



Representations of Home in Literatures and Cultures in English

(Dis)locations: The Shifting Thematics of Home

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University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies (ULICES)

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The ULICES Representations of Home research project addresses issues of identity and belonging in different geo-political, socio-cultural contexts of countries where English is or has become a language of communication.

Since its formation in 2013, the project has explored this theme as represented in literature, the visual arts and culture, but also from a social, political and historical perspective. The idea of home branches out in many directions, is multi-layered and ongoing. Its multiple interpretations range from more objective, when dealing with voluntary and involuntary migration and exile, war, conflict, abuse, trauma, demographic evolution and the effects of climate change, while the more subjective representations deal with the ideal, imaginary, remembered and desired home.

Location is fundamental to any of the readings of “home.” It is implicit that knowing where one belongs implies recognising where one does not belong, and the problem of being removed from such a place. However, it is important to deconstruct the assumption that there are boundaries and limitations to the possibilities of home or to where one belongs and does not belong. Bill Ashcroft has argued for less focus on boundaries than on a stance of “outwardness” (2001, 204-5), while Bhabha has long debated for the recognition of cultural hybridity in contemporary society, and the acceptance of diversity (1994, 114), while arguing for an ethics of reading unhomely fiction: “To live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity” (1992, 18).

Acknowledging place(s), space(s) or community as home simultaneously embraces actions of searching and anchoring, movement and non-movement, centring and decentering, whether individually or in a group, which empirically and symbolically attribute meaning to that or various locations and dislocations. The postmodern and postcolonial subject, described by de Medeiros as the “shattered postcolonial Self” (2018, 23), has shifted beyond the realm of the “monocultural, monoethnic, and monolingual” (30) and perhaps the same can be said of place. Divergent and shifting meanings attached to a specific place may be the reason for (dis)location or relocation. More subjective forms of (dis)location also exist through the reconstruction of

the past and construction of the present and future, a function of cultural memory. Concepts as “rhizomic anchoring” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), “topophilia” (Yi-Fu Tuan, 1974; 1977) and “un-homing” (Elliott-Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees, 2019), among others, also allow for a shift from the question about origins to that of destination (cf. Nicolas Bourriaud, 2009).

For the RHOME project’s next conference, which will take place in Lisbon in June 2023, we invite contributions on representations of home and the thematics of dislocation in English-speaking communities.

Possible topics to explore within this theme:

- Home and (non-)belonging
- Home and hospitality
- Home and migration
- Home, war and the refugees
- Home and nationalisms
- Home, language and identity
- Home and the body
- Imaginary homes/homelands
- Home and nature
- Home and the Anthropocene
- Home, memory and affect

Proposals of no more than 300 words along with a bio-note of 50 words, name, affiliation and 5 keywords should be sent to rephome@letras.ulisboa.pt by the 02/01/2023.

For more information on the project and past conferences please visit the project website at:

<https://www.rhome.letras.ulisboa.pt/>