

Call for Papers

**Men on the Margins**

**Postcolonial and Decolonial Masculinities in Anglophone Literatures**

20-21 June 2025

Freie Universität Berlin

Institute for English Language and Literature

Current debates about intersectionality tend to focus on the intersections between race and marginalised gender identities, such as femininity, trans\*ness and nonbinariness. Masculinities, however, often remain in the realms of normativity and invisibility, although in literature from the Anglophone world, there is a traceable increase of elaborate engagements with the portrayals of masculinities that go beyond the normative and hegemonic.

Writing male characters that provide an exploration of racialised forms of masculinities have become increasingly popular. In Caleb Azuma Nelson's *Open Waters* (2021), the Black male protagonist explores the monitoring, constriction and Othering of his racialised body in London. In her novel *Americanah* (2013), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie offers a rich insight into different forms of masculinities intersecting with race and class through the male love interests of her female protagonist Ifemelu. It is especially Black men in the diaspora or marginalised men who represent more progressive forms of masculinities.

The focus on race, postcolonialism, migration, and diaspora seems to stimulate alternative portrayals of masculinities. This takes place especially in postcolonial texts, which explore the lasting impact of colonialism on racialised bodies, groups and societies as well as decolonial texts, which focus on the unlearning of internalised colonial practices and reclaiming marginalised voices and narratives. While the number of literary texts exploring these non-hegemonic forms of masculinities is on the rise, the discussions within Literary Studies have to still follow suit. In this field, studies and research on the portrayal of marginalised masculinities remain few and occasional.

The conference "Men on the Margins" will encourage explorations of masculinities in postcolonial and decolonial texts and contexts and provide new perspectives on how gender, power, and identity are constructed and contested. As postcolonial theory continues to challenge the legacies of colonialism, the study of masculinities provides a lens through which to examine the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality in Anglophone literatures. "Men on the Margins" will therefore be centered on literary portrayals of masculinities which fall outside the hegemonic narratives. The aim is to discuss how postcolonial and decolonial frameworks reshape our understanding of manhood.

We invite established and early career researchers to submit proposals that engage with postcolonial and decolonial masculinities in Anglophone literatures from the 19th century to the present-day, addressing how marginalised masculinities are constructed, challenged, and transformed in various colonial and postcolonial contexts. We aim to explore how colonial legacies continue to inform masculine identities and in what ways men's roles shift in response to the cultural, social, and political changes in postcolonial societies. We further want to raise the question as to how non-normative and queer masculinities disrupt traditional understandings of manhood in postcolonial narratives.

**Possible topics for papers include (but are not limited to):**

Writing and reimagining masculinities in postcolonial and decolonial contexts

Masculinities and intersectionality

Colonial legacies and the construction of masculinities

Fatherhood and generational shifts in masculinities

Migration, diaspora, and masculinities

Queer and non-normative masculinities

Masculinities, nationalism, and nation-building

Men and religion

Men and violence

Masculinities in the globalised world

Ecocriticism and masculinities

Masculinities and memory

### **Keynote Speakers**

Prof Dr Elahe Haschemi Yekani (Professor of English and American Literature and Culture at Humboldt University Berlin)

Dr Rehana Ahmed (Reader in Postcolonial and Contemporary Literature at Queen Mary University of London)

### **Poetry Reading**

Ozan Zakariya Kesikinkiliç

We are looking forward to receiving proposals for 20-minute papers by 1 December 2024.

Proposals should consist of a title and an abstract (of c. 200 words) as well as a short bio (c. 150 words). Please email these to [kubraozermis@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:kubraozermis@zedat.fu-berlin.de)

The conference will be taking place at **Freie Universität Berlin**.

### **Conference Organisers**

Kübra Özermiş, Universität Potsdam

Sabine Schülting, Freie Universität Berlin