

Call for Papers
Gesellschaft für Anglophone Postkoloniale Studien (GAPS)
Annual Conference

The Postcolonial and the Material

May 5 – 7, 2016
University of Augsburg, Germany

CONFIRMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
Shoba Venkatesh Ghosh (University of Mumbai)
Bhekizizwe Peterson (University of the Witwatersrand)

For its 2016 conference, GAPS invites panels and individual papers addressing the relationship between the 'postcolonial' and the 'material' in anglophone literary studies, cultural studies, media studies, and linguistics as well as from transdisciplinary perspectives. Drawing from and exceeding the notion of the material in material culture studies, the conference aims to discuss the functions and significance of objects and things in relation to the processes of producing, constructing, collecting and representing them in literary, media, and other cultural contexts.

For example, fieldwork, collections, and their subsequent displays have played a highly problematic role in colonial settings, and their legacies as well as continuous practices of cultural appropriation remain highly contentious. More generally, colonial patterns of representation often refer to material objects and use strategies of objectification in the construction of Otherness, while both the persistence and attempts at re-signification of such representations continue to play an important role in current debates surrounding the postcolonial. Similarly, anthropologists' and archaeologists' interests in the material objects of cultures have been problematized in different ways across a wide range of post-independence and contemporary anglophone writing and critique. Objects and things can thus be analyzed across a variety of literatures and other media as signifiers not only of cultural heritage, belonging, community formation, and identity, but also as symbols of social exclusion and marginalization or cultural exoticization.

The material past and unequal material conditions of the present have furthermore played an important role in a variety of postcolonial theoretical and critical contexts, especially in relation to Marxism. Material culture in the widest sense also informs many debates on globalization, consumption, commodity exchange, and commodification. Questions surrounding the publication/production and market distribution of literature and film in connection to practices of critical reception also continue to influence what is discussed as postcolonial, which in turn is increasingly challenged through various forms of online dissemination of cultural material and criticism, thus frequently shifting the problem of availability to questions surrounding the digital divide and open access. Finally, cognitive approaches seem to necessitate a re-thinking of the relation between the material and immaterial aspects e.g. of language, thought, and ideas.

Based on these notions of the role and function of the material in relation to the postcolonial, possible contributions can address, but are not limited to, the following issues:

- Mercantilism and material (post-)colonial histories, politics, and modernities
- Colonial patterns, neo-colonial continuities, postcolonial and decolonial contestations of material representations
- The material and symbolic representation of culture through objects and artefacts in anglophone fiction, film, and music
- The materiality of subject/object relations in processes of cultural Othering
- Cultural appropriation in literature, film, photography, as well as in the music and fashion industries
- The materiality of postcolonial urban and rural settings: cityscapes, landscapes, architecture, monuments, memorials, or the built environment in fiction and visual culture
- Theorizing the material in postcolonial contexts: the influences of Marx, Lévi-Strauss, Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu, Latour
- Indigenous conceptions of materiality
- Materiality, the body, and practices: embodiment, sensoriality, incorporation, adornment, enactment, abjection, agency, and performance
- Revisiting *The Social Life of Things* (ed. Arjun Appadurai) thirty years after: notions of commoditization, commodity fetishism, consumption, and global cultural flows in postcolonial contexts
- Rethinking the boundaries between the material and the immaterial: transdisciplinary dialogues on cognitive approaches within anglophone postcolonial studies from linguistic, cultural, and literary perspectives

Please send **abstracts (300-500 words) of individual papers or panels of three papers** together with a bio-brief to gaps2016@phil.uni-augsburg.de. Abstracts will be evaluated from **December 1, 2015**, until **January 10, 2016**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by February 15, 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) to gaps2016@phil.uni-augsburg.de by **March 1, 2016**.

The organizers aim to supplement the limited number of travel bursaries that are available for part-time, limited contract or currently unemployed speakers as well as for presenting postgraduate and PhD students from countries of the global South who are, or become, members of GAPS. If you wish to apply for a travel bursary, please indicate so via e-mail to gaps2016@phil.uni-augsburg.de by **March 1, 2016**.

The conference will also feature a **Teachers’ Workshop** as well as **author readings**. Further information will be made available on the conference homepage:

<http://www.uni-augsburg.de/gaps2016>