorical techniques, the two texts have also become bestsellers in the "middlebrow" metropolitan book market (e.g. Amazon and Co.). Highlighting the role played in the mediation of this type of work by influential popular taste- and trend-setters such as Richard & Judy (UK television's answer to Oprah Winfrey), Hannah gets to grips with the somewhat woolly concept of the middlebrow by invoking Beth Driscoll's identification of "reading strategies that rest on an emotional, personal, and social understanding of literary texts". Middlebrow readers, it is said, tend to read for content, to perceive novels as being primarily stories about people. (Shades of E.M. Forster!) Novels set in former English colonies (such as Nigeria) and written by authors from those countries may well have the dual appeal of affording some species of self-improvement in the Victorian vein – as a source of status-enhancing information about the "foreign" culture conveyed by "authentic" representatives of that culture, whilst at the same time "domesticating" the characters, situations and conflicts portrayed, imbuing them with a reassuring "universality" divorced from anything culture-specific that one might need to (be seen to) identify with. As

Hannah concludes, this dualism of perspective is not entirely due to the intellectual horizon of the readership – it actually reflects substantive elements (of which she produces convincing examples) in the works themselves and may well even have been consciously implanted there by their authors, who thereby facilitate or even “co-construct” such “middlebrow” readings.

The issues raised in Hannah’s thesis go way beyond her specific case studies, so that her work could provide a valuable impetus for future projects. One could easily imagine the approach she has adopted being generalized to apply to many other areas – the Indian novel, for instance, springs to mind.

Last but by no means least, it has to be said that the impeccable, faultlessly elegant academic prose in which Hannah Pardey writes about writers and writing is a true pleasure to read.

Kylie Crane, Dagmar Deuber and Peter Marsden

GAPS Dissertation Award 2016: Citations

A total of six dissertations were submitted to the GAPS dissertation prize committee (Christian Mair – Freiburg, Cecile Sandten – Chemnitz, Frank Schulze-Engler – Frankfurt) this year. These dissertations engage in cutting-edge, innovative research and encouragingly reflect the impressive breadth and range of work currently being done in anglophone postcolonial studies in the disciplines of linguistics, literary and cultural studies and media studies, as well as in interdisciplinary projects involving disciplines such as economics and environmental studies. The overall quality of submissions was very high, and the jury had a difficult decision to make.

Before coming to the deserving winner of the 2016 GAPS dissertation prize, we would like to provide a brief summary of the entries we received in order to illustrate the impressive range of the topics covered and the originality of the approaches taken.

With his dissertation on “Speech Rhythm in Varieties of English: Evidence from Educated Indian English and British English”, **Robert Fuchs** from Münster University has produced a meticulous instrumental-phonetic study which impresses the reader through its competent handling of experimental and statistical methods and its sensitivity to the sociolinguistic and sociocultural context of Indian English. Where textbook wisdom has it that Indian English is “syllable timed” (and British English “stress timed”), Fuchs deconstructs such simple dichotomies by showing that syllable timing and stress timing are matters of degree in which tensions between local identity and global intelligibility play themselves out in interesting ways. While the phonetic detail of this study is of interest to the specialist, readers of all backgrounds will profit from its up-to-date description of the structure, status and function of English in contemporary India.

Drawing on methodologies from experimental psychology, sociology, human geography and gender studies among others, **Sandra Stadler** from the University of Regensburg offers a thorough scholarly engagement with an under-explored genre in her dissertation on 21st century South African English Young Adult Literature. Her analysis of South African coming-of-age stories and novels argues for South African literature for young adults as a key player in “the global project of developing new hybrid realism(s)”. Contextualizing her close readings within the larger framework of discussions on spatial, gender and socio-economic issues that pertain to a post-apartheid South Africa, Stadler’s dissertation represents an encouraging and lively contribution to the study of South African literatures in a German-speaking academic context.

Moving from a South African to an Indian context, **Christoph Senft** from the University of Potsdam argues for the usefulness of conceptualizing a “transmodern literary historiography” in his dissertation “Towards Transmodern Literary Historiography – Local Pasts and Global Designs in Contemporary Indian Writing in English”. This “transmodern literary historiography” engages various forms

and paradigms of “border thinking” so as to take into account the multiple modernities that contemporary Indian writing in English so exemplarily illustrates and inhabits and draws not only on literary theory and criticism produced in Anglo-American and Western contexts, but also engages in an extensive dialogue with South Asian critics. Via close readings of popular texts such as Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* and Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown* to the lesser known memoir *The Music Room* by Namita Devidayal and the novel *Solo* by Rana Dasgupta, Senft illustrates how recent Indian writing in English not only calls into question universal and teleological claims of “Western” modernity, but also engages in an extensive exploration of a plethora of “local” modernities.

