Postcolonial Interventions
An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies

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EDITORS' NOTE

One of the benefits of editing an academic journal like *Postcolonial Interventions* is the opportunity to forge fruitful connections with academics across continents. While it is true that our own experience of academia is often puntuated by the presence of sadistic, hierarchical individuals steeped in nepotism, cliques and varying degrees of hypocrisy, it is also refreshing to come across scholars and academics who remain undeterred in their pursuit of excellence and are able to freely interact with unknown academics situated thousands of miles apart without being bogged down by petty considerations and thus contribute to that project of knowledge formation which is undertaken without vested interests associated with forms of self-aggrandizement. The interactions with Nadia Butt and Theresa Krampe, two of the three Guest Editors of this speical issue on Postcolonial Europe, with whom we have been corresponding for about a year, have been warm, cooperative and mutually beneficial. I am hopeful that we have been able to sow the seeds of academic collaborations for years to come.

Such cooperation, is in many ways, the need of the hour as the planet continues to battle a pandemic even as it deals with inequality, aggression, ignorance and various forms of friction between people and states, brought

about by worsening ecological threats coupled with restrications and laws necessitated by the pandemic. The WHO has repeatedly underlined the issue of vaccine inequality and has even gone on to highlight how the ongoing wave of the pandemic, brought about by a new variant, could well have been thwarted through more equitable distribution of vaccines across poorer countries belonging to the Global South. Unfortunately the even the self-destructive consequences of ongoing inequality are not enough to bring about any drastic change in the global political-economic order. The continued concentration of wealth in the hands of a select few, who have even become richer during the pandemic, testifies to this debilitating trend.

Similarly unfortunate is the opposition to vaccines among European populations, their conflicts with governments and fellow citizens and attendant escalation of risk and precarity during the pandemic. It is ironic and puzzling that the same 'West' which has long projected itself as the harbinger of scientific advancement to the other so-called "backward" corners of the earth, where they even started inocculation programmes despite opposition from indigenous populations, should now be confronted with an army of anti-vaxxers, emerging from its own population. History stages the most ironic conundrums.

One such conundrum is of course associated with edu-

cation itself which is becoming rapidly digitized. While some of these changes are inevitable, making the digital platforms a norm, rather than a useful interim option, particularly in countries like India, where stark inequality of resources and opportunities remains an abiding reality, such changes are undoing years of attempts a educational democratization and pushing meritorious students from underprivileged families to a life of discontent, disillusionment and even fatal despair. This is what makes not-for-profit academic endeavours such as this journal, all the more vital, so that academic conglomerates are not able to restrict the generation and dissemination of knowledge through the imposition of hefty price tags. Of course, this is only possible because of the unpaid hard work that many of us continue to put in for the fulfilment of our academic objectives. Let me therefore thank the Guest Editors and Contributors of this special issue as well as the reviewers and editorial members associated with *Postcolonial Interventions* for all the patient and painstaking service they provide. Without the cooperation of academics like you, Open Access Publications would have remained chimerical. One can only hope that more people would willingly become a part of such projects and invest their labour and intellects for endeavours that would ultimately benefit many others.

These are essential ethical considerations. When we talk of publishing ethics, we generally only focus on weeding

out plagiarisation and maintenance of academic integrity. But ethical considerations also extend to other aspects of the publishing process, particularly in relation to a journal that commits itself to those strands of postcolonial thought which focus on the materialitty of our conditions and the praxis for its betterment. It is hoped that we will be able to continue on these paths with support from our readers, contributors and well-wishers in future as well.

What that future will be like will of course depend on how far we succeed in combating the pandemic and get our lives back on track without the constant fear of hospitalisation, ailments and unforeseen death. Here's hoping that medical advancements and collective righteousness will help to steer us towards a more healthy and fruitful 2022. Greetings and regards from the entire *Postcolonial Interventions* family!

Rethinking Postcolonial Europe: Moving Identities, Changing Subjectivities

Introduction

Nadia Butt, Robert Clarke, and Theresa Krampe

> Where does Europe begin and end? Has it always existed, and if not, when did it start? What is the 'new' Europe's relation to its past? Which parts of Europe belong to "the idea of Europe" and which do not? (Hall 2003, 36)

> Europe is not only deterritorialized, but also de-localized, put out of itself, and in the end deconstructed. (Balibar 2004b, 10)

> What is Europe? The answer to this question can be divided into two groups: 'Europe' as seen from 'within' and 'Europe' as seen from 'without.' (Khair 2008, 211)

Europe has always presented a problem for postcolonial studies. In the elisions of temporal and spatial coordinates that occur so frequently in theoretical discourse that ostensibly addresses the task of understanding the nature of colonialism and its aftermaths, of how colonialism shaped the modern world, and of how it may be resisted in the name of an equitable, peaceful, and just 'postcolonial' future, the 'when' and 'where' and 'why' of Europe has often been obscured. The anti-Eurocentric focus of early postcolonial studies, for example, belied a fixation on Europe—conceived as monolithic, undifferentiated, belligerent—as the locus of colonialist and imperialist energies. It was Europe that colonised and dominated the rest of the world, to Europe that the wealth of much of the world was expropriated, and it was against Europe that anti-colonial movements directed their animus. That early focus gave way to developments that, on the one hand, identified how the European continent has always been a colonised space, and how, on the other hand, other non-European or state-based colonialisms have proliferated in modern times—economic, cultural, and political. While the dominant trend in postcolonial studies has been to de-centre Europe, critical focus has

returned to Europe, especially since the 2000 publication of Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provinicializing Europe*, to critically examine its status as a space within which "both colonial legacies and new forms of colonialism, some of these operating under the rubric of globalization, are impinging powerfully on both individual nations and the region as a whole" (Huggan 2008, 242). The contributors of 'Rethinking Postcolonial Europe' take up this challenge of examining Europe as postcolonial and in doing so re-examining and challenging some of the core assumptions of the discipline of postcolonial studies.

On Terminology: Post/colonial Europe Re/visited

When imagining postcolonial Europe, the question arises as to what Europe is – a geographical space, a shared culture, a discursive formation, or the political institutions of the European Union? Scholarship on postcolonial Europe encompasses a wide variety of critical approaches concerned with how colonial power relations continue to influence geographies, politics, and subjectivities in and beyond geographical, cultural, discursive, or institutional Europe. According to Lucas Jensen, "to invoke the term postcolonial Europe requires insisting on analysing the many dimensions to the current conflictual space that Europe represents" (2020, 14). This may imply analysing the origins and reproduction of racism (Huggan and Law 2009; Jensen et al. 2018, 1), considering how the arrival of postcolonial subjects

challenges European self-perceptions (Jensen 2020, 14), or reading European integration in the context of "colonial and postcolonial globalization, migration and ethnicity" (Kinvall 2016, 155), to name but a few dimensions. In light of this multiplicity of perspectives and approaches, it is almost impossible to consider and address all the major discourses that surround postcolonial Europe. Rather, we seek to initiate a dialogue between narratives, media, debates, or policies that engage with different ideas of Europe, its colonial history, and its connection to different regions of the world.

Just as the term postcolonial and its various offshoots such as postcolonialism, postcoloniality, and postcolony have become familiar within the lexicon of academic humanist discourse, so too have a range of adverbs become common adjuncts. Among them are remapping, rerouting, revising, readapting, reframing, re-imagining, revisiting, or reworking, all of which point to a need to repeatedly unpack the term postcolonial in light of contemporary political, economic, and cultural changes[1]. This process of critical unpacking is perhaps no-

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1 See e.g. Amar Acheraïou, *Rethinking Postcolonialism: Colonialist Discourse in Modern Literatures and the Legacy of Classical Writers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008); Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru, and Sarah Lawson Welsh, eds., *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium* (London: Routledge, 2009); Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Wales: University of Wales Press, 2004); David D. Kim, ed., *Reframing Postcolonial Studies: Concepts, Methodologies, Scholarly Activisms* (Cham: Palgrave, 2021).

where more common than in relation to the discipline's engagement with Europe per se, and the interest in Europe in relation to the rest of the world. Jacques Derrida's reflections on European identity in *The Other Heading* (1992) and Zygmunt Bauman's evocative metaphor of *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure* (2004) challenge us to re/imagine Europe not as a fixed domain but as a new contact zone where people of different backgrounds and nationalities meet and interact. These meetings and interactions in the age of global mobility and migration have altered not only conventional notions of Europe but have also evoked new perceptions – different mindsets, the manifestation of which are conspicuous in diverse disciplines, especially literature, art, history, sociology, law, and cultural studies.

