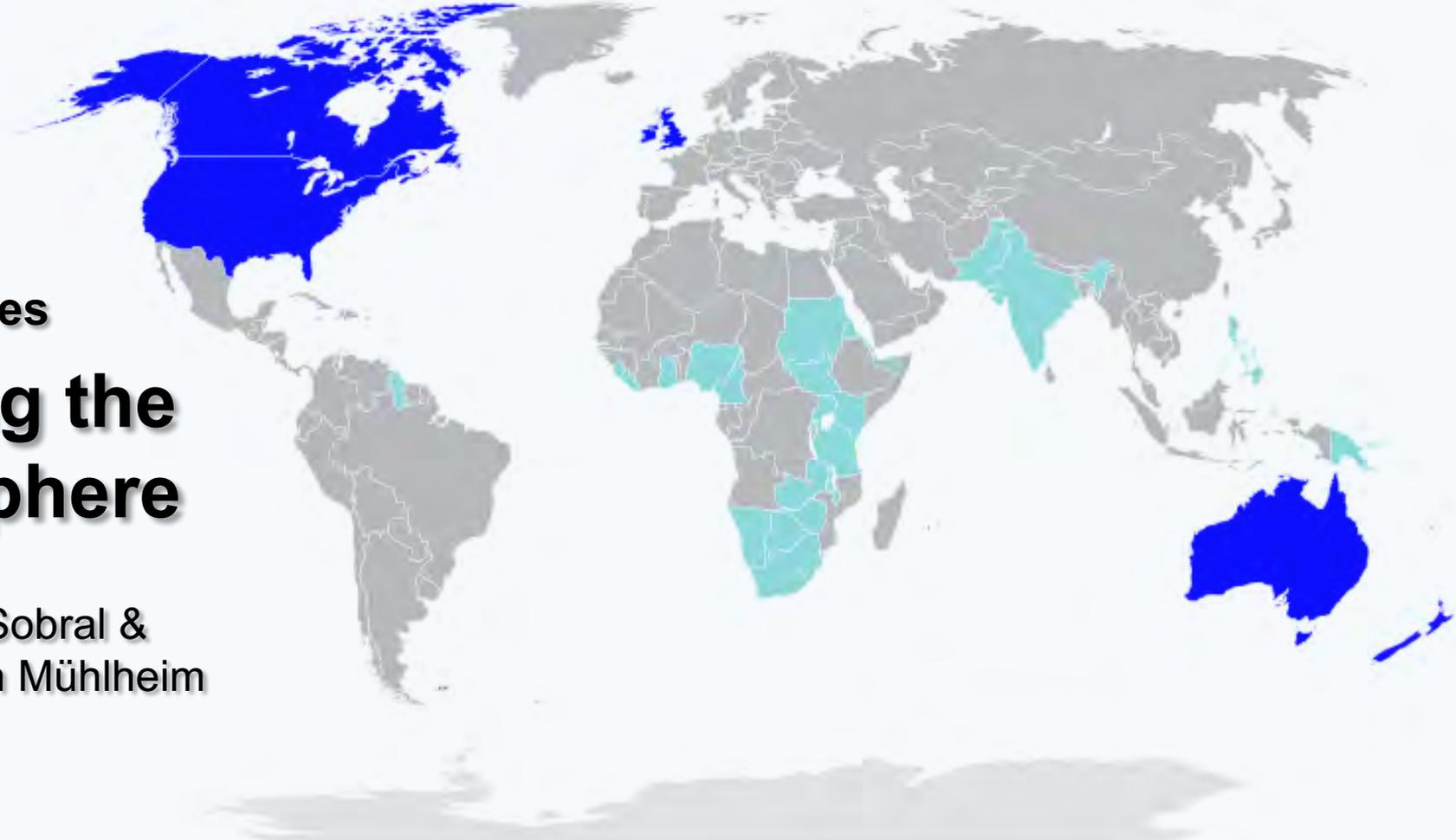




Lecture Series

# Debating the Anglosphere

Prof. Dr. Ana Sobral &  
Dr. des. Martin Mühlheim





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**Dr. Wilhelm Jerg-Legat**



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# Overview of Today's Introduction

1. Welcome
2. The Centrality of the Anglosphere
3. Writing the Anglosphere: Recent Books
4. Case Study (I): Use of English in Postcolonial Literature and Theory
5. Case Study (II): University Rankings
6. The Program: Speakers and Topics
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## 2. The Centrality of the Anglosphere



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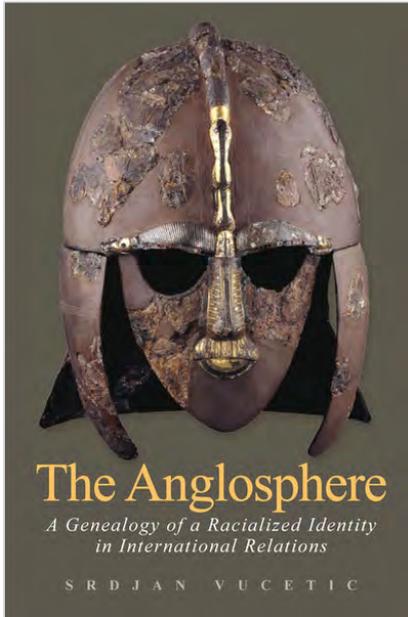