In her dissertation “Critical Branding: Postcolonial Studies and the Market”, **Caroline Kögler** from Münster University offers a thorough critical analysis of the significance and impact of market forces in the institutionalisation of postcolonial studies in Western universities. While many scholars in the field of postcolonial studies habitually dismiss markets and market-driven behavior as harbingers of an abhorrent neoliberal capitalism, Kögler shows that the idea of a “pure” postcolonialism uncontaminated by market and branding mechanisms is a product of wishful thinking rather than of critical engagement with academic reality. Drawing on critical business management theory, Kögler advocates a “non-Marxist materialism” and offers a critical re-reading of theories of the “marketization of literature” proposed by critics like Graham Huggan, Arif Dirlik and Sarah Brouillette. By engaging in what she terms “critical branding”, Kögler suggests, postcolonial studies could become aware of and critically monitor their own market behavior. Kögler’s study represents an original and thought-provoking contribution that urges us to think more reflexively and open-mindedly about the material and institutional dimensions of our own scholarly practice.

No less food for thought is offered by **Hanna Straß**’s dissertation, “Stories of Pollution: Narrating Toxicity in Postcolonial Contexts”. Her study was written at the LMU Munich and develops a comprehensive typology of the *postcolonial toxic Gothic* – a neologism that combines Laurence Buell’s term “toxic Gothic” (1998) with David Punter’s coinage “postcolonial Gothic” (2000) that denotes a new sub-genre of fiction addressing the problems of environmental pollution in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In her engaging study, Straß cogently argues for the necessity of reflecting on the future habitability of environments and the survival of communities affected by environmental disasters and other forms of socio-economic inequalities that shape the existence of the world’s population in the Anthropocene. Her well-chosen primary texts and her demonstrated familiarity with the field of postcolonial eco-criticism make Straß’s dissertation a timely and important contribution to current debates in environmental and ecological studies.

All of which brings us to the dissertation that in the end stood out for us, and deservedly wins this year’s GAPS dissertation prize. **James Ogone**’s “Domesticating Modernity in Africa: Local Epistemologies, Foreign Technologies and Dynamics of Mediation” was written at the University of Potsdam and supervised by Lars Eckstein (Potsdam) and Russ West-Pavlov (Tübingen). It is a compellingly argued and meticulously researched contribution to the fields of postcolonial and

media studies. It offers a nuanced and astute examination of the impact of new media technologies – from the radio to the mobile phone – on African cultures. Centrally, Ogone explores the ways in which local African epistemologies and knowledge cultures disrupt, challenge and re-configure global media technologies that have borne the stamp of Western modernity. The dissertation’s examination of the intricate relationship between media technologies and African (particularly Kenyan) oral traditions in Chapter two was particularly impressive. It is also in this chapter that Ogone challenges the notion of “Western modernity” as a homogenous entity, arguing, in line with other scholars such as Bill Ashcroft and Charles Taylor, that “Western modernity itself was never, and is not, a single uniform phenomenon” (p. 41). It is also in this chapter that Ogone lays out his notion of “domesticated modernity,” which draws on the notion of “vernacular modernities” developed by Taberez Neyazi in an Indian context and “acknowledges the existence of parallel modernities” (p. 44), especially those in an African context. The concept of Afromodernity – and here Ogone hints at the work of Michael Hanchard, Alexander Weheliye and others – offers a productive framework within which to rethink the complex ways in which “local brands of modernity in Africa [...] are influenced by global modernity”, yet “do not necessarily reflect [the latter] in totality”. Ogone’s detailed analysis of histories of film, video and audio recordings in African societies and his fascinating consideration of the informal economy of mobile phone usage in Kenya render his impressive dissertation a truly innovative contribution to current scholarship in the field of post-colonial studies that grapples with the push and pull of global and local modernities.

It is thus with great pleasure that we award the 2016 GAPS dissertation prize award to James Ogone for his outstanding dissertation, “Domesticating Modernity in Africa: Local Epistemologies, Foreign Technologies and Dynamics of Mediation”.

Cecile Sandten, Christian Mair and Frank Schulze-Engler

Call: GAPS Graduate Award

Purpose of the Graduate Award:

Each year, the Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien/ Association for Anglophone Postcolonial Studies (GAPS, formerly ASNEL) confers the GAPS Graduate Award for young academics. The aim is to honor outstanding theses (undergraduate and master's theses as well as state examination theses) on Anglophone postcolonial literatures and cultures as well as on the varieties of English submitted to universities and colleges in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Theses that were submitted outside of these countries are eligible for consideration if written by a student member of GAPS. The award winners are chosen by a three-person jury composed of university instructors. The Graduate Award for young academics was first conferred in 2008.

Who can nominate candidates?