Recent scholarship on postcolonialism, such as E. San Juan Jr.'s *After Postcolonialism* (2000) or Ania Loomba et. al' s *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005), not only indicates a dissatisfaction with the postcolonial paradigm but more importantly points out its limitation in making sense of our globalised world, shaped by diversity and syncretism. Janet Wilson et al.'s *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium* (2010) attempts to connect the postcolonial to globalisation and transnationalism in order to demonstrate new turns in the postcolonial field whereas Sandra Ponzanesi and Gianmaria Colpani's *Postcolonial Transition in Europe: Contexts, Practices and Politics* (2016) sets out to map and interrogate

the complex terrain of Europe in transition. Wilson et al. believe that "the postcolonial has moved in recent years from being a historical marker to a more globally inflected term applicable to a variety of regions" (2010, 2) whereas Ponzanesi and Colpani declare that engaging with postcolonial Europe today "demands that we find ways to open it up once again, rearticulating Europe otherwise" (2016, 7). In effect, Ponzanesi and Colpani aim at "turning this particular province of the world into an object of political, transformative desire for those who happen to inhabit it, or just want to pass through it" (2016, 17). Studies such as these testify to the ongoing struggle to define the elusive and slippery terrain of postcolonial Europe, and confirm the conclusion drawn by Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande that "Europe is not a fixed condition. Europe is another word for variable geometry, variable national interests, variable involvement, variable internal – external relations, variable statehood and variable identity" (2007, 6). Hence, it is virtually impossible to examine or explore Europe as a unified notion in a historical, cultural, or political sense.

The main title of this special issue, "Rethinking Postcolonial Europe" indicates a critical approach that considers Europe from myriad angles, examining legacies of European colonialism in the present, interrogating dominant ideas of Europe as a community of values, and attending to the marginalised narratives and voices that tell of ambiguous, fragmented, migratory Europes.

Significantly, the 'post' in postcolonial does not necessarily refer to a time when freedom was granted to the former colonies, or a return to the vital historical moment of gaining independence from the imperial rulers. Instead, 'post' in the context of our issue alludes to the inseparability of present-day Europe from its hegemonic position in the world and its colonial history of violence and exploitation in the name of European modernity and civilisation (see also Balibar 2004a, 7; Jensen 2020, 33-64). How present-day Europe grapples with former colonial practices and resonates with the legacy of power and dominance is central to our special issue.

The subtitle, 'Moving Identities, Changing Subjectivities,' attests to our view of European identity as a work in progress. In an age of globalisation, of cross-cultural transactions, of travel and mobility "across the lines" (Cronin 2000, 1-7), borders and boundaries are perpetually crossed and re-crossed, dismissing the myth of stable geographies, identities, and subjectivities. In short, 'Rethinking postcolonial Europe' is deployed as a frame, as a motif, as a trope, as a vantage point to comprehend the various dimensions of contemporary Europe faced with new political and cultural transformations.

From Empire to Cosmopolis: Challenging Old Problems in a 'New' Europe

Rethinking or thinking beyond postcolonialism takes us first back to the time after the Second World War when

a new democratic Europe, emerging from the debris of fascism and war, found itself struggling with the legacies of colonialism and caught up between still-powerful nationalist ideologies and a drive towards a renewed cosmopolitanism. These struggles remain palpable in present-day Europe (see also Beck and Grande 2007, 165). The question arises as to how to define the 'New Europe' and the 'New Europeans' when most European countries are increasingly multicultural and "newness has already entered the world," to use a phrase from Salman Rushdie (1991, 394). In the past century, Europe experienced many different migration flows: the Windrush generation from the Caribbean and the Indians and later Pakistanis to post-war Britain; the mass movement of North Africans to France; the relocation of Indonesians as well as Surinamese to the Netherlands; the settlement of Latin Americans in Portugal; the arrival of Turkish labour migrants in Germany; and most recently the resettlement of Syrian and Afghan refugees in different European countries. At first mainly driven by its economic prosperity and the demand for labour, these migration experiences are now indispensable to European identity as mobile and malleable.

However, the racisms and imperial ideologies of 'Old Europe' prevail in the 'New Europe' and cast a doubtful light on Europe's newness. The second and third generations of migrants express disillusionment and discontent with Europe as their *only* homeland when they continue to be relegated to the margins of society and are

targeted as the outsiders. Sandra Ponzanesi and Daniela Merolla, therefore, underline the "role of migration in reshaping European identities" (2005, 1). "Postcolonial Europe," in this sense, becomes "a critical term that reassesses Europe not only in its past imperial pluralities and contemporary divergent multicultural scenarios," but also in "its rearticulation of migration an integral part of its territorial indeterminacy" (2005, viii). Reflecting on migration in postcolonial Europe leads us to think deeply about the dynamics of identity and belonging, roots and routes, home and homeland, nationality and citizenship. These are intertwined with contemporary debates about diaspora, exile, expatriation, dislocation, or deterritorialisation, all of which urge alternative ways of representing and thinking Europe in this issue. As Ponzanesi and Merolla's volume also reveals, postcolonial literature is increasingly considered to be an important site to address and scrutinize the experience of migration, which distinctly overlaps with several historical factors. Ato Quayson is, hence, rightly convinced that

> as the sign of a critical orientation towards colonialism and its legacies, postcolonial literature […] designates the representation of experiences of various kinds including those of slavery, migration, oppression and resistance, difference, race, gender, space and place, and the responses to the discourses of imperial Europe. It is conventionally assumed that postcolonial literature is as much a reflection on conditions under imperialism and colonialism proper as

about conditions coming after the historical end of empires. (2012, 6)

The precarious social position and disillusionment of third generation migrants with Europe is conspicuous in a considerable number of postcolonial novels, especially in Diran Adebayo's *Some Kind of Black* (1996), Jamal Mahjoub's *The Carrier* (1998), Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* (2001), or Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore* (2003). All of these works focus on characters in disparate national and historical settings, whose plights and perils shed light on the dislocation of people of former colonies in Europe in a literal and metaphorical sense – people whose struggles seem to go unnoticed and undocumented but in the realms of literature.

Thinking of Europe as an idea, a geographical space, and a political force – in literature as in other cultural and political formations – is inseparable from thinking about its history of imperialism, its postcolonial legacies, and its preoccupation with questions of who is in or out, native or foreigner, rooted or displaced. Eurocentric colonialism not only aimed to exploit its colonies but also to shape the world in Europe's image, treating its Others as "flawed reflections" of the European ideal (Jensen 2020, 2; see also Balibar 2004a, 7). Two world wars, the end of Empires, decolonisation, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Eastern bloc shifted Europe's

focus from imperial domination to global leadership as a community of shared values. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the European Union was explicitly founded as an antidote to internal differentiation and warfare. This founding idea of the "ever-closer" union that would secure lasting peace is still strongly present in the EU's self-narration (European Union, n.p.).

Europe's imperial past and its ongoing complicity in asymmetric regimes of power and subordination, however, remained largely unacknowledged by European thinkers for much of the twentieth century (Kinvall 2016, 155). Even as we move into the second decade of the 21st century, binary distinctions of the self and the other, us and them, normative beliefs in European superiority, and an astonishing blindness towards its own constructedness continue to form the core of Europeanhood[2]. Perhaps more subtly but no less harmfully, Europe continues to self-stylise as an "originator and exporter of 'modern society'" (Jensen 2020, 3). How such Eurocentric logics prevail, sometimes where we would least expect them, becomes evident, for example, in Barbara Schenkel's analysis in this issue of the construction of the Jordanian female citizen in the context of international development relations.

