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Title

Geo-Graphies: Performing City Space and Economic Possibility and the Storyteller of Cairo

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Abstract

Albert Cossery, known as the 'story teller of Cairo', weaves tales of the marginalized living in a city of the global South whose geographies have been impacted by colonial and neocolonial legacy. Cairo's city and economic spaces have often been theorized as determined and dominated by the forces of neoliberalism, an approach that obscures the experience of residents who contest and evade these forces daily. For example, in "Les Couleurs de l'infamie", the main character is a robin-hood archetype that revels in observing the resourcefulness of the city's residents. 'Alternative' occupations and spatial uses abound: an unemployed philosopher teaches secretly out of the family crypt and a man has created his own trade in helping old women cross dangerous streets in the city. This paper approaches literature and the act of writing as being more-than-representational. It is a literary geography that considers how the city spaces and economic possibilities of Cairo are performed by Cossery's writings, and how this performance can be considered an act of resistance.

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