

World Literatures and the Global South 2019 - Call for Papers

23–25 August 2019

The School of Languages and Cultures at the University of Sydney, the Australian Studies Centre at Peking University and the World Literature Association jointly call for contributions to the third international congress of the World Literature Association under the title: “World Literatures and the Global South”, to be hosted at the University of Sydney from 23 August to 25 August 2019.

World literature studies have been defined as the exploration of a ‘global system of literary production, dissemination, and evaluation beyond Europe and its former colonies’ (Park and Habjan, 2017). Acknowledging the existence and consequences of a Eurocentric focus in national and comparative literary studies, world literary studies examine literary productions globally, alongside the networks, platforms (including digital) and market forces that drive or hinder their dissemination.

Yet world literature studies still face constraints imposed by a tendency to place English and the Anglophone world at the centre of literary networks and afford them the most academic prestige. This international conference seeks to engage with literatures in their own languages as well as in translation. Through its focus on the ‘Global South’, and on the transnational and postcolonial perspectives implied by the term, it will bring together writers and academics, giving equal billing to streams in English, Chinese, Arabic, French, Indonesian/Malay and Spanish.

We invite contributions about literary production on/from the Global South and on the concepts of world literature(s) and the Global South, two widely discussed notions that – far from having fixed and universally accepted definitions — are continuously being debated and re-defined. Australia, shaped by its colonial history and by its multiethnic, multilingual and transnational population, bears an ambiguous relationship to the Global South, making it an ideal location to explore and interrogate these two unsettled terms.

Proposal themes

Contributions should focus on the following questions and themes:

1. Imagining the Global South/Writing from the Global South

What are the dominant past and present representations and narratives from and of the Global South? How do literary productions from the Global South participate in renewing and challenging existing Western and Eurocentric representations? What world views and perspectives on world issues, including Western societies, emerge from literatures of the Global South?

- (Re)Inventing the Global South

- Self-representations of the Global South
- Representations of the 'West' and the 'North' in literatures from the Global South
- Global perspectives on/from the South
- Real and imagined spaces

2. Transnational literatures

How do world literatures move away from a nation-based understanding of literary production and what models do they assert in its place? What are the historic and emerging modes and methodologies for acknowledging, assessing and exploring transnational literatures?

- Travel, translation and translatability of cultures
- Multilingual writers
- Exophonic writing
- Diasporic literatures
- Literary migrations and networks

3. The Global South, world literatures and global market forces

In what ways are world literatures enriched and/or affected by globalisation in its various forms, notably political, cultural, financial, social, environmental? How is the present surge of nationalism and populism across the globe represented in contemporary world literatures? What is the place of world literatures from the Global South in an increasingly digital world?

- Ecocriticism from the Global South
- Science fiction from the Global South
- New media in the Global South
- Digital platforms, new genres and world literatures

4. Beyond world literatures

What dialogues, interactions and conflicts characterise relationships between world literatures from the Global South and other art forms (e.g. film, visual art, music, dance, etc.)? How do these productions participate in challenging traditional understandings of genres and forms? What are potential new generic and formal avenues offered by contemporary literatures from the Global South?

- Global South and film adaptations of literary texts
- The Global South through iconotexts
- Global South across disciplines

Submission of proposals close on 11 February 2019.

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Alternatively, you can send your abstracts to the following email address: world-literatures.conference@sydney.edu.au

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