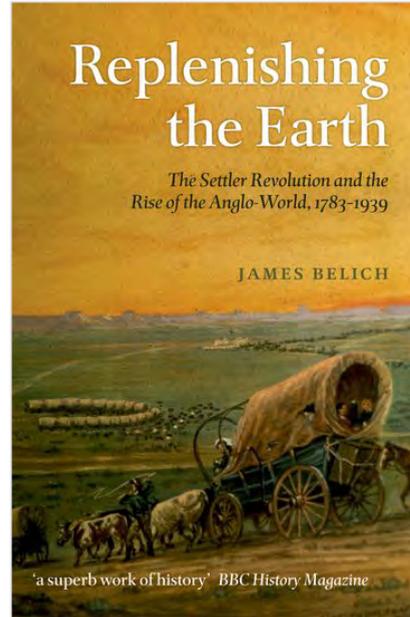
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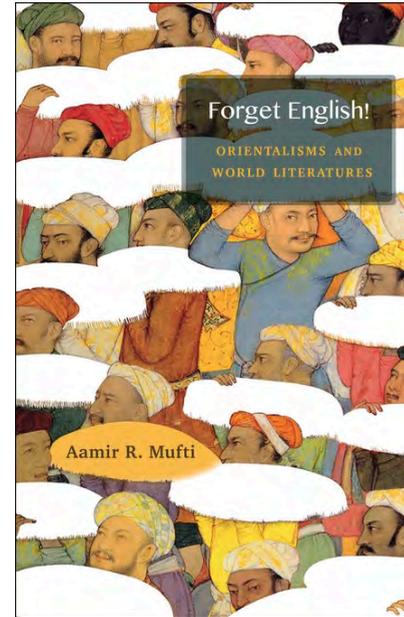
### 3. Writing the Anglosphere: Four Recent Books



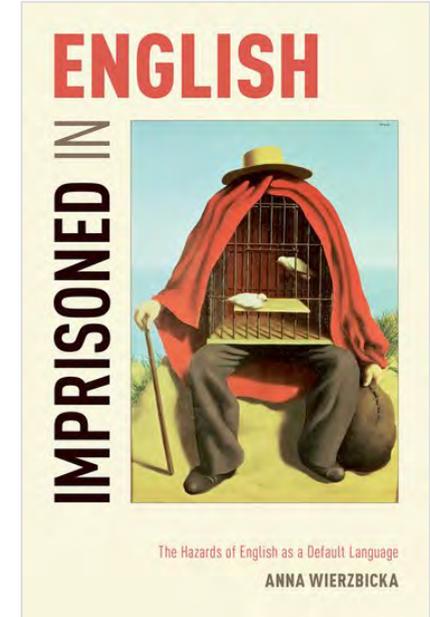
*The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations*, by Srdjan Vucetic



*Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1789–1939*, by James Belich



*Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literature*, by Aamir R. Mufti

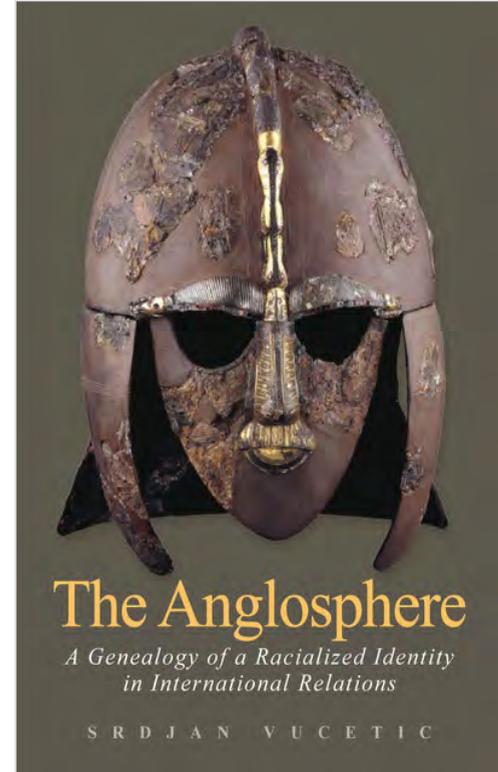


*Imprisoned in English: The Hazards of English as a Default Language*, by Anna Wierzbicka

# *The Anglosphere*, by Srdjan Vucetic

“**Australia, Canada, and New Zealand** established their special relationships with the **United States** more gradually, as they gained more and more sovereignty from **Britain**. Together, these special relationships are said to constitute a ‘core’ of a **distinct international, transnational, and imperial entity** within the global society, currently known as the ‘Anglosphere’.” (2)

“Centered first on London and then on Washington D.C., the Anglosphere has **dominated international politics for the world for the past 200 years**. (...) As a result, **the world has now gone Anglobal**. Though Australians, Americans, British, Canadians and New Zealanders make up less than 7 percent of the world’s population today, the **standard triumphant argument** is that ‘their’ language is the global language, ‘their’ economies produce more than a third of the global gross domestic product (GDP), and ‘their’ version of liberalism in society and economy defines most human aspirations.” (3)





