

# Global Currents in Translingual Poetry: Tracing Language, Geography and Culture in Contemporary Anglophone Literatures

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## Abstract

In a world marked by globalization, digital interconnectedness and migration, literary texts are increasingly international, transcultural, and linguistically diverse. Still, the prevailing literary research operates in the spheres of mono-culturalism and -lingualism. To contribute to the filling of this gap, this thesis project pays heed to a relevant, yet underexamined artform: poetry composed in an author's second language, which, as this thesis will demonstrate, is more aptly represented by the attributive modifier "translingual" (Kellman 2019).

On the example of poets' writings in the world's most influential global and most widely spoken second language, English, literary and cultural studies are combined with sociolinguistics to establish a theory of anglophone second-language poetry. The identified idiosyncrasies add value to the traditional English literary canon, as degrees of 'in-betweenness' come to the fore which enrich the understanding of literature in English. Following the transnational turn in literature (Jay 2014), translingual poems cue us to consider trans-temporality and trans-locality as markers of contemporary writing, which reveal their revisionist and visionary potential.

The innovative quality of this manuscript lies, first, in its zooming in on poetry as an aesthetically refined and restricted literary form that lends itself particularly well to linguistic, semantic, and semiotic explorations, transformations, and innovations. Second, the project demonstrates that in translingual poetry, language is "de-automatized" (Schmitz-Evans 1997: 120) and transcultural knowledge and intercultural understanding are (re-)constructed. Third, it shows how linguistic approaches can be made productive for literary and cultural analyses. And fourth, by approaching anglophone poetry from a global angle, the field of English literary studies is expanded for writing that is 'comparatist' by its very outset. As such, this thesis reveals how theories of national literatures and world literature need to be reframed to meet the needs of the contemporary literary field in a thoroughly globalized world.