



Call for Papers:

European Peripheries in Postcolonial Literatures: A Symposium

University of Liège, Belgium, 24 May 2018

Former colonial metropolises, London and Paris in particular, form popular loci for the so-called postcolonial/ethnic minority literary texts set in Europe (see e.g. McLeod 2004; Adesanmi 2005; Kuitche Fonkou 2010; De Souza & Murdoch 2013; Perfect 2014). With their landmarks and suburbs, these multicultural metropolitan centres serve as settings in narratives exploring a variety of diasporic and minority experiences in Europe. In this way, the texts contribute to the project of rewriting European cityscapes from a new perspective, and draw attention to the ways in which Europe itself is postcolonial (Schulze-Engler 2013).

Yet, due to the diversification of mobilities in the postcolonial era, traditional post/colonial centres are no longer the unique or axiomatic places in which postcolonial literary representations of Europe are set. Less central – and equally less studied – locations such as provincial cities, cities in countries with no direct involvement in colonialism, rural areas, or islands situated on the fringes of Europe, have also found their way into the postcolonial literary imaginary. Examples could include Edinburgh in Tendai Huchu's *The Maestro, the Magistrate and the Mathematician*; the Spanish enclaves in Marie NDiaye's *Trois femmes puissantes*; or the small Portuguese village of Mamarrosa in Monica Ali's *Alentejo Blue*.

The aim of this symposium is to explore the ways in which European locations that easily come across as peripheral from a metropolitan Londonian or Parisian perspective are represented in postcolonial literatures. How are these peripheries valued vis-à-vis more central European locations? Do the texts perpetuate or destabilize binary spatial oppositions (e.g. urban metropolis vs. provincial backwater) in their representations of Europe? If depictions of European metropolises in postcolonial/minority literatures tend to reflect on themes such as cosmopolitanism and transculturation, which issues seem to pertain to depictions of European peripheries?

We invite papers that analyse the representation of European peripheries and less central cities in postcolonial literary texts set anywhere on the continent and written in any language. Papers adopting a comparative approach to postcolonial narratives of different European central and peripheral locations are also welcome. The language of the symposium is English. After the symposium, selected papers will be considered for publication in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal (edited by Janine Hauthal, VUB, and Anna-Leena Toivanen, ULg).

Please send 250-word abstracts for 20-minute papers to Anna-Leena Toivanen at anna-leena.toivanen@ulg.ac.be by 29 October 2017.

The symposium is organized by CEREP, Centre for Teaching and Research in Postcolonial Studies of the University of Liège.