# Approaching the Anglosphere

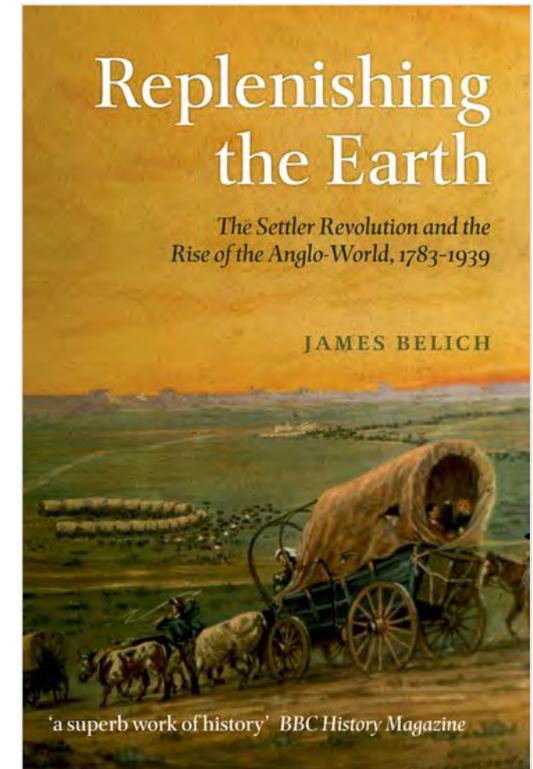
- Racial origins of the term → unity and superiority of the “Anglo-Saxon race”
- Anglosphere constituted through discourse, institutions, practices → e.g. colonialism, imperialism, racism, nationalism
- Centrality of concept of identity → constitution of a “white Self” in contrast to a “peripheral and overwhelmingly nonwhite Other” (6)
- Four epochs in the constitution of the Anglosphere:
  - America and Britain (1894-1903)
  - Australia and New Zealand (1950-51)
  - Australia and Canada (1955-56 and 1964-65)
  - Britain and Canada (2002-2003)

# *Replenishing the Earth*, by James Belich

“Leaving aside the 400 million people in Britain’s subject empire, **English-speakers grew over sixteenfold** in 1790–1930, from around 12 million to around 200 million – a far **greater rate than Indian and Chinese growth, as well as Russian and Hispanic.**” (4; emphasis added)

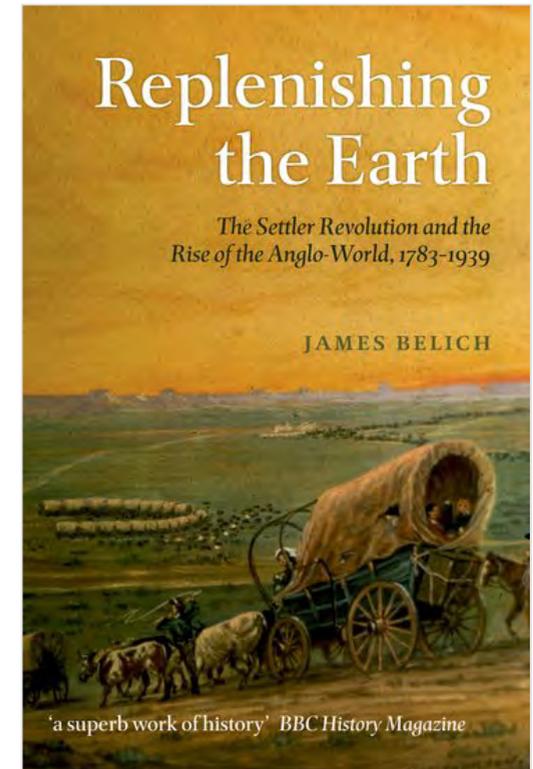
”Perhaps the dominant current explanation for the rise of the Anglophones is their possession of growth-friendly institutions.” (7)

“This book respects such explanations, but it also suspects them.” (8)



# A Very Rough Sketch of Belich's Argument

- Four revolutions: USA, French, Industrial, and Settler
- 1783: 'Anglo-world' fragmented = catalyst for change
- explosive colonization (boom = growth through growth)
- booms, busts, export rescue, and recolonization
- each region can go through various cycles
- different regions boom and bust at different times
- Anglo-prone, but not Anglo-exclusive (Siberia, Argentina)

