Anglophone Literatures This is a disciplinary field that links together all writing produced in English, inclusive of British and occasionally of so-termed minority or multicultural American texts as well, although the usual category for the latter is "literature of the Americas." All of the texts once understood as Commonwealth are now more widely understood as anglophone, with the semantic change signaling a de-emphasis of static imperial relations between the metropolitan homeland and its protectorates. Canonical value is no longer imagined to be held exclusively by the **center**, as it was with the discipline of **Commonwealth literature**. In fact, critics such as **C.L.R. James** have argued that the "best" writing in English in the twentieth century was produced by writers who are not themselves English, from James Joyce and Joseph Conrad, to **Derek Walcott**, J. M. Coetzee, and **Kamau Brathwaite**. The international popularity, critical acclaim, and prizewinning status of novels written in English by non-English writers confirm this. Understanding most of twentieth-century writing in English as anglophone acknowledges the difficulties, if not impossibilities, of establishing national identifications for the vast number of transnational or migrant writers who are born in one country and then choose (or are forced to choose) to live in another. In this respect, English studies has swerved away from a nation-based paradigm and toward one that is language-based. "Anglophone

literature" also acknowledges the increased production and availability of literary texts from all over the world, although one important pitfall of this expansion of the canon is advocacy criticism, whereby the value of "marginal" writers is determined in relation to the literary value of the center. Such a global literary web also suggests the possibilities of interconnectedness among texts produced in different parts of the world, whether it be through thematic, problematic, style, or narrative structure. A significant and much commented-upon group of anglophone texts are those that fall into the category of "rewriting empire" because they annotate, parody, and otherwise rework the major canonical tropes and figures that have contributed to an understanding of the "Third World" and its subjects. For example, such texts as *The Tempest*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Jane Eyre*, *Kim*, and *Heart of Darkness* and the figures of Prospero, Caliban, Bertha Mason, and Friday have been reframed and represented by such authors as Brathwaite, Walcott, Coetzee, **Michelle Cliff**, **Chinua Achebe**, Jean Rhys, and Michael Ondaatje. Insofar as the disparate anglophone texts may be said to share disparate concerns, they also may be said to allow for the identification of connections, particularly in their concern with the materiality of violence, Western commodities, migrancy, **nativism**, **identity** and alienation, and the imperial force of English.

The field of anglophone literatures is made up of diverse texts, all of which are written in English. An important question to ask, then, is what ultimately links, for example, **Jamaica Kincaid** to **Wole Soyinka** or to **Salman Rushdie**. One answer to this question has to be that there is a certain connection between the English language and colonialism. The authors understood as anglophone belong to different historical and cultural moments (e.g., South Africa, Pakistan, Antigua), and they belong to distinct moments and distinct spaces, yet they are all still readable if one knows English. This raises an interesting paradox: a sense of the different moments and practices of readings, on the one hand, and an apparent commonality and ease of translation, on the other. Yet, this act of **translation** is erroneous insofar as one cannot comprehend all of the texts equally; certain cultural references or rhetorical styles might always be "foreign" or ungraspable. Thus, the discussion of writing in English presumes a kind of unity and singularity, a unified literature in English, but multiplicity and differences are ineluctable: the field must instead be understood as literature in English*es*. Such a designation is necessary in order to account for the varieties of English that are circumscribed as anglophone, and naming individual dialects such as Jamaican English, Scots, and Nigerian English is not sufficient to account for the innumerable differences in languages among all of the "new" Englishes. These differences, which result from the use of pidgins, **Creoles**, nation languages, neologisms, Standard English, and a hybridity of languages, have been significant enough to prompt the critical suggestion that anglophone literatures would benefit from the methodological approaches of comparative literature and linguistics.

