

The French Dilemma: Postmigrant Writing and *Francophonie*

Myriam Geiser, Université Grenoble Alpes

The postmigrant condition is not easy to define in the context of French literature, since the reception of migrant writing after 1945 has been very different, depending on whether the authors originate from former colonies or not. The academic discipline of *Francophonie* partially hindered the study of postcolonial migrant writing as a contribution to French culture from the Inside. This may appear contradictory as the conceptual term of *Francophonie* is “still widely perceived to designate locations and contexts outside metropolitan France (including France’s overseas departments and territories, which remain constitutionally and economically part of the French state)” (C. Forsdick / D. Murpy, *Postcolonial Thought in the French-speaking-World*, 2009, 4). Recent critical positions dismiss it therefore as “a carrier of neocolonial, Orientalist baggage; a ghettoizing, divisive, exclusionary term in publishing and academia” (E. Apter, *Against World Literature*, 2013, 175). Due to the complex reception context of migrant writing within the postcolonial framework, writers and works have evolved in a sort of ‘blind spot’ of the French literary system. The location of postmigrant writing in France since the late 1980s seems as ambiguous. Neither entirely ‘French’, nor ‘Francophone’, this current has been marginalized as a ‘no man’s land’ outside of all spatial categories. Paradoxically, it was the postmigrant *Beur* phenomenon that first raised scholarly attention to migrant writing in France (although it received more interest in foreign French departments than in French academia). The literary production of descendants of Maghrebi immigrants was perceived as the paradigm for a new transcultural tendency in French literature. My contribution tends to reflect present transformations of the literary system and its complex dynamics of canonization in the realm of current debates on identity and affiliation. Recent globalizing concepts such as “littérature-monde” can be considered as attempts to overcome the postcolonial predicament. Is postmigrant writing in France a ‘cultural project that is trans- or anti-national in spirit’?