

Representations of Sub-Saharan Africa - Deadline extended

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Workshop

Date:

November 15, 2017

Location:

France

Subject Fields:

African American History / Studies, African History / Studies, Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Cultural History / Studies, Popular Culture Studies

The research group MEDIA is organizing a one-day workshop on representations of Sub-Saharan Africa since decolonisation as presented in the media of the English-speaking world. The workshop will be held at the University of Paris 8 on 16 February 2018.

Africa has long been the continent of stereotypes and its people objectified. These representations all too often are what Westerners believe is reality. For all too many, Sub-Saharan Africa is the “dark continent”, a culturally monolithic land full of poverty, disease, war and famine. It is uncivilized, a place of savagery and superstition. Or it is a place practically devoid of humans: the animalization of Africa through nature documentaries has long been a tendency of Western media. In any case, the continent receives very little detailed or positive coverage.

At the same time, Africans themselves have represented Africa and the African diaspora through pan-Africanism and other movements. They argue that African people everywhere share a common heritage and destiny, and that - rather than being the passive recipients of Western aid - they collectively and their governments have agency.

This one-day workshop seeks to examine the shifting image of Africa in the English-speaking world's media, including - but not limited to - news, film, television and literature. It will look at the diffusion of concepts like pan-Africanism and examples of local representation. How do the different images of Africa intersect, inspire or compete with each other? How have the calls for African solidarity changed over time and how have they been received by the African diaspora in the English-speaking world? What cartographies have come to replace the ordered and apparently rational maps produced by the colonial powers? How do the English-speaking media filter non-local and local representations?

Please submit an abstract (in French or English) of 250-300 words by November 15, 2017 to the following address:

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