

Postcolonizing Europe? An International Workshop

with Dipesh Chakrabarty (Chicago)

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The project of postcolonial studies can, arguably, best be understood and practiced in terms of process and perspective rather than in terms of period and place. Instead of turning to a given set of territorial examples, typically found beyond the perceived boundaries of Europe, and to some troubled period in their historical emergence from colonial rule, postcolonial studies may more productively draw critical attention to the ways in which such histories and territories have been made and remade in a process of reflection, shifting concepts and perspectives so as to question also the positions from which all given inquiries proceed. In *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty has raised such issues about postcolonial thought and how it may relate to place, working on the premise of contemporary globalized conditions and yet searching for another standpoint where historical difference and multiple modernities can be addressed and critically reviewed. How, then, does Europe figure in current postcolonial arguments? How have the boundaries between Europe and its other been policed and/or transgressed? What social challenges are raised and met by diasporic or transcultural citizens of Europe's metropolitan cities? And how may we proceed from provincializing to postcolonizing Europe?

The workshop is organized as part of "Postcolonial Europe", a two-year international research network, sponsored by the AHRC and involving the Universities of Leeds, Munich and Utrecht. Until recently, most work done in comparative postcolonial studies focussed on Europe's ex-colonial peripheries. Increasing emphasis is now being placed, however, on the after-effects of colonialism on European metropolitan cultural practice, and on those power relations within Europe that can be analysed as direct or indirect forms of colonial power. The network aims to establish the parameters of postcolonial Europe, bringing the interdisciplinary field of postcolonial studies back to its European intellectual origins but also showing how these origins have been crucially transformed, so as develop a critical alternative to binary understandings of the Occident and the Orient, the West and the non-West.

The workshop venue is the Zentrum für Umwelt und Kultur (www.zuk-bb.de/zuk) at Benediktbeuern, Bavaria, well connected by public transport (from Munich central station one hour by train, change at Tutzing; from Munich airport two hours by train, change at Pasing and at Tutzing; for timetable details see www.bahn.de). The Franz Marc Museum of European modernism, with an excellent collection of expressionist art situated in the artist's former home, is nearby in Kochel am See (www.franz-marc-museum.de). The workshop programme starts on Monday afternoon and finishes on Wednesday lunchtime, so that participants may travel on directly to the University of Bayreuth where the ASNEL conference "Contested Communities" (www.gnel2010.uni-bayreuth.de) opens on Thursday afternoon.