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Wednesday, 6 February, 2013, 11 a.m.

Fellow Seminar

Ágnes Györke:

The Poetics of Urban Space: Exploring the City Through Literature

My presentation addresses three questions: in the first part of the talk I will discuss the main approaches to the study of urban space; second, I will address the role of literary texts (and other cultural products) in creating imaginary versions of the city; third, I will analyse the novels of a number of migrant writers (Monica Ali, Buchi Emecheta, Salman Rushdie, among others) in the context of urban studies. I argue that there is a discrepancy between the claims of postcolonial critics such as Homi K. Bhabha and Bill Ashcroft, for instance, who assert that the migrant is empowered to actively challenge dominant discourses, and the subjectivities depicted in these texts. Relying on G. C. Spivak's notion of the subaltern, I will explore marginalised positions and gendered spatialities in Emecheta's and Ali's novels.

Ágnes Györke is a lecturer at the University of Debrecen, Department of British Studies. She received her PhD in 2009. Her research interests include contemporary British and postcolonial fiction, gender studies, (trans)nationalism in literature (including Hungarian fiction), and cultural studies. Her book titled *Rushdie's Postmodern Nations: Midnight's Children, Shame and The Satanic Verses* was published in 2012.