Thesis advisors who are GAPS members are entitled to nominate candidates. Eligible for proposal for the Graduate Award to be conferred for 2017 are works submitted in connection with examination procedures that were completed between January 1, 2016, and January 1, 2017. The deadline for submission is January 15, 2017.

How does the nomination process work?

Nominations are to be sent to the GAPS Board of Directors, which then forwards them to the jury. For its work, the jury requires the examination thesis and report both in electronic form (CD or email attachment) and as a hard copy. Please send nominations to:

Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien
Attn: Prof. Dr. Katja Sarkowsky
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster
Johannisstr. 12-20
D-48143 Münster, Germany
seksarkowsky@wwu.de

What is the award's endowment, and where is it presented?

The GAPS Graduate Award is endowed as follows:

- € 500 prize
- Payment of travel expenses (second-class train travel) and one night's hotel accommodation for attending the award presentation at the GAPS annual conference as well as the fees for the conference
- Free GAPS membership (including yearbook) for two years

- Payment of conference fees by GAPS for two additional GAPS annual conferences
- Opportunity to publish the thesis on the GAPS website

In addition to the Graduate Award, two **recognition awards** are conferred. These are endowed as follows:

- € 50 book voucher
- Payment of travel expenses (second-class train travel) and one night's hotel accommodation for attending the award presentation at the GAPS annual conference as well as the fees for the conference
- Free GAPS membership (including yearbook) for two years
- Payment of conference fees by GAPS for one additional GAPS annual conference

The GAPS Graduate Award and the two recognition awards will be presented in connection with the GAPS annual conference which, in 2017, will take place at the University of Bonn.

Call for Papers

Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien /
Association for Anglophone Postcolonial Studies (GAPS)
Annual Conference

Representing Poverty and Precarity in a Postcolonial World
May 25 – 27, 2017 - University of Bonn, Germany

CONFIRMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Neil Lazarus (Warwick) Maria Eisenmann (Würzburg) E.E. Sule (Lapai)

Poverty and precarity are among the most pressing social issues of our day. The last fifteen years have seen not only an ever widening gap between rich and poor across the globe as well as an exponential growth in the number of border subjects – refugees, asylum seekers and illegal migrants –, but also a steady growth of fictional and non-fictional representations of disenfranchised groups and individuals. This correlates with an intensification of research into the visual and narrative forms of these representations. For its 2017 conference, GAPS invites panels and individual papers addressing conceptualisations of poverty and precarity and investigating the ethics and aesthetics of representing poverty and precarity across the postcolonial world.

The ‘new poverty studies’ and the ‘turn to precarity’ are firmly embedded in ethical criticism analysing the frameworks of representation that facilitate or disavow the affective and ethical responses to precarious subjects. Originally a concern of social studies and economics, poverty and precarity have increasingly been discussed in literary and cultural studies, as well as in the field of EFL teaching, in recent years. This growing interest may be attributed not only to the mediated awareness of the emergence of new forms of precarity, subalternity and marginality resulting from the effects of neo-liberal capitalism, terror and war, science and technology, environmental degradation and discrimination. It might also be related to a shift in definitions: social scientists such as Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have linked poverty with social capabilities, arguing that poverty must be understood not “only as (relative) material deprivation, but also as an encompassing socio-cultural exclusion and a lack of agency, opportunities and access (to knowledge, traditions, rights and capabilities)” (Korte and Zipp 2014). Precarity has been conceptualised by Judith Butler (2009) as “that politically induced notion in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death”. Beyond

the spectacular, these forms of poverty and precarity include the “slow violence” of economic and environmental exploitation (Nixon 2011), “modes of exhaustion and endurance that are ordinary, chronic, and cruddy rather than catastrophic, crisis-laden, and sublime” which Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) has termed “economies of abandonment”.

While poverty and precarity are global phenomena – even though the most haunting images continue to come from formerly colonised nations –, their representations in Anglophone literatures and other fictional and non-fictional media can be approached by using established frameworks of Postcolonial Studies. Since the representational appropriation of disenfranchised groups with usually limited access to self-representation poses both an ethical and an aesthetic challenge, investigations address the power of and over representation, questions of agency and voice, of authenticity and essentialisms, of marginalisation and subalternity. In this light, the conference might contribute to the current debate about Postcolonial Studies’ engagement not only with the colonial past, but also with the global present and future.

Contributions may address, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas:

- the relationship between poverty/precarity and social justice in a post-colonial context
- the intersections between poverty/precarity and age, disability, gender, ethnicity and social class
- the ethics of representing poverty and precarity
- intersections with discourses of ecology/ecocriticism and discourses of globalisation
- intersections between the local and the global in representations of poverty and precarity
- representational practices and devices contesting and/or reifying stereotypical images of poverty and precarity (language, metaphors, images, narrative strategies, aesthetics of the abject)
- spaces and embodiments of poverty and precarity
- new subalternity and subaltern cosmopolitanisms
- potentials and limitations of representing poverty and precarity in different modes and media; the impact of visual and narrative conventions
- the (discursive and material) legacies of the colonial past in the global present
- the production and representation of disenfranchised subjects in academic knowledge
- issues of poverty and precarity and their representation in intercultural learning, foreign language education and educational materials/textbooks.

