

## **Proposal for the Special Issue**

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### **Rethinking Postcolonial Europe: Moving Identities, Changing Subjectivities**

Thinking 'Europe' as an idea, a geographical space, and a political force is inseparable from thinking about its history of imperialism, its postcolonial legacies, and its preoccupation with questions of who is 'in and outside', 'native or foreigner', 'rooted or displaced' or 'centre and periphery'. Mass migration to European countries and the current so-called refugee crisis in the last years not only urge a changing perception of those power hierarchies that tend to divide the world between 'the West' and 'the Rest' but also compel new discourses of national and cultural identity and belonging. The recent resurgence of populism and racism connected to the rise of right-wing parties in several European states serves as an uneasy reminder of the continuing influence of hegemonic ideas of European exceptionalism and cultural superiority. Since global inequalities tend to persist, the freedom of movement often remains linked to where one comes from. At the same time, however, practices of resistance and emancipation in migrant/BPoC self-organisation reimagine Europe as an entangled space (Randeria 1999), which has been home for people of different backgrounds and origins. Consequently, received notions of nation and culture as well as identity and subjectivity have undergone a dramatic change, vividly reflected in the domains of art, literature, media, law, and politics. Investigating these current dynamics from a post-/decolonial perspective is thus crucial to understanding contemporary Europe as a contradictory space and a contested place.

Exploring Europe from a post-/decolonial perspective, this special issue lays emphasis on rethinking Europe and its borders to generate a discussion about 'travelling cultures' (Clifford 1992), diasporic and migrant communities, hybrid identities, changing subjectivities, cultural translations (Bachmann-Medick 2012), transnational and transcultural

relations, neo/cosmopolitanism, or neo-nomadism (Dagnino 2013), to name but a few. In our world on the move, it has become increasingly conspicuous that people, ideas, cultures, or resources cannot be understood in terms of traditional, binary models of centre and periphery, South and North or East and West as “cultural conditions today are largely characterized by mixes and permeation” (Welsch 1999: 197) in the wake of transnational relations. In the 21st century, post-/decolonial studies continue to deconstruct the myths around Europe by interrogating the histories and geographies of power associated with Europe and its (colonial) legacy around the globe.

In light of these transformations, the following questions are particularly addressed in the special issue in order to scrutinize the idea of Europe from a variety of perspectives: How have practices of travel and mobility in the age of globalization altered traditional concepts of culture and identity? How can post/decolonial literatures, art, and practices imaginatively refigure (Gikandi 1991) Europe as a geographical and imagined space? Why is it important today to understand and acknowledge the role of marginalized communities in transforming the idea of Europe? How do past and present migration policies and other governmental practices shape the idea and geography of Europe, or rather of “multiple Europes” (Boatca 2013)?

The articles collected in the special issue engage with and challenge the idea of Europe from a wide range of interdisciplinary perspectives, including but not limited to the following areas of interest and research:

- New perspectives and approaches in post-/decolonial studies
- Representations of Europe and its ‘Others’ in different media
- Narratives of European identity in and beyond the EU
- Legacies of European colonialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Post-/decolonial/ Critical Migration Studies

- Afro-European Studies
- Critical Race Studies
- Memory Studies
- Narratives of Displacement
- Diaspora Studies
- Transnational and transcultural Studies
- Queer and intersectional approaches
- Political, legal, and human rights perspectives
- World Literature / World Anglophone Studies
- Tourism/Travel Literature
- Performing Arts

## Bibliography

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