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2 As Balibar puts it, distinction that are "[a]lready dramatic within each nationality […] are reproduced and multiplied at the level of the postnational or supranational community" (2004a, 9).

The resurgence of populism and racism connected to the rise of right-wing parties in several European states such as the Rassemblement National in France, the AFD (The Alternative for Germany), or the FPO (The Freedom Party of Austria) are uneasy reminders of the continuing influence of hegemonic ideas of European exceptionalism and cultural superiority. Mass migration to European countries and the so-called refugee crisis in recent years seem to have escalated simmering "nationalist paranoia and xenophobic fears" (Kinvall 2016, 155). To shed a systematic light on these issues, Marina Choy in her contribution to this issue deconstructs three different types of myths that articulate immigration as a problem in the French national context.

Europe's claim to universal values and its unity in diversity are put to the test as desperate and displaced populations arrive on the shores of the Mediterranean and across the Balkans. So far, the EU has not risen to the occasion. Quite the contrary, the idea of "Fortress Europe" (see e.g. Gebrewold 2016, 1-12) has returned to the European imaginary with a vengeance as images of heavily guarded borders circulate across TV screens and cover pages. Refugee films such as Wolfgang Fischer's *Styx* (2018), analysed by Isabell Sluka in her paper included here, are haunting testaments to this failure. Within and without the EU, freedom of movement and access to supposedly universal human rights remains linked to where one comes from.

Having scrutinised its multidimensional history, part of which is often suppressed or manipulated to keep Western supremacy intact, Europe turns out to be a contested and fragile construct. The future of the EU, too, seems to rest on uncertain foundations. As developments such as the Brexit or, most recently, the Polish Constitutional Court's highly controversial ruling against the primacy of EU law have shown once more, it is impossible to ignore the power of nationalism in major European countries. The COVID-19 crisis seems to have significantly promoted this trend towards thinking in local and national, rather than supranational or even global terms and restored the internal borders of the Schengen area. On a more optimistic note, the demographic changes in European populations through immigration, diasporic communities, multiple citizenships, or globalisation also prompt us to think beyond the Eurocentric definition of Europe as a unified community based on racial, historical, and religious affiliations. Transnational migration, in particular, not only demands 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. Practices of resistance and emancipation in migrant and BIPoC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) self-organisation reimagine Europe as an entangled space (see Randeria 1999, 87-96.), a 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 different kinds of media in the wake of rapid technological modernity.

Several contributions in this special issue are devoted to the analysis of such discursive interventions and renegotiations of identities in examples ranging from migrant literature (Miriam Hinz) to refugee film (Isabell Sluka) and from legal documents (Cresa Pugh) to political articulation (Marina Choy). Investigating these dynamics from a postcolonial perspective is crucial to understanding contemporary Europe as a contradictory space: a place of cultural collaborations as well as conflicts, cultural communications as well as clashes. Travel writing and road novels, as the analyses by Raphaëlle Efoui-Delplanque and Michelle Stork show, are ambivalent sites when it comes to generating discussions about "travelling cultures" (Clifford 1992, 97-110), hybrid identities, cultural translations, or transcultural and transnational relations (Hannerz 1996, 8). In a world where cultures and communities are on the move, it has become increasingly conspicuous that people, ideas, cultures, or resources cannot be understood in terms of binary models of centre and periphery, South and North or East and West. Reflecting these insights, the articles of Efoui-Delplanque and Stork, like others in this collection, remind us that Europe cannot afford to treat its cultural 'Others' as 'Others' in order to keep the myth of racial superiority intact. A myth, no less, that has been

thrown into doubt by the cross-cultural encounters in almost every European metropolitan city. Indeed, travel as a metaphor of "dwelling and displacement" (Clifford 1989, n.p.) defines the cultural dynamics in today's Europe as a place of transcultural transformations and not merely post/colonial anxieties. As a result, "the transcultural turn" (Bond and Rapson 2014, 9) in cultural studies already shows new avenues in the field of postcolonial studies and more innovative ways of understanding contemporary Europe.

In light of these transformations in the field of postcolonial studies in the last decades and years, the contributors to this special issue set out scrutinise the idea of a new Europe from a variety of perspectives: considering how globalised travel and mobility alters the traditional concepts of culture and identity; examining how postcolonial art and literature imaginatively refigure Europe and Europeanness; investigating the role of marginalised communities in transforming the idea of Europe; and critiquing how past and present migration policies and other governmental practices shape the idea and geography of Europe, urging us to think of "multiple Europes" (see Boatca 2013). Imagining Europe as a hub of diversity, Étienne Balibar reminds us: "In all its points, Europe is multiple; it is always home to tensions between numerous religious, cultural, linguistic, and political affiliations, numerous readings of history, numerous modes of relations with the rest of the world […]" (2004a, 5).

These tensions are all the more conspicuous in the age of global and digital modernity, which has created spaces of cultural encounters and communication hitherto imagined to be the prerogative of the West.

Europe and the Limits of Postcolonialism

Despite its pitfalls and new turns in cultural studies that express scepticism towards postcolonial/ism as well as postcolonial theory since its emergence with Edward W Said's *Orientalism* (1978), postcolonial studies in the present century continues its important work in deconstructing the myths around Europe by interrogating the histories and geographies of power associated with Europe and its (colonial) legacy around the globe. According to Pramod K. Nayar, postcolonialism offers not only a historical or theoretical framework, but also an interpretive method. Nayar claims that since the 1990s, postcolonialism has seen two important shifts:

> The first is the shift towards a transnationalization of European histories, the second, extending the first shift to the contemporary age, an increased attention to locating the politics, problems, and processes of the postcolony within the contexts of globalization, neocolonalism, and decolonialization" (2016, 2).

To these two shifts, our special issue adds a third, namely postcolonialism as instrumental in generating chang-

ing perspectives on Europe and its former colonies and client states as the so-called periphery is now (re)located in the imperial metropolises (ibid., 2-3). Thus, in this issue we examine how rethinking postcolonial Europe helps to identify and create new notions of identity and subjectivity, and new forms of political and cultural resistance. In this regard, Dipesh Chakrabarty rightly concludes that present-day Europe is certainly

> ...a new frontier of postcolonial studies – and not because the classical peasant-subaltern can be found in Europe. No, it is because the new subalterns of the global economy – refugees, asylum seekers, illegal workers – can be found all over Europe (2012, 8).

As Europe's 'Others' permeate and defy its geographical borders, new social and political dynamics arise that demand a rethinking of the future of Europe as a set of interconnected communities and as a meaningful project.

Concerning the first shift towards the transnationalisation of European histories and its extension to the present age, postcolonial studies have emphasised how the EU's foundations, despite its universal and transnational ambitions, are conspicuously founded on religious, racial, and cultural uniformity that excludes non-white, non-Christian nations and identities. As Susan Arndt states,

> [Europe] needs to revisit its politics of belonging just as much as its history of becoming. Thus, antiquity, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment are to be revisited in order to relate their merits just as much as their responsibility for European atrocities committed in the eras of slavery, colonialism and National Socialism. It is this approach of re-narrating Europe that will offer new ways of understanding Europe in a global perspective. (2011, 47-48)

Arndt is justified in highlighting the need to place and comprehend Europe in a global context so that it is possible to deal with current political and cultural challenges with which New Europe and New Europeans are confronted – challenges that compel people of colour to render voice to their in-betweeness, namely their liminal European identity as opposed to the singular and so-called pure one, which is as mythical as notions of racial purity in postcolonial Europe. Speculating on the very perplexing notion of postcolonial Europe, Sandra Ponzanesi and Bolette B. Blaagaard attempt at "deconstructing Europe," claiming:

> [t]o read Europe as a postcolonial place does not imply that Europe's imperial past is over, but on the contrary that Europe's idea of self, and of its polity, is still struggling with the continuing hold of colonialist and imperialist attitudes" (2012, 4).