The conference will also feature a **Teachers’ Workshop** as well as **author readings**. Further information, e.g. on travel bursaries, will be made available on the conference homepage (from October 1, 2016): <http://gaps2017.wordpress.com>

Abstract submission and participation

Please send abstracts (300-400 words) of individual papers or panels of three papers together with a bio note by **December 31, 2016**.

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 of the conference, for which poster presentations are also welcome. Please submit abstracts for project presentations (250 words) indicating your chosen format (paper or poster) by **March 1, 2017**.

For special requirements, please contact the organisation team.

Contact and information: gaps2017@uni-bonn.de

Conference Reports



“The Postcolonial and the Material” – 27th GAPS Conference, University of Augsburg, 5-7 May, 2016

The 27th GAPS conference opened with a welcome by the president of GAPS, Katja Sarkowsky, who right from the start articulated the task for the following hours and days: namely to confront the “material challenge” GAPS had set itself with the topic of this year’s conference. What that meant would be voraciously and vividly discussed in the panels and keynotes to come. The second welcome was provided by the conference convenor, Annika McPherson. She started by commenting on the “precarious material conditions of organising a conference in Bavaria on a bank holiday,” not only hinting at the always precarious state of the arts and humanities but also at the material, corporeal commitment at stake. With her introduction, she initiated the process that would inform the following days: weaving an intricate web of connections with the help of “many threads coming together,” constituting the very material of the conference. Exemplary for this process were the pattern books from Augsburg’s State Textile and Industry Museum which featured on the conference poster and the woven dish towels which were given to the keynote speakers as presents. Of course, I can only provide a partial overview of the proceedings, but in the following I will do my very best to at least present some of the colourful and multi-faceted threads, scraps and frayages that made up the fabric of the conference.

The official opening was followed by the first keynote lecture by Prof. Shoba Venkatesh Gosh, Head of the English Department at the University of Mumbai. Gosh talked about Hindi cinema whilst taking up strands from gender studies, film theory and visual culture. She concentrated on the nexus between public and private spheres and led us through three film that on various levels dealt with the troubled narratives of national female identity. To do so, she made visible the materiality of cinematic language as well as the processes of interruption and intervention inherent to the visual tactics of film. Her discussions of the Indian Bengali drama *Charulata* (*The Lonely Wife*, 1964) opened with the first minutes of the film which show a scene of embroidery. This was interesting not only within the theme of weaving and knitting that Annika McPherson suggested, but also because of the significance of the needle work which stands for the domestic femininity the film highlights, simultaneously offering up alternative models of female affect and desire. The theme of gender and femininity, and in direct connection to that the notion of mobility and validity of female desire, became also apparent in the two other films Shoba introduced us to: *Mother India* (1957), a tale of the idealised, prototypical mother figure within constraints of nationality and

domesticity, and the 2008 melodrama *Jab We Met* which both questions and reinforces heteronormative notions of corporeality, sexuality and gender.

The keynote and its spirited discussions were promptly followed by talks picking up the threads offered in the opening addresses and the first lecture. The panel I chose featured Ifeoluwa Aboluwade on material culture and translation in Femi Osofisan, John Nkemngong Nkengasong on literary dig sites in Linus Asong and Bole Butake, and Katrin Berndt on Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*. The first two papers very eloquently discussed the materiality of theatricality and stage productions, processes of digging up, of carrying and transporting – as such, they positioned material culture as an active agent which people use for constructing meaning in their communities. The third paper posited a counterargument to the first two talks, as it focussed on trauma, war and murder and convincingly offered up an alternative way of approaching the material within the postcolonial. The three talks were followed by a stimulating discussion on memory, archaeology and violence. Of course, I also would have loved to listen in on the other panels (especially Janice Bland's talk on refugee and verse narratives or the film screening of *Welcome to the Smiling Coast. Living in the Gambian Ghetto*), but such are the trials and tribulations of every conference that is as well put-together as this one was.