The imperial force of language has become a central thematic in twentieth-

century literature and criticism, and the institutionalization of imperial languages (English, French, Spanish) within the colonies has been registered within anglophone literary texts as both a destructive imposition and as a productive, enabling, or even necessary force. **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o** and Chinua Achebe have most prominently taken these respective positions within the context of what can be framed as a debate on the use of English by African writers. (It is important to note that this debate on the politics of writing in English is not alone in its basic premise, which is that there is no material difference in the facility with which non-native speakers work within the language.) Achebe articulates both the necessity and the advantages of writing in English in terms of the international audience and currency of the language and in terms of its cultural and literary inheritance. He does, however, allow for English as performing a colonization of the mind, a position most famously taken by Ngũgĩ, who reads language as colonialism's weapon of choice. Ngũgĩ argues that English functions as the language of capital, industry, technology, and war and that the phenomenon of Africans writing in English suggests that the situation for "Third World" writers is neocolonial, rather than postcolonial. Contemporary arguments that have followed in Ngũgĩ's wake have held that the imagined diaspora of English is not just a matter of anglophone unity but also a matter of an anglophone identity intimately allied with a civil and thinly disguised cultural identity. In such a context, to command someone to write in English is not just to command the use of a grammar or vocabulary or to command the demonstration of a technical literacy but is also to command the performance of a particular cultural identity. Such a power/knowledge critique of a one-way flow of information, from the center to the margins, has been modified by an understanding of the use of English as an appropriation, counterinhabitation, and dismantling of a dominant language. It follows that the ultimate argument, made by Chinua Achebe and others, for the use of English depends upon the refashioning and making "new" of English. Such a refashioning finds its perfect metaphor in the title of Louise Bennett's (Jamaica) poem, "Colonisation in Reverse" (1949), which is about the phenomenon of **black Britain** and is itself written in a dialect of English.

One reaction to the "new" Englishes from the metropole has been that the uses of English by anglophone writers have been read as part of the unintelligible background noise of the colony and of the metropole—as imperfect, impure corruptions of a Grand (literary and linguistic) Tradition. But they also have to be read as highly innovative and even emancipatory, whereby a postcolonial writer might appropriate English in order to subvert the tyranny of an imposed colonial language by making a home within it. Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) is an early and important example, as is Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (1985). What Tutuola, Saro-Wiwa, Michelle Cliff, and **Sam Selvon** achieve in their novels is precisely that: the inhabitation, making indigenous, and subterranean reworking of English. These writers are not in the position of assimilation or **mimicry** or simply producing

literature in the canonical or generic mode of the West, but they are instead producing a hybrid cultural form. They are at once severing language from some of its cultural associations (severing English from its ties to Western power and rewriting its racist and colonial ideology) *and* realigning language and culture (providing oppositional representations of "Nigeria" or "Jamaica" in a new language). Their work promises to reconfigure the association of English with power, empire, nation, and culture, and it suggests the extent to which there are fundamental differences between "English literature" and "literature in English." Other Nigerian writers commenting upon the relations between English and power and contributing to a "new" English include Achebe, Gabriel Okara, Ben Okri, **Buchi Emecheta**, Femi Osofisan, and Wole Soyinka.

The "literatures" component of anglophone literatures is equally important, encompassing as it does the classical generic modes of poetry, novels, stories, memoirs, essays, and plays but including as well a number of oral modes such as dub poetry, folk poetry and folk songs, praise songs, calypso, dread talk, curses, and word-songs. These oral modes have directly contributed to the emergence of anglophone Caribbean literature (also named West Indian) as an academic field, insofar as their translation into print form has secured an international audience and insofar as they have helped to inaugurate a literary tradition with which contemporary writers remain in conversation. An important early moment in this field was the BBC-sponsored radio program *Caribbean Voices* (begun 1946), a weekly program broadcast to the West Indies that helped to launch the careers of Selvon, **V. S. Naipaul**, Michael Anthony, **George Lamming**, and Andrew Salkey. A diasporic Caribbean literary community with profound ties to Britain was the result, and the fifty or so books produced by British Caribbean novelists between 1948 and 1958 constitute one of the most significant cultural phenomena at the ends of the British empire. Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) was the first Caribbean novel written entirely in the literary demotic and among the first to present Caribbean speech as dignified, natural, and something other than a curiosity. Calypso has had a profound influence on Selvon and Caribbean literature as a whole, as has jazz, and Jamaican writing in particular has evolved in relation to reggae, of which dub poetry, which involves reading against the rhythm of the bass line, is the quintessential form. Black British dub poets such as Linton Kwesi Johnson, Benjamin Zephaniah, and Michael Smith have found a significant audience in London and New York, and they have turned their attention to the problem of race relations in contemporary Britain, much as migrant Caribbean writers living in the United States have turned their attention to race relations here (Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, Cliff).