Ponzanesi and Blaagaard point up the notions of race and race relations that still intersect with the debates on asylum seekers, refugees, and economic migrants in Europe who are treated beyond the parameters of white Christian Europe. These debates, we argue, point to the paradox of postcolonial Europe which is expanding its boundaries but closing its borders – which is multicultural but is bent on keeping its racial and historical identity intact.

Addressing Europe as a concept in constant flux, it seems pertinent to follow Beck and Grande in identifying at least two different kinds of Europe: the "old Europe" (2007, 165) of stringent nationalism and the "new cosmopolitan Europe" (ibid.) of transnational networks. In the wake of globalisation, Europe is increasingly becoming a space of cultural fusions and cosmopolitan transactions, despite the fact that the colonial legacies or practices seem to carry on in several ways: Northern Ireland and Scotland are significant cases in this regard. From another perspective, a number of acclaimed Black British and Asian British writers such as Mike Phillips, Johny Pitts, Nadeem Aslam, Hanif Kureishi, or Leila Aboulela are not only critical of racism but its perpetuation in Europe and of Europe's insistence on defining itself as a homogeneous rather than a heterogeneous concept. Similarly, a number of scholars such as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Tariq Modood, Basam Tibi, or Étienne Balibar are keen on re-imagining Europe as a place

of several historical and cultural encounters in order to deviate from the ancient idea of Europe as a closed container.

According to Robert J.C. Young, postcolonial remains cannot be ignored in our contemporary times, as the postcolonial frame urges rethinking the divide between the former colonial oppressors and the former colonised people from a critical perspective. However, Young highlights at the same time that postcolonialism is not just a disciplinary field, nor is it a theory which has or has not come to an end. Rather, its objectives have always involved a wide-ranging political project "to reconstruct Western knowledge formations, reorient ethical norms, turn the power structures of the world upside down, refashion the world from below" (2016, 126). Young believes that "[t]he task of the postcolonial is to make the invisible, in this sense, visible" (2016, 128), which the members of the Subaltern Studies Collective particularly wished to emphasise. In light of these changing perspectives on Western power and dominance, it is important to address and demonstrate how different narratives about Europe in different fields create new meanings through which we may better understand our fast-changing present. Young is justified in claiming that a postcolonial perspective captures political and cultural "transformations" in the twenty-first century (2016, 128-129), a quest shared by the articles in this issue.

Finally, rethinking Europe through a postcolonial lens necessitates a rethinking of some of the core assumptions of postcolonial studies itself. Recently, a number of scholars, particularly Frank Schulze-Engler, have challenged postcolonialism both as a historical phenomenon and as a theoretical concept on the basis that the idea of the postcolonial falls prey to a binary opposition inherent in it, which it actually seeks to dismiss and dismantle, namely perceiving the world in terms of 'West' and 'non-West' or 'Europe' and 'non-Europe' (2007, 20-32). Imagining the world in terms of these neat and clean dichotomies is certainly problematic. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the seminal works of scholars like Arjun Appadurai (1996), James Clifford (1992), and Bill Ashcroft (2019) direct us to the blurring borders of nations and cultures in the wake of global mobility, modernity, and cultural change.

How, then, can Europeanness be (re)thought in and for contemporary culture? Graham Huggan maintains that postcolonial Europe in the sense of Paul Gilroy's interpretations in his book *After Empire* (2004) is not only about "the *unmaking* of Europe as a space of exemplarity, exception, and privilege, but also the *remaking* of Europe as a convivial space of inclusiveness, transcultural ferment, and openness to the rest of the world" (2011, 1; emphasis in the original). Several constructs around the idea of Europe cropping up in the last few decades such as Euro-Islam (Tibi 1991), Afro-Europe (Brancato 2009), or Afropean (Pitts 2019) already point to the

"mongrel" (Dawson 2007, 6) and transcultural European identity rather than the postcolonial one. Significantly, postcolonial Europe is not only about the legacies of colonialism but also about hybridisation of its identity. Postcolonial literature, culture, and art demonstrate and capture pluralisms which could be the beginnings of New Europe. Indeed, accepting and acknowledging plurality is the way to keep peace and harmony and believe in a society which is not defined by its borders but its horizons. Schulze-Engler in his essay "Irritating Europe" therefore declares that it is not sufficient to "fall back on postcolonial routines of 'deconstructing Europe'" (Pieterse 1991, 7-10 as cited in Schulze-Engler 2014, 685) or "invoke the time-honoured postcolonial trope of 'unthinking Europe'" (Ponzanesi and Blaagaard 2011, 4-9 as cited in Schulze-Engler 2013, 685). On the contrary, he claims that the real challenge for postcolonial studies lies "in rethinking and transforming" Europe (ibid.). This is the challenge with which our present issue engages. As we focus on a variety of approaches to postcolonial Europe, we are able to rethink the highly contested spaces of European colonialism and its legacy in our contemporary times.

The Contributions to This Special Issue

The special issue comprises seven articles and two literature reviews that respond to the challenge of postcolonial Europe from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives.

Most of the contributions expand on talks presented in the course of the three-day conference, held by the postgraduate forum Postcolonial Narrations at Giessen University, Germany in February 2021. Bringing together scholars of various disciplines and from various countries, the conference explored different ideas of Europe through the lens of postcolonial studies. The articles collected in this special issue represent a cross-section of the important perspectives and voices raised during the conference. Among them are critical discussions, case studies, and literary analyses that challenge hegemonic ideas of Europe, or draw productive attention to transcultural and migrant perspectives. Importantly, they also reflect the spirit of enriching transdisciplinary conversations and ongoing exchange that we believe to be vital if we are to rethink and transform Europe in and for the 21st century.

In the first article "Relational Reparations: On the Promise of Post-National Repair," Cresa Pugh offers a post-nationalist critique of European reparation policies. In an in-depth critical analysis of the 2019 resolution entitled "Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe," she demonstrates how the measures laid down in the resolution fall short of bringing about genuine atonement and repair largely because of their continued reliance on the logics of the nation-state. Pugh advocates a relational approach to reparations; an approach that is historical, transnational, and postcolo-

nial and which recognises the interconnectedness of the spaces and histories of Empire.

Continuing the critical work of interrogating contemporary Europe's self-perception, Barbara Schenkel looks towards the figure of the empowered female citizen in Jordan. Based on qualitative research and discourse analyses, her article "Postcolonial Europe and its Construction of Female Citizens in Jordan" carefully investigates how European development interventions targeting women's empowerment also serve to support Europe's geopolitical interests and perpetuates narratives of European superiority. The construction of the empowered female Jordanian citizen, Schenkel argues, allows Europe to simultaneously construct itself as a promoter of democracy and liberal values.

Migration and the current so-called refugee crisis, followed by the resurgence of populism and racism connected to the rise of right-wing parties in several European states, are among the most visible and urgent developments of recent years. They are also of central concern to two articles in this volume. In "Articulating the 'Problem of Immigration': Nationalism and Dominant Mythological Formations around Immigration in France," Marina Choy employs articulation theory and the Barthesian concept of myth to examine how immigration is constructed as a threat to the nation in France. She then proceeds to deconstruct three dominant myth-

ological formations about immigration that are deeply rooted in French history and continue to dominate discourses well beyond right-wing rhetoric. In this sense, the article not only provides insights into the discourses dominating the French national context in the 21st century but also testifies to the continued power of mythological formations in contemporary Europe.

Isabell Sluka, in her article "From Nation States to Communities of Interest: Solidarity and Human Rights Declarations in Wolfgang Fischer`s Styx" then zooms in on *Styx* (Fischer 2018), a drama film dealing with the moral implications of the 'refugee crisis' unfolding in the Mediterranean. Approaching the film from a human rights perspective influenced by Hannah Arendt, Sluka argues that the film critically engages with human rights, and especially the dilemma of the right to seek asylum, which is not necessarily secured by an obligation to grant it. Of particular interest to Sluka are the potential solutions suggested by the film; solutions that build on the transformative power of political actions carried out by individuals and ordinary citizens. *Styx*, in Sluka's view, is profoundly Arendtian in that it recognises the responsibility of anyone with citizenship privileges to put human rights into practice in solidarity with those who do not hold such privileges and to resist state policies that do not comply with human rights.