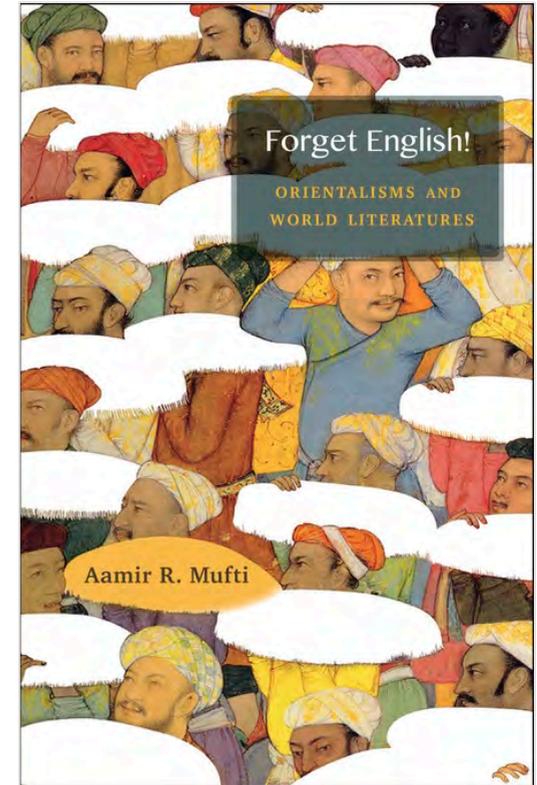


# *Forget English!*, by Aamir R. Mufti

“**Concepts and categories of European origin** are at the core of literature as a worldwide ‘space’ or reality, including long-established ways of thinking about the alien, the exotic, or the other. And European ‘world’ languages, **above all English**, seem to be the not-quite-invisible ether that permeates this space.” (xi)

“I shall seek to demonstrate here that *world literature* has functioned from the very beginning as a **border regime**, a system for the regulation of movement, rather than a set of literary relations beyond and without borders.” (9, italics in the original)

“Today, readers in India, Pakistan, Iran, or Turkey will typically **encounter each other’s literatures only in translation in English** (or in further translation from English), thus only if the works have received that **metropolitan authentication.**” (147)





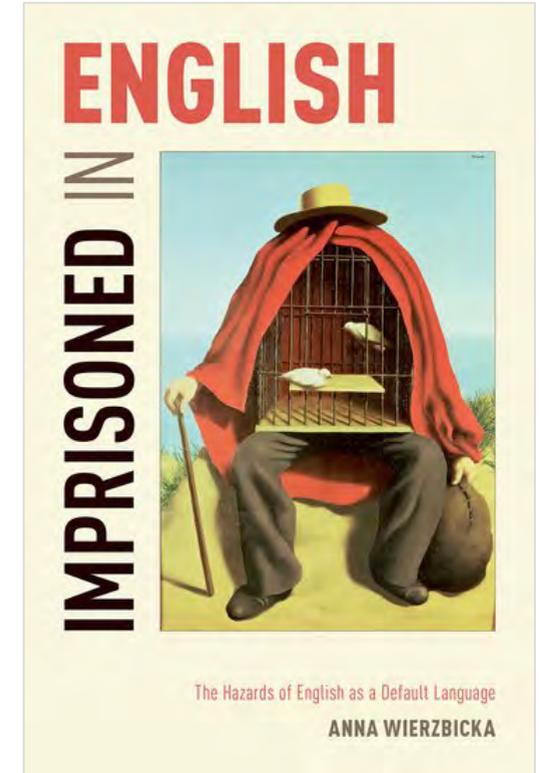
# ***Forget English!*, by Aamir R. Mufti**

- British Empire first transformed extensive and dispersed writing cultures (e.g., Persian, Sanskrit) into “ethnonational spheres” (146) → ‘Orientalization’ of Arab and South-East Asian cultures
- Nationalization of languages accompanied by globalization of English → Central idiom of cosmopolitan exchange
- ‘Indian literature’ circulating globally is usually Anglophone → Rise of a global market for Indian writers writing in English
- Access to English language learning in India fundamentally linked with “class, caste, religious communal, regional, gender, and urban-rural politics” → Desire for English as “mark of the desire for social mobility” (159)
- Rise of the Indo-English novel to global prominence → attribution of an urban middle-class idiom to an illiterate subaltern (as represented in fiction)

# *Imprisoned in English*, by Anna Wierzbicka

“**As individuals, we often see things differently** because we are different persons, with different interests, preoccupations, and assumptions. **As speakers of different languages we see them differently because every language equips its speakers with a particular set of cognitive tools for seeing and interpreting the world.**” (3; emphasis added)

“**[T]he practice of implicitly treating the English language as a standard** in relation to which all other language and cultures can be analyzed and interpreted is still very widespread.” (5; emphasis added)



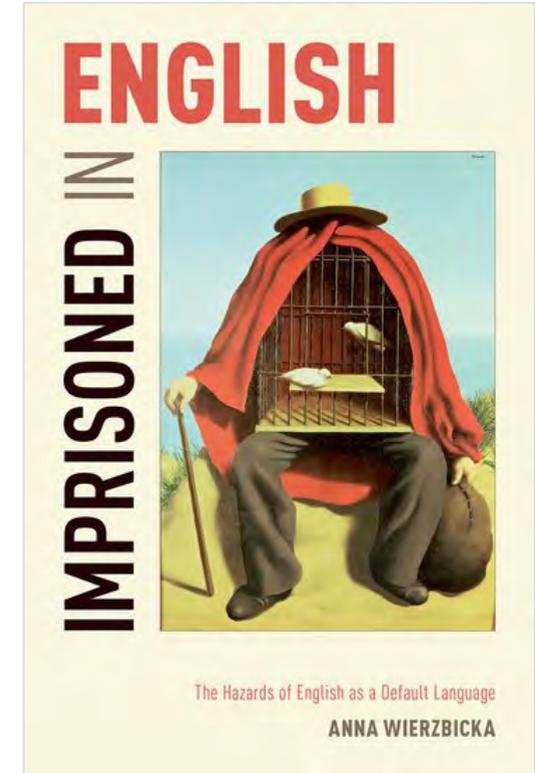
# Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM)