After the first round of panels, everyone had the opportunity for a little breather and a snack and after the lunch break we re-assembled to enter the second round: It was now time for my own talk and I was pleasantly surprised by the warm and collaborative atmosphere offered both by my panel chair Jan Albers and the other participants: Martin Riedelsheimer and Korbinian Stöckl from Augsburg, and Valérie-Anne Belleflamme from Liège. Martin and Korbinian talked about debbie tucker green and via the materials blood, coffee, and hair brilliantly connected discussions on cosmopolitanism (Appiah), ethics, and discourses of human rights with three of her plays (*Dirty Butterfly*, *Stoning Mary*, and *Trade*). Valérie offered an elegant analysis of Gail Jones' works and in numerous close readings carved out the urban psycho-geography put forth in the novels *Five Bells* and *A Guide to Berlin*. Following my own talk on the Youtube Web Series "Strolling" by Caribbean-British film maker Cecile Emeke, we had a wonderfully lively discussion which extended well over the allocated time frame into the evening. Again, it goes without saying that I suffered from a severe case of FOMO ("fear of missing out"), especially regarding Caroline Kögler's talk on critical branding and Anamika Purohit's talk on home and belonging in Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* in the parallel panels.

The day ended with a triple treat at the State Textile and Industry Museum Augsburg (tim for short, and a former Kammergarnspinnerei), one of the collaboration partners for this year's conference. The site of the museum linked the discursive patterns and thinking structures delineated within the conference to the material space and graspable history of the city we found ourselves in. This connection was brought to the fore in the second keynote of the day, given by the director of the tim, Karl Borromäus Murr, titled "The Interplay between Local and Global - Importing US Cotton into Augsburg in the 19th century." Murr provided us with a fascinating history of the cotton trade, branching out from Augsburg to

Africa, the Americas and other parts of Europe. In linking cotton to systems of classification, consumption, and slavery, his keynote literally wove together the past with the present. The following award ceremony was hosted by an ever sprightly and entertaining Peter Marsden and GAPS rewarded its graduate award to Yann Le Gall and its dissertation award to James Ogone (both from the University of Potsdam). Historical overview and celebratory ceremony were interspersed by poetry readings by Kei Miller who enchanted the audience by spinning tales of two materials in a stunning and moving performance. In "Place Name: Oracabessa," he interconnected the stories of colonisation, gold digging and plantations with that of place, language and belonging: "Could someone / please go back in time and tell Columbus, in Taino there / is no word for gold." The second poem he read was not his own but someone else's, namely Robert Pinsky's "Shirt": "The back, the yoke, the yardage. Lapped seams, / The nearly invisible stitches along the collar [...] The buttonholes, the sizing, the facing, the characters / Printed in black on neckband and tail. The shape, / The label, the labor, the color, the shade. The shirt." Acknowledging the historical materiality of colonialism and the cotton trade (what is a shirt made from if not cotton?) as well as the overarching conference theme of weaving (how is a shirt made if not woven?) that Annika McPherson kick-started in the morning, Miller brilliantly put into poetry and performance the theoretical concepts afoot during the keynotes and panels. The magic and buzz of his poetry was transported over into the very last part of the evening: the conference dinner held right in the museum's restaurant *nunó* where we ended the day with great food, drinks and conversations.

Friday, the second day of the conference, started off with a keynote by Bhekizizwe Peterson, Professor of African Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg with the title "Spectral Performances: Narrative, Aesthetics and the Material in Post-Apartheid South Africa." For me, who had never really immersed herself in the field of South African history, politics and culture in great depth, this talk was enlightening and greatly appreciated. Peterson described the entanglements of Empire, Apartheid, and Post-Apartheid by shedding light on blind spots caused by often in-existent or harmful negotiations of history, "the unfinished business of Apartheid." He located his discussions within three sites of contestation: activism, decolonisation, and black pop culture. He argued for the making of counter-narratives to tell lived experiences, and argued against the regulation of narrative, the systematic monitoring of official (hi)stories. His careful and sensitive exploration of dead black bodies, of mass produced clothes that are burnt, of goods destroyed and of statues erected and pulled down as forms of possible resistance offered new ways of thinking about materiality within a South African context.

I continued my education in things South African in the following panel which featured a talk by Laura Zander on the works of Nadine Gordimer and a talk by Kirsten Sandrock on Nigerian Chimamanda Adichie's third novel *Americanah*. Both talks were illuminating and graceful and provided a deeper insight into the two writers. They presented an analysis of the material in literature via the negotiations of space: the uncanny house/home in Gordimer and the global, diasporic

spatiality in *Americanah*, be it either the Nigerpolitan club in Lagos, the detention centre in Manchester or the sprawling space of the migratory city London. I would also have loved to listen in on Julian Wacker's talk about *Penny Dreadful*, Sarah Fekadu-Uthoff on routes of exchange and cultural contact zones in Tayeb Salih and Amitav Ghosh or Lars Eckstein on "Recollecting Bones." In the next round of panels (after lunch break), I chose a panel on the politics and poetics of food. The materiality of consumption, culinary traces and the bodily experience of hunger was illustrated in a talk by (unfortunately absent) Kai Wiegandt on Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* as well as in an evocative talk by Sarah Knor on Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* and Ramabai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge*.