The special issue's second part encompasses three literary analyses of contemporary migrant literature. In

"Towards Afropean Perspectives: Evolving and Conversing Afro-European Narratives from *The European Tribe* (1987) to *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe*" (2019), Raphaëlle Efoui-Delplanque provides a joint reading of two travelogues by Black British writers Caryl Phillips and Johny Pitts. Published almost three decades apart, these works bridge two generations of Afro-European writers and consequently the article places special emphasis on the genealogical and intertextual relations between them. Through her comparative perspective, Efoui-Delplanque identifies a generational shift, from the portrayal of tribalist, fragmented, and conservative European societies and an overall sense of displacement in Phillips' *The European Tribe* to Pitt's vision of an unhyphenated Afropean identity and his focus on new, post-diasporic forms of belonging in *Afropean*.

Another example of travel writing is found in Michelle Stork's article "Identities Lost and Found? Transcultural Perspectives on Jamal Mahjoub's Road Novel *Travelling with Djinns*." Taking the road novel genre as its point of departure, Stork's case study is concerned with the crossing and recrossing of European borders as it portrays cultural and political contexts and phenomena that transcend individual nation-states and national identities. Like Efoui-Delplanque, Stork points out the importance of intertextual references, travel, and diasporic experience to the literary construction of Europe as an interconnected space shaped by transcultural crossings and encounters. Writings such as *Travelling with Djinns* thus

reimagine Europeanness as a transnational and transcultural work in progress.

The final article in this volume, Miriam Hinz's "'I ain't no homosexual, I am a . . . Barrysexual!': Queering the Bildungsroman in Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013)" offers an intersectional and multi-layered close-reading of the novel *Mr Loverman* by Bernardine Evaristo. Hinz examines how Evaristo's novel rewrites the classical European *Bildungsroman*, a genre entangled with imperial histories and Eurocentric ideologies. The novel, she argues, queers the genre through its atypical coming-of-age story focussing on a seventy-something, homosexual, Caribbean-British protagonist. She furthermore points out the productively unsettling effects of literary techniques such as polyphony, multiperspectivity, non-linearity, and intertextuality. Queering, to Hinz, refers not only to the protagonist's sexual identity but also to a creative and subversive process that holds immense transformative potential.

The special issue concludes with a review of the anthology *Reframing Postcolonial Studies: Concepts, Methodologies, Scholarly Activism*, edited by David D. Kim (2021). The reviewers, Nele Grosch and Anne Stellberger, pay attention not only to the major themes and ambitions connecting the individual chapters of this wide-ranging, interdisciplinary volume but also contextualise them with regard to this issue's thematic focus on postcolonial

Europe. As with the other articles in this special issue, their work draws our critical attention to the importance of rethinking Europe, and, in doing so, rethinking the postcolonial.

Acknowledgements

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Relational Reparations: On the Promise of Post-National Repair

Cresa Pugh

Introduction

In 2019 the European Union Parliament passed a resolution entitled "Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe" (henceforth the Resolution), which urged EU member states to adopt legislation focused on improving the condition of Black Europeans. The Resolution had as its explicit focus the reckoning and atoning for Europe's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and its crimes against Africa committed under European colonialism during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the enduring effects these systems have had on Europe's black population. In her opening remarks about the

Resolution during its hearing, Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, the Italian representative to the EU parliament and one of the authors, stated that the Resolution was Europe's first attempt to pass legislation which sought to repair the region's relationship with Black Europeans: "For the first time Europe has recognized its violent form of racism, racism against people of African descent, something which is, unfortunately, more and more common in Europe. This Resolution is only the first step towards a more inclusive, multicultural, fair and respectful society--a society where there is no longer room for racial hatred" (EU Parliament Website 2019). In addition to redressing contemporary harm toward Black Europeans, the EU Parliament also presented the Resolution as a form of reparations for historic crimes against humanity through its reckoning with Europe's dark history of enslavement and colonization (EU Parliament News 2019). Yet, in this paper I argue that the Resolution falls short of achieving these stated objectives, in part due to the nationalistic way in which reparations have largely been defined and construed across Europe and beyond. This paper offers a post-nationalist critique of reparations policy in Europe, noting that the EU's nation-state bounded conceptualization of reparations is limited in its ability to make legible the ways in which former geopolitical structures of power operated historically, making them only attentive to issues at home while failing to connect to those beyond their borders. I argue that reparations which attempt to redress long-stand-

ing injustices between communities must embody three characteristics: (1) historicity, (2) transnationalism, and (3) postcoloniality. This paper proposes an alternative framework for conceptualizing reparations that is relational in nature and suggests that the restitution of cultural antiquities represents one way of constructing and executing a relational approach to reparative justice. I conclude by presenting the case of Germany's recent reparations efforts as an illustrative example of such a relational model.

Defining Reparations

It is first important to define what is meant by reparations generally, and more specifically how the EU has framed the concept. Reparations are largely thought of as compensation for grievances or damages incurred by one party at the hand of another. Lisa Laplante has defined reparations as "measures to address the material and moral damage suffered by victims" (Laplante 2014, 71). Within the nation state context of internal colonization, Ernesto Verdeja has defined reparations as "those policies and initiatives that attempt to restore to victims their sense of dignity and moral worth and eliminate the social disparagement and economic marginalization that accompanied their targeting, with the goal of returning their status as citizens" (Verdeja 2008: 208). The Rabat Report suggests that reparations programs are "meant to provide material and symbolic gestures that might

help repair the harms and assuage the pain suffered by victims" (International Center for Transitional Justice 2009). Others have framed reparations in terms of the programs they include, for example apologies, truth commissions, civil rights legislation and financial compensation" (Brophy 2006).

These definitions each contain two important features: first, there is an emphasis on addressing the *historic* injustice, or the initial violation committed in the past. Second, these definitions focus on repairing the relationship and restoring justice to the community initially harmed in the violation. This paper argues that while the Resolution seeks grounding in these principles of reparations, in principle it fails to deliver on these commitments due to the ahistorical nature of the Resolution and misguided focus on the population it is meant to benefit.

About the Resolution

The Resolution was largely the result of research, actions and policies developed within the EU framework to address issues happening across the continent. In 2017 the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) published a 2017 report entitled "Being Black in the EU" that details experiences of racial harassment and discrimination primarily in the labor and housing markets (EU Website on Integration 2018a). The report was one of the primary resources used in the development of the

Resolution and is cited frequently throughout its text. In 2018 the European Parliament also sponsored the EU's first ever People of African Descent Week, described as an initiative to raise awareness of Europe's 15 million residents of African descent and to discuss solutions to address the injustice and violence they face, including racial prejudice, discrimination and Afrophobia (EU Website on Integration 2018b). This event was considered to be a formative step in the drafting of the Resolution as a symbolic gesture of the values and sentiments the legislation represented. Furthermore, in 2017, the Council of Europe High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a comment condemning what they referred to as "Afrophobia" in Europe, which began with the following statement:

> Human enslavement and the slave trade were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity which still cast a shadow on Europe. Colonialism scarred the destiny of millions of men, women and children and left an indelible mark on our world. It shaped European societies for centuries and led to deeply rooted prejudices and inequalities. Its consequences are still largely ignored or denied today (Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights Website 2017).

The 2017 EU Fundamental Rights report defines Afrophobia as follows:

A specific form of racism, including any act of violence or discrimination, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping, and leading to the exclusion and dehumanisation of people of African descent; whereas this correlates to historically repressive structures of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017).