- all languages share universal lexical & grammatical core
- finding universal "semantic primes" & "semantic molecules"
- more complex terms defined through primes & molecules

⇒ "mini-English" = "unbiased" framework (35)

## ***A Very Different Approach***

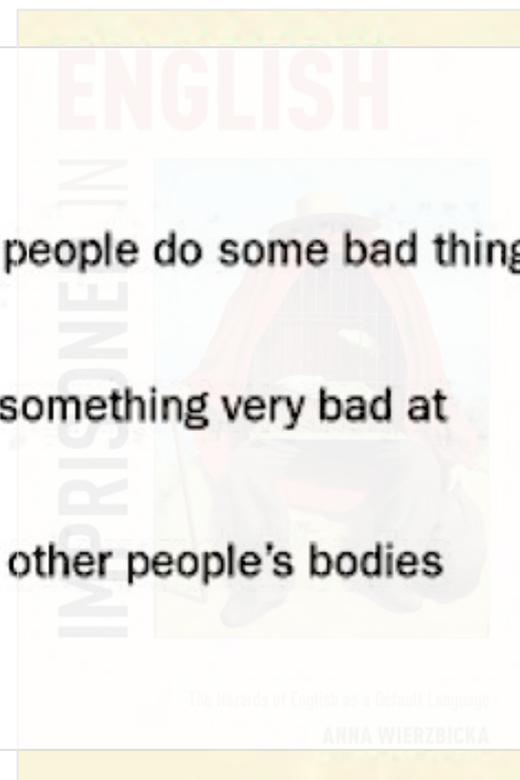
Robert Phillipson. *Linguistic Imperialism Continued*. Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2009.



# Example for an NSM Definition

## **violence** (Modern English)

- a. it can be like this:
- b. something happens in a place for some time because some people do some bad things to some other people in this place at that time
- c. these people do these things at that time because they feel something very bad at that time
- d. they can know that something very bad can happen to these other people's bodies because of this
- e. it is very bad when it is like this





# Four Books, Four Major Points

- Anglosphere: key analytical entity (esp. in global politics) – but problematic
- Rise of the Anglo-world: long 19th century; settlers; complex web of factors
- Even the concept of ‘world literature’ is essentially Anglo-centric
- English as academic *lingua franca* may lead to conceptual imprisonment



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## 4. Use of English in Postcolonial Literature/Theory

Two modes of seizing the language of the colonial centre and **replacing** in in a postcolonial context:

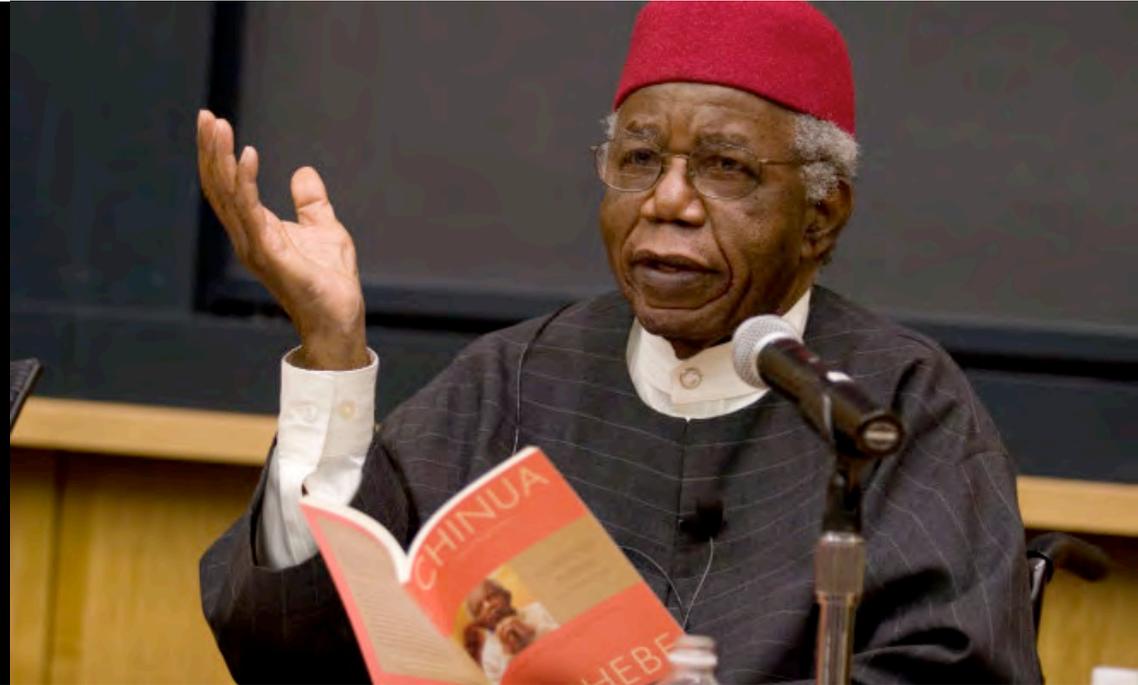
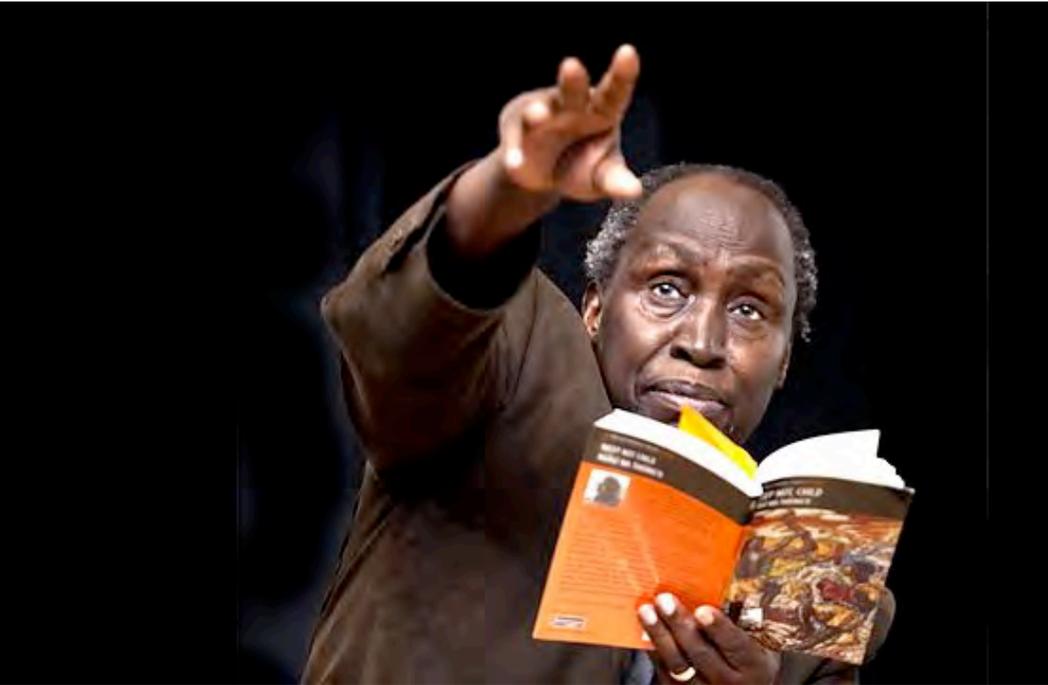
### 1. **Abrogation** → Denial of privilege of English

- Rejecting metropolitan power over means of communication
- Refusing categories of imperial culture: aesthetic values, normative or 'correct' usage, assumption of a 'fixed' meaning attributed to words

### 2. **Appropriation** → Capturing and remoulding the language to new usages

- Colonizer's language made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience
- Language adopted as tool and utilized to express widely differing cultural experiences

# Abrogation vs. Appropriation: A Conflict





# Abrogation vs. Appropriation: A Conflict

## Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

- Famous Kenyan novelist, author of *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986)
- Rejected his Christian name (James Ngugi)
- After 1977: decided to write his novels only in his native Gikuyu

## Chinua Achebe

- Nigerian author, one of Africa's best-known writers, author of 'the first African novel' (in English), *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), "English and the African Writer" (1965)
- Defender of creative use of English language



## Ngugi: *Decolonizing the Mind*

- Language embodies thought processes and values of its culture
- Colonialism and imperialism as a “cultural bomb”: destroyed people’s belief in own language, environment, identity (3)
- Colonial tongue as province of a postcolonial elite → language itself reproduces colonial class distinctions
- Postcolonial African Anglophone literature created an English-speaking African peasantry existing only in novels and dramas → Clear negation of African reality

## Achebe: “English and the African Writer”

- Legacies of colonialism constantly need to be addressed but, paradoxically, they may best be addressed by some of the tools taken from the colonizers
- “I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings.” (30)
- “The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use.” (29)



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Immerhin ETH bleibt in den Top 10

## Uni Zürich rutscht 30 Plätze ab

Sieben Schweizer Hochschulen rangieren unter den Top 200 der besten Hochschulen der Welt, wie die neueste Rangliste des Fachmagazins «Times Higher Education» (THE) zeigt. Für die Uni Zürich gab es jedoch eine unschöne Überraschung: Sie büsste 30 Plätze im Vergleich zum Vorjahr ein.