The afternoon offered an eclectic program where everyone could choose amongst the offered diversions to their heart's content: There was a brown bag reading with Futhi Ntshingila and John Nkemngong Nkengasong which combined literature and food; there was the *Under Construction* panel which enabled PhD students to share their research; there was a film screening of *Zulu Love Letter* (2004) directed by Ramadan Suleman; there were teachers' workshops ("Afrika"-Bilder im Unterricht) and a city tour; and there was a guided tour of the State Textile and Industry Museum. The GAPS Annual General meeting ended a day packed full to the brim with inspiration, dialogue, exchange and input.

The last day of the conference began with another appearance of Kei Miller – albeit not in his function as wordsmith and performer *extraordinaire*, but in his function as lecturer at Royal Holloway, University of London. His keynote with the title "If I Could Write This on Zinc, I Would Write This on Zinc" offered up different "paths" that led us to tin roofs in Jamaica, to orange scrap books, the failures of Microsoft Word in the face of wilful language, to new media and old writing tools, and to graffiti on walls. In sharing with us the materials he writes on, with, about and through, Miller skilfully and poetically circumscribed locales near and far, whilst constantly engaging in processes of disturbing and rethinking genre, art and representation.

The keynote, which for me was one of the conference's highlights, was followed by a last round of panels which in their complexity and diversity can be seen as exemplary for the many materials the conference covered. To bring all the threads together, I experienced a conference characterised by a welcoming tight-knit community, by numerous interwoven affiliations, and by not only fruitful and enlightening but also exceptionally enjoyable exchanges. Special thanks go to the ever smiling and incredibly helpful organising team for my very last minute dinner ticket and many wonderful tea and coffee breaks. I'm looking forward to next year's conference and the continuation of our collective process of weaving, knitting, and interlacing.

Jennifer Leetsch (Würzburg)



**“Crisis, Risks and New Regionalisms in Europe II:
Emergency Diasporas and Borderlands”
DAAD Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa
Technische Universität Chemnitz, 1-5 June 2016**

Terms abundantly present in recent public discourses have been refugee crisis, migration, European crisis, humanitarian crisis, border crisis, threats to human integrity or social peace, risks. Apart from the semantic differences, all refer to the seemingly same public discourse. There have been discrepancies in the perception and reaction of the recent phenomenon of migration of refugees and peoples to “Europe”, nevertheless the question whether Europe’s reaction has been adequate remains open. The academic discourse, however, on notions such as crisis, risks, emergency diasporas or borderlands was taken up again in Chemnitz.

The second DAAD-“Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa“-conference on “Crisis, Risks and New Regionalisms in Europe II: Emergency Diasporas and Borderlands” took place on 1-5 June 2016 in Chemnitz, organized by the Chair of English Literatures at the Technische Universität Chemnitz in cooperation with the Department of Studies in Language Meditation and Intercultural Communication of the University of Milan. It was for the second time that issues of risks, crisis, diasporas and borderlands in Europe were discussed within an academic context, following up on the first DAAD-conference of similar content held in Milan in December 2014. The conference brought together a group of scholars and intellectuals of various professional and cultural backgrounds who discussed and raised a number of intriguing and thought-provoking questions related to the topics of this academic event. The notions of crisis, risks and regionalisms are undoubtedly open to many interpretations. Nevertheless, speakers and presenters of the conference conveyed how there was a historical temporality between the colonial past and the “postcolonial present”.

An official opening of the conference by the host, Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten addressed the themes and issues that were to be raised and discussed at this academic event.

In his compelling keynote lecture on “Afro-Pessimism and the Ruse of Analogy”, Frank B. Wilderson III (University of California Irvine, US and Research Ambassador of the University of Bremen, Germany) addressed the issue of Afro-Pessimism, interrogated the logic of the Bakhtinian chronotope and reflected on Gramsci’s theory of civil society.

During the first workshop on “General Theory”, Sebastian Berg (Ruhr University Bochum) referred to the case study of the British Left in his paper on “The Problems of a European Left” by analyzing the relationship of the Left with the European Union. In a rather recent historical analysis (from the 1960s on), by means of political sociology and critical discourse analysis, Berg related to controversies in the Labour Party, the trade union movement and the intellectual left as objects of his analysis. Along these lines, the discussion with the audience

focused on how and why there has been a gravitation towards right-wing tendencies in politics. Questioning whether the EU is still able to maintain its original political “configuration”, a pro-position towards the UK staying in the EU was a common stand amongst the participants.

