

*Helvetia Writes Back: A Journey into the Heart of Swissness*

*Chapter titles:*

- (i) De-closeting Swiss Colonialism: Presenting the Case for the Post/Colonial Turn in German-Swiss Fiction.
- (ii) A Proto-Postcolonial Gaze? Empire and Aftermath in Helvetic writing.
- (iii) Connecting Colonial and Postcolonial Swiss Narrative: Traits, Trends, and Transnational Colonialisms.
- (iv) 'A Journey into the Heart of Swissness': Intertextual Postcolonialisms in Contemporary German-Swiss Writing.
- (v) Swiss Subalternity: Narratives of Diaspora and (Reverse) Migrations.
- (vi) Helvetic Postcoloniality.

My monograph proposes for the first time a systematic study of German-Swiss literary texts that connect Switzerland with the Age of Empire. It recognizes the importance of existing historiographic and archive work focusing on Swiss colonial activity, and uses this as a source to justify a postcolonial analysis of covert narratives of Swissness. As a result, I trace the emergence and development of (post)colonial dimensions in Swiss literature written in German from the 1800s to the present day. More recent developments in Swiss writing that seek to highlight Helvetic neo-colonial activity and which link this to Swiss colonial activity are also considered.

The study examines both canonic and contemporary texts to articulate Switzerland's marginal and contingently colonial engagement. It explores the textual traces that acknowledge Helvetic colonial, yet not imperial engagements overseas, e.g. Swiss missionary presence and mercantile activity. The monograph demonstrates how Swiss complicity in European colonialism impacts upon, and offers fresh insight into, the forces that shape contemporary Swiss literature.

Expanding on my doctoral work, the corpus examined is hugely diverse, bringing together for the first time canonic works such as Gottfried Keller's *Martin Salander* with contemporary works such as Lucas Bärfuss' work *Hundert Tage*. I consider how recurrent narratological structures interrogate concepts of (post)colonial mimicry, problematize issues of language of colonizer and colonized, and demonstrate a clear preoccupation with colonial and postcolonial space.

My study argues that the previously covert shadows of Swiss colonial engagement are made visible when considered through a postcolonial literary optic. The analytic approach adopted has significant potential to lead to the recognition of a closet literary history of Swiss colonialism. As such, the monograph is of interest not only to scholars working within Swiss Studies, but more broadly to (post)colonialists working within and across other humanities fields such as history and literature.