

Towards Afropean Perspectives: Evolving and Conversing Afro-European Narratives from *The European Tribe* (1987) to *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe* (2019)

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Abstract

In 1987 Caryl Phillips, a Black British author born in the Caribbean, published an account of his travel endeavor “to increase [his] awareness of Europe and Europeans” (1987, 9), titled *The European Tribe*. Some thirty years later, another Black British writer, Johny Pitts, set out for a similar journey, with what he underscores is a different purpose: rather than emphasizing specifically the exclusion of people of African descent from a majority White European identity, Pitts takes down “Notes from Black Europe”. A comparative reading of the two texts highlights the changes in the way a Black British writer might construct and narrate his position towards Europe, its ‘Whiteness’, its Black ‘communities’, and its hybrid identities. In this article, I work out some central literary and discursive modalities of this construction, in particular the intertextual practices and other forms of conversation in and in-between the texts. I focus on the emergence of a sense of Black European “community” as a differentiating factor and that, in the thirty years that have elapsed between both publications, a shift from a diasporic sense of displacement and estrangement in Europe (Phillips) to a post-diasporic focus on belonging and the complexities of community (Pitts) has taken place.

Keywords: Black diaspora; afrodiasporic literature; community-making; intertextuality; Afropean