05.09.2017 19 Reax, 492 Views



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### Mehr zum Thema



Spitzenplätze auf Rangliste  
**Welche Schweizer Uni produziert am meisten Milliardäre?**

35 Reax



Grosse Exklusiv-Umfrage  
**Schweizer wollen radikalen Islam verbieten!**

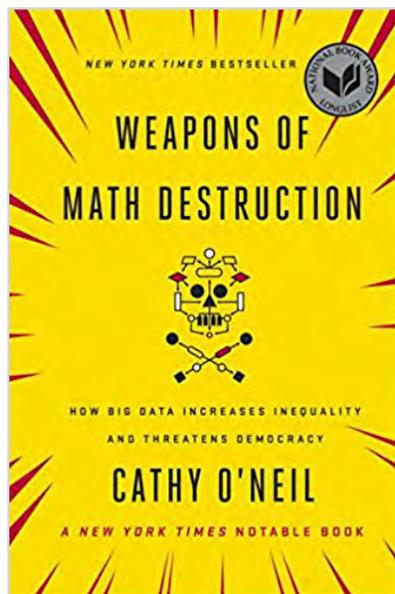
32 Reax



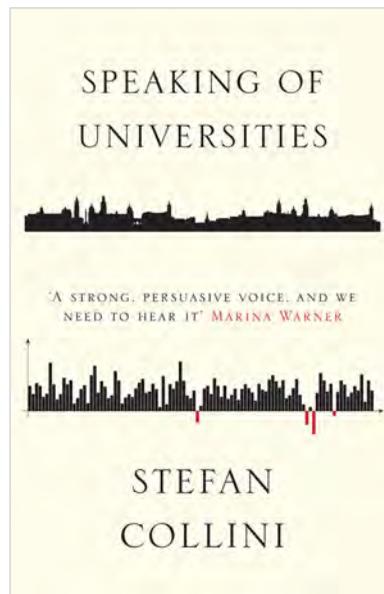
Schweiz hat die höchsten  
Fleischpreise  
**Unser Guggeli ist vier Mal teurer als bei den Nachbarn**

5 Reax

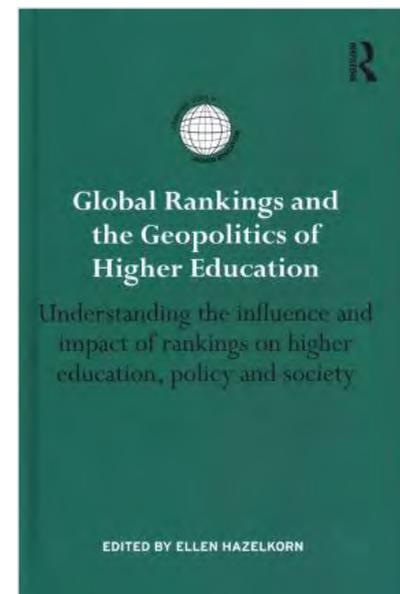
# University Rankings: Three Books



O'Neil, Cathy. *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Our Democracy*. London: Penguin, 2016. (Chapter 3)



Collini, Stefan. *Speaking of Universities*. London: Verso, 2017. (Chapter 2)



Hazelkorn, Ellen, ed. *Global Rankings and the Geopolitics of Higher Education: Understanding the Influence and Impact of Rankings on Higher Education, Policy and Society*. London: Routledge, 2017.



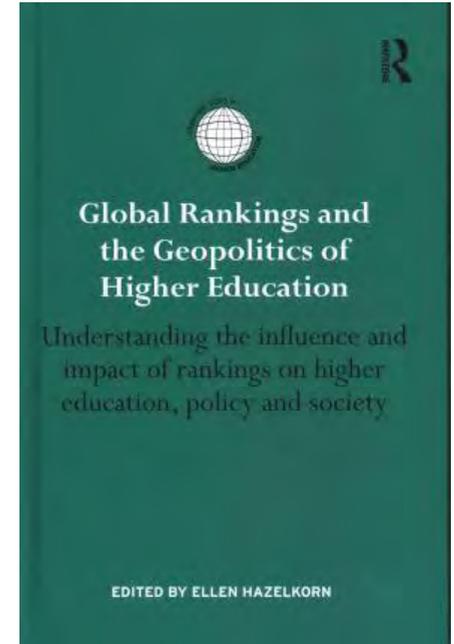
# Rankings: Three Problematic Aspects

1. Rankings use proxy measures  $\Rightarrow$  can be 'gamed' (Collini 53; O'Neil 55)
2. One measure used in most rankings is reputation  $\Rightarrow$  circular (Collini 54)
3. Minor changes in weighting of measures lead to huge shifts in rankings:

“As careful statistical critiques have shown, small variations in such weightings produce dramatically different results, catapulting into the ‘top ten’ institutions not previously included in the ‘top fifty’ and so on. **There is no neutral or agreed way to weight the different components.**” (Collini 54–55; emphasis added)

# The History of University Rankings

1. Pre-history (1870–1983)
2. First wave of national rankings (c. 1980)
3. First wave of global rankings (c. 1997)
4. Second wave of national rankings (c. 2003)
5. Second wave of international rankings



Usher, Alex. "A Short Global History of Rankings." In: Hazelkorn 23–53.