Anglophone Caribbean writing is composed of African, East Indian, Carib, and other indigenous cultural influences, but an important divide is epitomized by Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite, insofar as Walcott generally writes in standard English and has achieved a place within mainstream world literature, and Brathwaite generally writes in what he terms "nation language." Another way of tracing the contours of the field is generational (not by age but by moment of publication), with the following writers grouped in the first wave: Louise Bennett (Jamaica), Erna Brodber (Jamaica), **Wilson Harris** (Guyana), Merle Hodge (Trinidad), C.L.R. James (Trinidad), George Lamming (Barbados), Paule Marshall (Barbados), V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad), Jean Rhys (Dominica), Andrew Salkey (Jamaica), and Sam Selvon (Trinidad). The second wave of Caribbean writers would include Kamau Brathwaite (Barbados), Jean Binta Breeze (Jamaica), David Dabydeen (Guyana), Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua), **Earl Lovelace** (Trinidad), Grace Nichols (Guyana), **Caryl Phillips** (St. Kitts), Olive Senior (Jamaica), Derek Walcott (St. Lucia).

Black British writing links together not just Caribbean migrants but African and South Asian as well. Among the more prominent literary figures tied in some way both to Britain and to a South Asian diaspora are Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi. Kureishi is a novelist and short story writer, but some of his most important work has been screenplays (*My Beautiful Launderette* [1986] and *Sammy and Rosie* [1988]), which indicate the extent to which anglophone literatures include all media forms. Other writers who have produced notable works for visual media include Ken Saro-Wiwa, who wrote and directed the popular and critically acclaimed Nigerian sitcom *Basi and Company* (1987), and Michael Ondaatje, whose novel *The English Patient* (1992) was translated into a popular film. The South Asian diaspora has produced some of the most prominent "postcolonial" writers, critics, and critical studies essayists, and after the publication of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), a retroactive genealogy of what has also been variously termed as subcontinental, Indo-Anglian, and South Asian literature has been drawn back to Rabindranath Tagore. Such a genealogy includes colonial-era texts by Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forster and Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Burmese writers such as Ondaatje (novels), Rushdie (novels, stories), **Bapsi Sidhwa** (novels), **Anita Desai** (novels), Kamala Das (poetry), Rohinton Mistry (novels), **R. K. Narayan** (novels), **Nayantara Sahgal** (novels), Vikram Seth (novels, poetry), Arundhati Roy (novels), Sujata Bhatt (poetry), Sara Suleri (memoirs), and Wendy Law-Yone (novels).

British literature itself is a problematic category, given the most recent revival of Scots, led by award-winning and popular writers James Kelman (novels, stories), Irvine Welsh (novels, stories), Duncan McLean (stories), Janice Galloway (novels), Alex Hamilton (stories), A. L. Kennedy (novels), and Andrew Crumey (novels). Traces of linguistic and cultural autonomy, if not **nationalism**, are present in the latest generation of Scottish writers, as is anticolonial sentiment. So, too, English–Irish colonial relations figure prominently in Irish writing of this century, from James Joyce and W. B. Yeats, to Flan O'Brien (novels), Seamus Heaney (poetry), Eavan Bolland (poetry), Brian Friel (plays), and Roddy Doyle (novels). Anglophone literatures also encompass other national literatures annotated in this volume: Australian, Canadian (English), Filipino, Irish, Native American, New Zealand/Maori, South African, Sri Lankan, and Zimbabwean.