Despite its stated commitment of addressing the long-term effects of colonialism and the slave trade, identified as the roots causes of injustices against Black Europeans, the Resolution largely fails to attend to the people, places and institutions most directly affected by colonialism and the slave trade--African communities decimated by those systems as well as the enduring legacies of harm between Europe and those communities. The Resolution, while important for protecting the lives of Black residents of Europe, does little to confront the legacies of slavery and colonialism elsewhere, where arguably the effects of these historic systems of oppression loom much larger. These structures are not simply institutions of our past, but continue to inform the ways in which Europe and its former colonies relate to one another in the present, a reality which requires attending to through more direct forms of repair. A focus on Black Europeans presents a version of history which misrepresents the location of harm and where accountability lies. Ultimately addressing the needs of Europe's black population serves to primarily benefit the former

imperial nation state and its residents, while failing to reallocate resources and power to the colonized nation, a cornerstone of reparative justice.

The Resolution is grounded in historical rhetoric that explicitly names the violence of Europe's historic injustices and calls for more transparency about the structural vestiges of historic violence in the lives of Black Europeans. It acknowledges such legacies explicitly:

> [W]hereas histories of injustices against Africans and people of African descent, including enslavement, forced labour, racial apartheid, massacres, and genocides in the context of European colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, remain largely unrecognised and unaccounted for at an institutional level in the Member States (ibid, section F).

Furthermore, Measure 5 of the Resolution calls for days of remembrance to be instituted as one way of acknowledging the ongoing violence of the past:

> Encourages the EU institutions and the Member States to officially acknowledge and mark the histories of people of African descent in Europe, including of past and ongoing injustices and crimes against humanity, such as slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, or those committed under European colonialism, as well as the vast achievements and positive contributions of people of African descent (ibid, Measure 5).

While the stated goal of the Parliament is to reckon with the continent's brutal past, the focus of the recommendations is less attentive to the histories of these events, which I argue must be a critical component of reparations. The Resolution calls for 28 measures to be adopted and implemented by member states, the vast majority of which are affirmative action style social policies. Measure 3 calls for the development of "national strategies for the social inclusion and integration of people of African descent"; Measure 10 encourages member states "to make efforts to systematically fight ethnic discrimination and hate crime"; and Measure 11 calls for member nations "to develop national anti-racism strategies that address the comparative situation of people of African descent in areas such as education, housing, health, employment, policing, social services, the justice system and political participation and representation."

Despite the Resolution's explicit focus on righting historic wrongs and bringing Europe's dark history into the present in order to begin the process of atonement, the proposed solutions are nationalistic and largely lack historical orientation. In contrast to the language of historicism of crimes committed under systems of colonialism and slavery, these social policy measures largely focus on issues related to Europe's more recent immigrants without attending to the conditions which produced their presence in Europe. Consequently, the question of how Black Europeans arrived to Europe is rarely interrogated.

There is a sense of amnesia about the origins of the violence that produced many of Europe's Black citizens and residents. By returning to the point of their arrival to Europe, we may develop a new understanding of what is owed to this population.

The affirmative action style social policy measures outlined in the Resolution are a necessary component of reparations in Europe but are not sufficient in bringing about justice-oriented repair. Reparations, in addition to attending to the contemporary manifestations of harm in Europe, must return to the historical point of violence *elsewhere*, where the initial violence was committed, and begin to atone for wrongdoings in these places as well. Such work would require returning to the moment of imperial conquest and colonial expansion and confronting the people in places that endured colonial violence, not just their descendants in Europe. Ariella Azoulay encourages us to examine *potential history* by returning to the point of origin of the historical injustice before violence was an inevitability in order to excavate the possibility of a post hoc alternative in the form of repair. "Rather than going forward, undoing imperialism entails going backward, revisiting violent conjunctures and their effects and giving these situations a second life, knowing that we live in their wake," she argues (Azoulay 2019). For reparations efforts to be effective they must not just attend to the legacies of historical events, but the historical events themselves. The Rabat Report sug-

gests that "the distinction between reparations and social policy is clear; the challenge is how to articulate it. The distinctive feature is historical memory." In short, reparations without historical memory may make for sound social policy but do little to address crimes of the past. As such, a more historical framework for reparations is necessary to fully begin redressing Europe's treatment of Black communities.

What this means for reparations in the EU is that member states must go beyond social protection measures for Black Europeans within their borders and consider the ways in which their imperial histories continue to manifest in their ex-colonies. In short, Europe's reparations efforts must be rooted in history, transnationalism and postcolonialism. Reparations agendas that remain only focused on addressing contemporary issues at home risk reifying the colonial nation state's position of power without redressing the global inequities produced by centuries of slavery and colonization.

There are two articles of the Resolution which explicitly name the project of reparations as a historical project. Measure 8 calls for Member States to adopt "some form of reparations such as offering public apologies and the restitution of stolen artefacts to their countries of origin" and Measure 9 "calls on the Member States to declassify their colonial archives." These two measures embody the historical, transnational, and postcolonial

qualities that I argue are necessary for a relational approach to reparations. Applying such an approach to the social protection objectives of the Resolution, thus expanding the impact beyond Black Europeans to those in ex-colonies, in ways that are locally and contextually specific, would amount to relational reparations that would help to overcome the nationalistic bias of the present Resolution.

Relationsalism

Relationalism as a theory first emerged with the growth of postcolonial theory and has since risen to prominence across the social sciences and humanities as fields from sociology to history of science to literature have found utility in the framework. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said examines the ways in which Western epistemologies constructed the Orient as regressive, static and singular while the West was held as progressive, modern and universal, and that overcoming such binary distinctions through relational thinking was critical to undermining hegemonic paradigms (Said 1979). Édouard Glissant describes the poetics of relations as "relational comparison as the complexities and entanglements among cultures and communities (Glissant 1997)." And Lisa Lowe and Kris Manjapra have theorized an "analytic of relation that seeks to reckon with the coloniality of knowledge that divides and regiments the world into areas, objects, properties, and scales of meaning, by observing instead

asymmetrical conflicts, entanglements, survivals, and transformations" (Lowe and Manjapra 2019). Dipesh Chakrabarty's call to 'provincialize Europe' is a relational declaration that seeks to destabilize Europe's position at the center of analysis and global relations in an effort to undermine its universality while turning attention to the importance of considering 'the periphery' and its relation to Europe and beyond (Chakrabarty 2000). This paper is a call to provincialize reparations in Europe by asking how their reach may extend beyond Europe's borders, unearthing ways in which Europe continues to benefit from centuries of slavery and colonization, and how reparations applied relationally might begin to address such realities.

A popular concept of postcolonial relational theory is the idea of the mutual constitution of the colonizer and colonized. This notion largely extends from Fanon's conceptualization of the master-slave relationship which was rooted in his engagement with Hegel's theorization of the dialectic. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that the slave and master constitute one another: "When there are no longer slaves, there are no longer masters (Fanon 1967)." Slaves and their masters, according to Fanon, are only able to recognize themselves through mutually recognizing each other and occupy a human world that is "a world of reciprocal recognitions (ibid: 171)." Social theorists since Fanon have extended this theory to describe colonizer-colonized relations, arguing

that Europe was influenced and shaped by its colonies as much as it was an agent in influencing and shaping them. Postcolonial social theorists have also used terms such as metrocentrism and methodological nationalism to refer to this bias in Eurocentric perspectives. Sociologist Julian Go has further suggested that analytic bifurcation occurs when relations that might not, in reality, be separate are analytically held apart and he calls, instead, for a relational approach that "emphasizes the interactional constitution of social units, processes, and practices across space (Go 2013: 28)." One example of this is Go's claim that in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault only attends to violence in France and the *ancien regime,* while ignoring the simultaneous and connected violence in France's colonies, such as Saigon, Senegal and Algeria. As such, Foucault perpetuates the myth that colonial history was not, in fact, Europe's history.