# The History of University Rankings

1. Pre-history (1870–1983) → ***USA (+ UK)***
2. First wave of national rankings (c. 1980) → ***USA, commercial agents***
3. First wave of global rankings (c. 1997) → ***China (Shanghai Ranking)***
4. Second wave of national rankings (c. 2003) → ***government-sponsored***
5. Second wave of international rankings → ***regionalized, multi-dimensional***

Usher, Alex. "A Short Global History of Rankings." In: Hazelkorn 23–53.

# Alex Usher on the Shanghai Ranking

“[T]his global ranking developed out of an exercise which **tried to analyse excellence in the specific framework of American research universities**. This created something of an **institutional bias** towards certain forms of higher education organisation. [...] Specifically, it elevated those parts of the world where where universities' research mission was more prestigious than its teaching or social missions (i.e. North America, parts of Europe and Japan) over those where the opposite was the case (everywhere else).”

(Usher 38; emphasis added)

Usher, Alex. “A Short Global History of Rankings.” In: Hazelkorn 23–53.



# Alex Usher's History of Rankings: Assessment

***EITHER*** Usher's history is correct – in which case the spread of university rankings is a perfect example for Anglospheric influence;

***OR*** Usher's history is incorrect in claiming that phases 1–3 were dominated by the Anglosphere – in which case his article is a perfect example of Anglospheric bias.

***IN EITHER CASE*** the question of Anglospheric hegemony is crucial: either as a matter of direct geopolitical influence – or as a bias in academic historiography.

Usher, Alex. "A Short Global History of Rankings." In: Hazelkorn 23–53.

# Summary and Additional Points of Criticism

- **Goal displacement:** improving ranking & proxies – not quality (McCormick 211)
- **Homogenization:** ‘Western,’ with a strong Anglo-bias (Lane and Kinser 269–270)
- **Uni-to-uni comparison:** variability within institution neglected (McCormick 213)
- **Bifurcation:** global elite universities attended by elite (Lane and Kinser 271)
- **Public cost, private profit:** free data for ranking firms (Robertson and Olds 65)

Lane, Jason E. and Kevin Kinser. “Rankings, Higher Education Internationalisation and National Strategies: Trade-Offs, Policy Levers and (Un)Intended Outcomes.” In Hazelkorn 258–273.

McCormick, Alexander C. “The Intersection of Rankings with University Quality.” In: Hazelkorn 205–215.

Robertson, Susan L. and Kris Olds. “Rankings as Global (Monetising) Scopic Systems.” In: Hazelkorn 54–76.

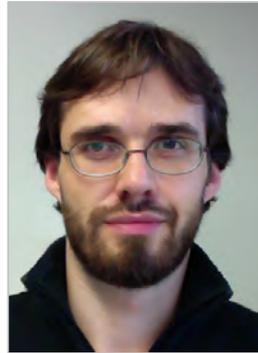


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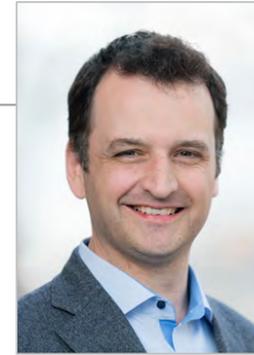
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## 6. The Program: Speakers and Topics



# Section 1: History and Politics (I)



1. **Srdjan Vucetic** – The Anglosphere beyond Security
2. **Martin Dusingher** – Other Spheres in History: The Sinosphere
3. **Harald Fischer-Tiné** – The (Post)-Colonial Careers of English in India  
(c. 1800–2000)

## Section 2: Language



4. **Daniel Stotz** – Language Policy in Switzerland’s Educational System:  
A Case of Anglo Encroachment?
5. **Daniel Schreier & Marianne Hundt** – The Evolution of World Englishes:  
From Unity to Diversity

## Section 3: Music, Art, and Literature



6. **Laurenz Lütteken** – “Seid umschlungen, Millionen!”: Musikalische Leitkulturen und das Problem des Englischen
7. **Ana Sobral** – Spreading the Hip-Hop Nation: Americanization of the World?
8. **Carmen Mörsch** – The Education/Formation of O\_t\_h\_e\_r\_s through Art: Art, Education, and Empire
9. **Martin Mühlheim** – “Woven with Tram Lines”: Zurich in Anglophone Literatures

## Section 4: History and Politics (II)



10. **Ambassador Breifne O'Reilly & Shane Walshe** – Ireland and Globalisation: Closer to Boston than Berlin?
11. **Prem Mahadevan** – The “Jihadosphere” versus the Anglosphere: Convergence and Clashes of Intellect and Brutality
12. **Ana Sobral & Martin Mühlheim** – Conclusion: Reconsidering the Anglosphere



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## 7. Final Exam: Important Information

- **Date:** December 20, 2017 (maximum time for exam: 90 min)
- **Format:** Two multiple choice questions per session = 26 questions overall
- **To pass:** Bachelor students need fewer correct answers than Master students
- **Note:** Two questions may be left empty (i.e. only 24 need to be answered)
- **Who:** Only students who have booked the module
- **Additional Information:** Session on November 22, 2017