“Pedagogy of Borders: Between the Classroom and the Streets” was the title of Marta Baraldi’s (University of Milan) paper. Pedagogical strategies of Cultural Studies focusing on two crucial elements, namely the “classroom” and the “streets” were analyzed. In light of recent events, namely migration, Baraldi suggested that the conversational strategy that Cultural Studies encourage between education and the multicultural society is worth practicing. Along similar lines, Lidia Anna De Michelis (University of Milan) interestingly broached the issue of representing the “borderization” of Europe and the criminalization of migrants by institutions and the media. In her paper on “Reclaiming Neoliberal Zones of Indifference: Exclusionary Borderscapes in Anders Lustgarten’s *Lampedusa*”, she focused on the example of the island of Lampedusa and the way migrants have been “discursively re-constructed”. Introducing the play *Lampedusa* by British political activist Anders Lustgarten, de Michelis referred to Europe’s collective responsibility for the tragedy of contemporary migration. De Michelis concluded her paper by stating that another better world is possible and necessary.

After the lunch break, the conference continued with the second workshop titled “Crisis in Europe: Emergency Diasporas and Borderlands”. While Vivien Sommer (TU Chemnitz) presented her project on finding appropriate media solutions for the refugees currently located in Chemnitz, Yodit Estifanos Afewerki (University of Milan) shared her experiences of working in Sicily as a Tigrinya cultural mediator. Speaking about her field work, Afewerki claimed that the current crisis is less of a migration crisis and rather a question of inequalities by highlighting that migrants are expected to “fit into specific classifications notwithstanding the different and infinite life stories and experiences that characterize each single migrant”. Giada Ragone (Max Planck Institute) brought a different perspective to the discussion. From a legal point of view, she talked about the main asylum policies adopted by European countries mostly affected by the recent migration flows. By interpreting the two recent cases reviewed by the European Court of Human Rights, namely that of HIRSI in Italy and the M.S.S. in Belgium, Ragone indicated that cases of rejection and denial of asylum rights could be considered violations of the European Convention of Human Rights. The pleasure of listening to the most enjoyable and gripping readings by Jamaican Paris-based writer Alecia McKenzie and Indian gay writer R. Raj Rao, accompanied by wine and a Mediterranean buffet, gave the conference participants the opportunity to reflect on the fruitful discussions of a successful day one of the conference in the historic setting of the Kaßberg Gewölbe.

While during the first day there the focus was more on “general theories” related to the crisis in Europe, day two presented a wide range of case studies connected to the conference topic, offering more intercultural communication theory and specific cultural approaches. In her keynote lecture on “Limits of Hospitality”, Heidrun Friese (TU Chemnitz) defined hospitality in terms of

historical semantics, as “a religious and ethic duty”. Paradoxes of democracy and their relationship to the limits of hospitality were addressed by means of Lampedusa, to also reflect on the “social imagination and images of mobile people” and how these articulate the contemporary border regime.

During the first workshop on “New Regionalisms: Metropolitan Marketplaces and Urban Underbellies”, Miguel Mellino (University of Naples L’Orientale), Lucrezia Cerabino (University of Milan) and Carola Grandi (University of Milan) provided very thought-provoking presentations from rather heterogeneous contexts and sources of work. Miguel Mellino approached the recent “European Crisis” via the history of European colonial rule and Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics in his paper on “The State of the European Crisis: Neoliberalism Within Biopolitics and Necropolitics”. He argued that the current crisis should not be referred to as a crisis but rather “the reverse side of the Neoliberal European project”. “This is not simply a crisis in Europe but Europe in a time of crisis”, he concluded.

As two papers notably demonstrated, colonial hegemony and post-colonial crisis are interconnected with multi-cultural identity and cultural heritage. Lucrezia Cerabino shared very interesting results of her work in the city of Kaduna. Her presentation “Kaduna, the City of Crocodiles: Colonial Heritage, Multi-Cultural Identity and Urban Challenges” offered an overview of the Nigerian city from the perspective of a scholar aiming at analyzing the impact that colonisation played in shaping the urban structures of such colonised cities as well as at “dismantling the colonial stereotypes that fabricate African cities as chaotic megalopolis from which huge waves of migrants flee to invade Europe”. Carola Grandi on the other hand spoke about “Borders of Identity: Hip Hop as Indigenous Culture” amongst the Canadian aboriginal youth and how hip hop was used as a means of “deconstructing hegemonic stereotypes associated with indigeneity”. Grandi focused on how expressions, protests and resistance texts used in hip hop were interpreted from outside of Canada.