In practice, in discussions about reparations, Europe is almost exclusively concerned with how the vestiges of its empire continue to manifest domestically, while paying scant attention to the ongoing implications in ex-colonies. A relational reparations approach would help Europe overcome this singular, nationalistic focus on the member state, recover the interactive relations between the nations, and open up the possibility of acknowledging the legacies of imperial violence both at home and abroad, and the space between. Similarly, Parliament, by allowing each country to develop its own nation-based

strategy as well as focusing on only reparations for Black Europeans, and not addressing the need for reparations in former colonies across Africa, structurally maintains a form of analytic bifurcation and Europe-centered metropolitan nationalism.

By thinking of former colonial states such as the UK, France, Germany and Belgium not as individual nation-states, or independent entities, but instead as historical actors in a global imperial network; or thinking of former metropolitan centers and former colonies not as distinct sites with discrete characteristics, but instead bringing them into the same analytic frame, one can both more accurately assess the impacts and endurance of the imperial world and address the appropriate population in need of reparative justice. Relational thinking serves as a critique of the nation state as a framework for analysis and policy. "Relationality disrupts the presumption of essentialized, singular cultural origins, and emphasizes internal heterogeneity and differently scaled connection among different traditions, rather than the comparison of uniform abstractions, such as nation, region, or culture," argues Glissant (1990: 24). As such, relationality as a concept encourages a mediation on what the nation state paradigm obscures in conversations about reparations and how we might overcome such limitations. The Resolution, in its adherence to the nation state paradigm as a solution within a reparative justice framework, further exacerbates the inequities between former imperi-

al nations and ex-colonies which have endured in the postcolonial period. It is through the work of thinking and acting relationally—between and across, as opposed to within and apart—that such forms of parity may be pursued. Instead of thinking and acting in terms of discrete spaces, what is needed is a way of acknowledging relations between the colonial and colonized worlds and reconnecting and reconstructing them.

Over the last several decades, postcolonial social theorists have explored this 'relational turn' in their historical analyses of global power. Edward Said early on suggested that we attend to "overlapping territories" and "intertwined histories" and construct narratives that are "common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and the peripheries, past as well as present and future (1979: 46)." This means acknowledging that the experiences of the colonizer and colonized were not easily disentangled. Richard Price suggests that relationalism is a way of returning to the period of colonization and thinking about the way that empire manifested as more than just an event that took place at home, and which affected people at home, but a process of encounter, contact, association and interaction that stretched across geographies and, now, temporalities (Price 2006). He develops the concept of "imperial circuits" as a way of interrogating these mutual connections between the colonial nation and its empire which is often construed as distant, distinct and foreign.

On the British empire, Price advances the idea that there is no such thing as an autonomous British state, both during the height of the colonial period and as the nation exists today:

> The British state was neither a fixed nor an essential category. It assumed different shapes and forms from different historical moments or geographical vantage points. [...] Indeed, the state provides perhaps the best example of the mutually constitutive relationship of empire and British history. Historically speaking, the idea of the British state was inseparable from the idea of empire (ibid: 614).

While Price is describing the historical conditions which facilitated the development of an awareness of Britishness with respect to its colonial world, I argue that the same logic applies to ways of developing and implementing strategies for decolonization and repair. It is not possible to colonize at the level of an empire but only decolonize at the level of a state--the entire empire, or its modern corollary, must also be contained in such efforts. This fact is made even more complicated by the reality that the EU is of course comprised of multiple former competing imperial nations that are now acting as one body which issues non-binding guidance to individual members states, highlighting the need for a pluralistic, yet unified, response. As such, reparations cannot just be a project focused on the plight of Black Europeans but must be relationally configured to also

incorporate the multiple enduring empires it has left behind.

An over reliance on what many have referred to as the "metropolitan gaze" also has the effect of isolating the metropole from its colonies. As Price has described it, "The metropolitan gaze is insufficient to properly scan the links of Britain's history to its empire. To approach empire from the metropolitan perch is to miss a great deal of the process of constructing empire. One big thing that is missed is the agency of the subjects of empire in the making of British history" (ibid 626). The Resolution suffers from a metropolitan gaze that only allows it to develop policy for descendants of imperial violence that live within its borders but does not fully address the needs of those 'subjects' whose role in the construction of the imperial world was just as central as European involvement. A relational model of reparations would thus deconstruct the metropolitan gaze and re-shift the focus of analysis and efforts toward a more interactional, constitutive, transactional approach between Europe and Africa.

Much of postcolonial theory is trying to overcome what Antoinette Burton refers to as "the persistent conviction that home and empire were separate spheres (1997: 231)." She argues that distinctions between concepts such as "home" and "away" defined the imagined geography of empire during periods of European coloni-

zation and have persisted through the present day. Such distinctions, citing the work of Mrinalini Sinha on the British empire, risks "remaking Britain (itself a falsely homogenous whole) as the centripetal origin of empire, rather than insisting on the interdependence, the 'uneven development', of national/imperial formations in any given historical moment (ibid)." Though specific to the British imperial case, Burton's study has generalizable applicability to other European imperial contexts, and the EU more generally, given the ways in which both systems of direct and indirect rule facilitated similar patterns of imperial replication that continue to reproduce this very binary across nations.

Instead, a relational approach to the analysis of empire would recognize not just the interconnectedness of the spaces—because interconnectedness would imply that they are two distinct things that are connected—but an actual sameness that binds the two together. Burton argues that the nation is not an independent entity, but "an imperialized space--a political territory which could not, and still cannot, escape the imprint of empire (ibid: 240)." Empire, thus, does not need to be brought into the nation—it is the nation. The nation, as Burton describes it, "often stands as the mirror to which imperial identities are reflected back (ibid: 232)." She describes a form of relational thinking that conceives of the 'nation' as, in fact, "a set of relations that are constantly being made and remade, contested and refigured, that

nonetheless produce among their contemporaneous witnesses the conviction of historical difference (ibid: 235)." The distinction between home and the colonies was an intentional discursive project in order to provide evidence for modernity and civilization in the former. As such, undoing such categorizations and recognizing the fluidity between the two is a decolonial move toward undermining colonialist discourses of progress and development that persist today.

The nation-state is an insufficient site of redress because it misrepresents the scale, nuance and structure of empire, and creates a false notion of clarity about borders and their ability to contain the dubious effects of colonization while, in reality, the vestiges of empire are much more widespread and messy. Colonization was far from a nation-state based enterprise, but rather a global system of racial capitalism which superseded contemporary notions of the nation state and Europe. As such, its solutions must also be rooted within these global systems, which can only happen through decentering the European nation state and its populations. I propose a relational approach to thinking about reparations that maps onto the realities of global imperial domination, an approach that helps to clarify the impact of empire in order to use it as a starting point to undo its lasting harm. Such an alternative framework for reparations is already, on a small scale, being conceived through recent acts of cultural heritage restitution, namely the return

of artifacts plundered during colonial wars from Western museums to their indigenous source communities across Africa.

Cultural Heritage Restitution

Restitution, which generally refers to the return of property to its rightful owner, is a concept that dates back centuries, often in situations in which victims of war are seeking the restoration of objects looted during conflict. One of the first large-scale global restitution efforts was the return of Jewish cultural property—including artwork, personal belongings and other valuables—to Holocaust survivors and descendants of victims at the conclusion of the Second World War (Zweig 2001). Over the last few decades, claims for restitution among ex-colonies of former European empires have been growing as awareness and outrage over the withholding of imperial plunder in Western museums have increased with the rise in racial justice movement organizing. An estimated 90 to 95 percent of Africa's cultural heritage is held outside the continent, largely in elite museums, galleries and private collections in the Northern Hemisphere. African governments are one constituency which have, for decades since gaining their independence from European nations, fought to retrieve their artifacts from Western museums that were acquired mostly during the decades between the Berlin Conference and the First World War (Hicks 2020). Since the publication of the Sarr Savoy

report, commissioned by French President Macron in 2017—which urged the restitution of artifacts held in French public museums which had been looted from Africa under French imperial conquest—there has been a great deal of energy and interest from European museums in initiating conversations around restitution, and many successful returns have taken place[1].

