

Call for Papers

Mediterranean Working-Class Literatures

International Conference

University of Thessaly, Volos

7-8 June 2024

Confirmed Keynote Speaker: Dr. Monica Jansen, Utrecht University

Despite its establishment as a geographic space and field of widespread and consolidated imaginary investments, the Mediterranean resists any definite and unanimous delimitation and topographic ring-fencing. In fact, the Mediterranean is indissolubly tied to its discourses (Metvejevic, 1999, p. 12), which, on a diachronic axis, include both orientalist approaches and attempts to resist or overturn implicit or explicit value judgments intrinsic to these narratives (Camus, 1948; Cassano, 2005). Although traditionally viewed through the lens of a geographically static 'Mediterraneanism' either as a single, closed space or as a hotbed of conflict and contrasts (Herzfeld, 1984), the Mediterranean has been recently approached on the basis of diverse scales, in order to explore asymmetrical relations of symbolic and institutional power. The term 'postcolonial sea' both involves part of these shifting relations and places an emphasis on fluidity and exchange.

In this context, **mobility** arises as an invaluable compass for the navigation of the unchartable Mediterranean Sea. During the 20th and the 21st century, Mediterranean ports have constituted points of departure for overseas journeys; of arrival, for intra-Mediterranean transfers; transit points for routes to northern destinations. However, the intensification of mobility has been accompanied by a retentive process of control based on social stratification, which both regulates the circulation of primarily labour skills and effects the institutionalization of material and symbolic, internal and external, borders. The concept of '**class**', therefore, is particularly pertinent in this instant, especially when taking into account that certain, primarily gendered, codes regularly employed for the analysis of Mediterranean cultures may be interpreted as expressions of class relations (Herzfeld, 1984, p. 66; de Pina-Cabral, 1989, p. 402).

Drawing on the above remarks, this conference starts from the premise that **working-class narratives focusing on the Mediterranean** renegotiate the stereotypical, often gendered, hierarchically interlinked representations of European North and South, East and West, which discursively construct the Mediterranean in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Hence the adoption of the Mediterranean as a context of literary production, point of reference and comparative literary study allows for a more thorough understanding of working-class narratives, which, in this particular area, are closely related to migratory phenomena.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) The Mediterranean as a cultural context for working-class narratives
- 2) The intersection of class with other social categories (gender, ethnicity, sexuality) in Mediterranean working-class narratives

- 3) Comparative examinations of working-class narratives belonging to diverse literary traditions of the Mediterranean
- 4) Diasporic working-class narratives
- 5) Migration as a motif in Mediterranean working-class narratives
- 6) Comparative analysis with other types of working-class narratives in the Mediterranean (cinematic, autobiographical, etc.)

The conference will take place on-site at the University of Thessaly, in the city of Volos; however, provisions will be made for on-line participation, in exceptional cases.

Interested contributors are invited to submit in a **250-word** abstract in **English or Greek**, accompanied by a short bio, by **February 10, 2024** to: medworklit@gmail.com. Please also use this email address for any further queries. Contributors will be notified by the Scientific Committee by **February 20, 2024**. Selected conference papers will be published in a collective volume.

Organising Committee

Vasiliki Petsa, Postdoctoral Researcher & PI of the research project GEWOCL (H.F.R.I.), University of Thessaly

Evgenia Sifaki, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Thessaly

Vasileios Petikas, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Crete, Scientific Associate of the research project GEWOCL (H.F.R.I.), University of Thessaly

Nikolaos Kalogiros, Ph.D. Candidate & Scientific Associate of the research program GEWOCL (H.F.R.I.), Department of Early Childhood Education University of Thessaly

Carlo Bragheti, Chercheur contractuel Centre National Recherche Scientifique – CNRS, member of the research group OBERT

Erica Bellia, Junior Research Fellow, Churchill College, University of Cambridge, member of the research group OBERT

Scientific Committee

Vasiliki Petsa, Postdoctoral Researcher & PI of the research project GEWOCL (H.F.R.I.), University of Thessaly

Evgenia Sifaki, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Thessaly

Carlo Bragheti, Chercheur contractuel Centre National Recherche Scientifique – CNRS, member of the research group OBERT

Erica Bellia, Junior Research Fellow, Churchill College, University of Cambridge, member of the research group OBERT

Bibliography

Metvejevic, P (1999) *Mediterranean. A Cultural Landscape* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press).

Camus, A. (1959)[1948] 'L' exil d' Hélène', in *L' été*, (Paris: Gallimard), 75-83.

Cassano, F. (2005) *Il pensiero meridiano* (Bari: Editori Laterza).

Herzfeld, M. (1984) 'The Horns of the Mediterraneanist Dilemma', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 439-454.

Chambers, I. (2008) *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press).

Giaccaria, P. & Minca, C. (2010) 'The Mediterranean alternative', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2011), 345-365.

de Pina-Cabral, J. (1989) 'The Mediterranean as a Category of Regional Comparison: A Critical View', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Jun., 1989), pp. 399-406.



This conference is supported by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) under the "3rd Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to support Post-Doctoral Researchers" (Project Number:7520, GEWOCL, PI: Vasiliki Petsa).