

## **Dr. Corinne Fowler: Creative Manchester abstract**

This paper is informed by research into the 300 novels, anthologies, autobiographies, plays and poetry collections that are listed in an online electronic catalogue produced by the Moving Manchester research project.<sup>i</sup> It asks to what extent Manchester's literature confirms that the city's immigrants and refugees have 'integrated Manchester into the world'.<sup>ii</sup> This overarching theme informs a number of supplementary questions: is sustained attention to Manchester's writing key to gaining a sense of the settled presence, and formative influence, of refugees and migrants to Greater Manchester? What is the potential of the city's literature to counter historically amnesiac conceptions of multi-racial Britain? Finally, given the London bias of mainstream publishing, which has routinely denied Northern literatures access to national or international readerships, does sustained attention to the full range of Manchester's writing counter the predilection for nostalgic images of a neighbourly, white working class North? (Procter 2006)

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<sup>i</sup> The project, which is named 'Moving Manchester: how the experience of migration has informed creative writing in Manchester since 1960', is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and is led by Professor Lynne Pearce. It began in January 2006 and is due to end in September 2009. The e-catalogue is self-limiting in the sense that it only lists titles published since 1960 and is by no means exhaustive. In particular, many plays produced at key venues such as the Contact Theatre are not available in published form and are not represented on the catalogue.

<sup>ii</sup> The latter phrase is derived from the stated aim of the symposium.