

‘The Politics and Poetics of Space in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express*’

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Abstract

Les Passagers du Roissy-Express is habitually situated in relation to writing on the city and/or postcolonial writing. The aim of this article is twofold: first, to explore the extent to which, in its rewriting of the spaces of the *banlieue* as historical and contemporary authentic spaces of the French nation, it can be aligned to some postwar sociological writing on rural France. Second, through a close reading of the language of the text, to show the landscape of the *banlieue* is also an emotional landscape, a landscape of filth and of freshness, of departure and disappearance. The public discourse of rediscovery and difference is inflected by a much more private one rooted in the oppression and suffering of the Occupation, and the text problematises the notions of otherness and elsewhere at both levels.