



# 'MINORITY' CULTURES AND TRAVEL

## CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

**NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH, 14-16 SEPTEMBER 2015**

In collaboration with Wales Literature Exchange and Ceredigion Museum

Keynote speaker: Professor Michael Cronin (Dublin City University)

Interview: Basque writer Kirmen Uribe in conversation with Ned Thomas

This interdisciplinary conference interrogates the concept of 'minority' culture through the prism of travel and travel writing. In this context, the complex and often controversial notion of 'minority' might be defined as linguistic, cultural, ethnic or geopolitical. The conference theme emerges from work undertaken as part of the AHRC-funded project 'European Travellers to Wales: 1750-2010' and seeks to broaden the scope of the project to encompass encounters involving so-called 'minority' cultures from across the globe. The topic has particular currency in the light of events unfolding in Scotland and Catalonia, where cultural identities are being renegotiated in relation to the hegemonic hierarchy of power, as well as those in Ukraine where competing minority identities continue to struggle for cultural recognition against a backdrop of oppression and political disenfranchisement.

This conference will probe the nature of the relationship between 'minority' cultures and travel. Its central concern is the engagement of travellers with the places they visit and their documented responses to experiences in the 'contact zone' (Pratt 1992) or 'translation zone' (Apter 2006). How do travellers conceptualise and engage with 'minority' cultures? How do their works reflect the shifting dynamics of centre-periphery relationships and address the potential invisibility and perceived immobility of 'minority' cultures? To what extent do they reinforce or challenge hegemonic/'minor' dichotomies, or consider the relationship between 'minority' cultures? Equally, how does the cultural identity/status of travellers from 'minority' cultures influence their experiences and representations of travel? To what extent can travel and the genre of travel writing be used as vehicles to call for the cultural and political recognition of 'minority' cultures and increase their visibility? Is it possible to identify a poetics of travel writing associated with authors from 'minority' cultures? Within such a tradition, to what extent is it necessary to pay attention to other variables that identify the traveller, such as class and gender?

We welcome papers from diverse theoretical frameworks, cultural contexts and historical periods. Papers may focus on a variety of textual sources and visual artefacts including travelogues, letters, correspondences, diaries, literary works, fine art and documentaries.

Topics may include but are not confined to:

- Travellers from 'minority' cultures
- Travel in 'minority' cultures and non-state nations
- Invisibility, hegemony and globalisation
- Periphery - periphery relations
- Travels and lesser-used languages
- Travel writing and translation
- Mobility studies

We invite proposals of **300 words** for papers of **20 minutes in length**. Please e-mail your abstracts to Dr Rita Singer ([rita.singer@wales.ac.uk](mailto:rita.singer@wales.ac.uk)) by 31 October 2014. We welcome proposals for individual papers or for ready-formed panels of three speakers with a chair. Papers may be delivered in English or Welsh.

Organisers: Carol Tully (Bangor University), Kathryn Jones (Swansea University), Heather Williams and Rita Singer (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth).

For further information about the project, please visit our website: [etw.bangor.ac.uk](http://etw.bangor.ac.uk)



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