A very interesting link between Chinua Achebe and his autobiography *There Was a Country* and today’s European Union and the idea of the Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis of a new pan-European Movement was made by Sara Cesario (University of Milan) in the second workshop on “General Theory”. Relating history to the present (presentation title: “History/Story: A New Perspective for Europe”), Cesario referred to Achebe’s suggestion that “history is never interpreted from only one point of view but that the visions of (hi)story should take into consideration all the human personal stories, generating an emotional and empathic bond, which would lead to a common focus on collective good”. She associated the above with the European Union of today, which hints at having lost its core values, namely unity, integration, cooperation. She concluded her presentation by quoting Varoufakis in that the European Union puts together peoples who speak different languages, embrace different cultures and have different national histories. Cesario called for a restoration of Europe according to Achebe’s suggestion. The notion of cartographic maps as in Nurrudhin Farah’s novel *Maps* was the subject of analysis presented by Mala Pandurang (Dr. BMN College,

SNDT Women's University, India). As in the above-mentioned novel, Pandurang also challenged the idea of maps as an "unquestioned arbiter of reality". Her intriguing paper on "'Unmapping Maps': Borders Territories and the Crisis of Identity" correlated also with the current politics of borders, being and becoming. Day two of the conference drew to a close with a film presentation and discussion. *Dauters: La vita va Avanti (Life goes on)* was a documentary that underwent the scrutiny of psychologists Eleonora Voli (Frantz Fanon Association Turin) and Stefania Gavin (University of Turin) aiming at "collecting stories and memories of Nigerian immigrant women, in order to create new possible archives of the present".

Despite the participants' longings for a languorous Saturday morning, the keynote speech on "Re-Thinking Borderlands: Contesting the 'Normal'" by María do Mar Castro Varela (Alice Salomon University Berlin) aroused the attention of all attendees. By referring mainly to the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Castro Varela drew the debate towards the issue of a refugee crisis which she interpreted to be a border crisis. Contesting borders and their definitions, her talk engaged the audience in an intriguing and thought-provoking manner. By means of Anzaldúa's concepts of belonging, the state and the borders, Castro Varela questioned the radical "reconfiguration of the way we conceive an 'us' in the world".

A debate session titled "The Crisis in Europe" involved four talks of slightly different theories and perspectives. Utopian identity and institutional communication were issues broached in Miriam Bait and Marina Brambilla's (University of Milan) paper which reflected their ongoing research on outlining a contemporary utopia related to public communication. Bait and Brambilla quoted Fairclough in that language use is a form of social practice that shapes society, and therefore their research analysed the communication strategies of public agencies on their websites. Suggesting the use of technological tools as facilitators for inclusion, opportunity and social change, the authors called for an e-Utopia project, namely one that would assist in building "a better society that is able to recognize the needs of present and future generations: sustainable development, economic prosperities, cultural vitality, social cohesion".

Like the previous speakers, Claudia Gualtieri presented questions for debates with the aim of promoting an exchange of ideas and discussions. In her presentation titled "Is Tradition Omnilocal? Observations on Migrant Theatre", Gualtieri addressed the notion of tradition in relation to the global context of recent migration. She defined tradition as "a set of cultural forms and expressions that are perceived and recognized by a group of people as belonging to their shared history and memory", therefore its locality are evident. Referring to new Italian literature by African writers and drawing a relation to migration, Gualtieri claimed that traditions of hosting communities may be re-discovered and resurrected while local roots are maintained. Roberto Pedretti (University of Milan) discussed aspects of crisis from an economic and social perspective. Invoking crises as instruments of capitalism used to treat economic and social problems, he raised the question whether there are gaps signaling a possibility to go beyond capitalism. Pedretti claimed that while words like socialism and socialist are

acquiring new currency in the political space, concepts like nation-state, democracy, citizenship, representation have seemed to collapse. Moreover, Itala Vivan (University of Milan) hypothesized that the core of the frictions and contradiction between the European hosting countries (with a focus on the Mediterranean Area) and the incoming migrants may not only be due to Islamophobia or the fear of the other, but also, or rather, to gender questions. She called for a debate on the issue and referred to New Year's Eve in Cologne and other events. Finally, Vivan argued that the whole topic of migration "falls into the pattern of postcolonial situations".

The conference culminated with a final roundtable discussion on "Crisis, Risks and New Regionalisms in Europe", which allowed more time for further exchange amongst the presenters and the audience. The fruitful discussions were wrapped up by a specially produced video lecture on "What Words are Worth" by Lawrence Grossberg, professor of Cultural Studies and Popular Culture at the University of North Carolina and participant of the first part of the conference in Milan in December 2014. Lastly, it is necessary to applaud Thaer Ayoub, a Syrian writer and journalist, who in a most moving fashion read his poems in German and Arabic. This was followed by the theater performance *Aphrodites Rebellen* (Aphrodite's Rebels) which the conference participants were presented in a video screening by the student theatre group of the TU Chemnitz, *Turmbau 62*, together with refugees. In the play they enact the story of Thaer Ayoub and his flight from Syria to Germany in search of a safe shelter.

Valeza Polster (Chemnitz)

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