Restitution as a practice is structurally oriented around the tenets of relationalism and provides a viable model for an historically attuned reparations agenda for Europe. It acknowledges the entanglements between territories and obligations states have to one another, seeking to push beyond the binaries of home/away and metropole/colony through a recognition that the processes which affect those at 'home' are produced by the same dynamics which continue to bear implications for those elsewhere. Restitution is a process that not only acknowledges the existing relations between ex-imperial states and colonies but seeks to actively return to the historical moments at which such relations became fraught in order to excavate their 'potential history' for future generations. Nations pursuing strategies of restitution live in full recognition that it is not enough to honor the

1 See recent examples of restitution by the University of Aberdeen and University of Cambridge in Chow, V. (2021) "After Years of Debate, Two Universities Have Become the First U.K. Institutions to Restitute Benin Bronzes," Artnet News, accessed on December 17, 2021, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/uk-universities-restituted-benin-bronzes-2027670.

legacies of slavery and colonization by addressing the problems within their borders, but must be responsive to all who have suffered as a result of these systems, regardless of citizenship or nationality.

Case: Relational Reparations in Germany

The German government's recent reconciliation efforts toward their former colonies is one model that provides a relational approach to reparations. Over the last few years, the German government and cultural establishment have begun to prioritize the return of cultural artifacts that have been illegitimately held. In 2018 the government returned the skulls of victims of the Herero-Nama genocide in Namibia that they had held for over a century. The following year, in 2019, Germany agreed to return a Portuguese Stone Cross that was of great cultural significance to Namibia which had been looted in 1893. And most recently, in early 2021, the German government announced that it would begin the process of returning Benin Bronze cultural objects to the Nigerian government that were looted from the ancient Kingdom of Benin in 1897. In addition, Germany has for many years been an active member of the Benin Dialogue Group, an organization committed to seeking the reunification of the community of Benin with their heritage and has been a key player in the development of a new cultural museum in Benin where the repatriated objects will be replaced.

In early 2021, the German government agreed to pay the Namibian government 1.1 billion euros as a gesture of reconciliation over the early 20th century genocide. The compensation will go toward development projects including land reform, rural infrastructure, and technical assistance. The German government explicitly did not refer to the compensation as reparations or issue a formal apology, as both actions would trigger a set of legally binding mechanisms that would make other forms of compensation necessary and would set an unwanted precedent for payment for Germany and other European and former imperial nations, and the Resolution was not formally referenced with regard to such decisions. Yet while the German government has been unwilling to use the term 'reparations' with regard to their reconciliation efforts, the sum total of their efforts related to cultural heritage restoration and direct financial investments represent a comprehensive form of reparative justice that is inherently relational. Beyond simply providing material support to people of African descent living in Germany, or Namibians whose recent ancestors were subject to violence in the genocide, the German government is addressing the decades- and centuries-long interactions between the communities implicated, interrogating how they continue to manifest and influence one another and seeking solutions that stretch across time and space. Julian Go argues that relational approaches must transcend discrete actions: "Rather than focusing narrowly

upon processes within societies (western, colonized, or non-Western) or even just *between* them (as in *inter*-national studies), it *would track the processes and relations between diverse but connected spaces in the making and remaking of modernity*" (2013: 41).

In addition to being transnational, Germany's efforts are also deeply rooted in historical realities of violence and plunder, as well as a postcolonial framework that acknowledges the mutuality of relations between Germany and its former colonies. While there is much left to be desired in the German case—including but not limited to stronger social and economic inclusion and anti-racism projects, and an explicit naming of reparations and financial compensation to the victims of the genocide—the German government's efforts provide a strong argument for why incorporating a relational approach into our theory and practice of reparations is necessary and will make the repair process more whole.

Conclusion

In its current iteration, the "Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe" resolution addresses only the specific needs of Black Europeans who are citizens of individual member states without attending to both the imperial legacies within ex-colonies as well as the supranational legacies of the EU's multiple empires which each bear their own vestiges of colonial power

across Europe and the colonized world. The spirit of article 8 in the Resolution, which calls on "the restitution of stolen artefacts to their countries of origin," must be applied more broadly to not just artifacts, but to all the ways in which the EU has conceptualized repair within the Resolution. The affirmative action style social policies, in addition to efforts to curb discrimination and harassment and symbolic gestures meant to commemorate and memorialize the contributions of Black Europeans to society throughout history, must also be applied with this relational orientation.

While Germany's framework for reparations provides a solid starting point from which other EU countries may begin thinking through their reparations program, it is far from perfect and represents just one model that is appropriate only for the specific German case. Given that each EU member state has its own distinct historic relationship to the institutions of slavery and colonization, so too must they develop their own strategies that consider such unique circumstances. As such, no two reparations plans would look alike as each member country must devise a plan that would be locally and contextually specific to the conditions of their imperial histories. For example, because Germany's colonial crimes in Namibia involved a large-scale genocide that were particularly deadly for the Herero and Nama ethnic communities of Namibia, their plan is focused on socioeconomic rebuilding as a form of recovery for the

nation. In Nigeria, on the other hand, where the enduring effects of the artifact looting are most strongly felt, reparations interventions might focus more on the cultural dimensions of repair and rehabilitation, such as investments in the arts and culture sector.

Instead of thinking nationally, a more justice-oriented and historical approach would be to think imperially in order to begin to unravel empire's enduring legacies. We must return to the time and site at which historic relations of extraction were formed to think through who was harmed in these interactions and who benefited. If European nations were the primary beneficiaries in the transatlantic slave trade and colonial projects, reparative solutions that only reify the nation state are necessary insofar as they support descendants of those harmed through these systems of dominations, but are insufficient in bringing about repair for those affected who are seeking justice beyond the nation state boundary. Given that each nation's imperial history is different, each member state must return to its own point of initial violence to embark on the work of recuperation. Marcy Norton warns of "the persistence of a historiography that conceives of Atlantic (or global) history as the history of competing empires and/or settler colonial societies" and advocates, instead, advocating for a mode of entanglements between interconnected and interdependent worlds (2017: 18). Addressing the realities of an entangled capitalist imperial world economy in produc-

ing the alienation of cultures from their heritage may be one step toward unraveling the legacies of colonialism. Instead of looking inward, toward one's own citizenry, a relational approach to reparations would look outward and between to tell a new global imperial history that moves beyond the metropolitan centers. Approaching reparations from a historical perspective which recognizes the ways in which harm continues to manifest in all the spaces along the imperial route is a necessary way of collapsing the boundaries between nations, ultimately allowing our entanglements to ground us in a space of mutual repair. We are living through a moment in which decades, if not centuries, of organizing around the restitution of colonial plunder is coming to fruition, providing a pathway through which to envision and practice such forms of connected care and allowing us to imagine new ways of being, relationally.

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Postcolonial Europe and its Construction of Female Citizens in Jordan

Barbara Schenkel

Introduction

Ulrich Beck famously argued that one of Europe's fundamental values was "the moral duty to relieve the suffering of others" (Beck 2003, 34). International development cooperation between Europe and Jordan seems to operate under the slogan that it is Europe's moral duty to relieve the lack of democracy of others. Both the European Union as well as individual member states

are actively funding, promoting, or implementing a great variety of international development projects in Jordan that operate under the umbrella of democracy promotion and women's political empowerment, the latter being the focus of this paper.

A postcolonial perspective on Europe suggests that its others are always already "*implied* in the theoretical and practical work which produces the unity of European space and the concepts which articulate that unity" (Mezzadra 2006, 32, emphasis in original). The fact that European actors are involved in the 'making' of female Jordanian citizens outside of its borders therefore leads me to explore what these citizen-making interventions reveal about postcolonial Europe through its construction of these others/othered citizens. Citizenship as a fundamentally gendered and colonial/Eurocentric concept is turned back to its origins which allows me to argue that it is actually postcolonial Europe that reveals itself through its development interventions in Jordan.

I understand postcolonial to be not only a chronological signifier for the condition of both colonised and colonisers after the formal end of Europe's colonial endeavours in the Middle East and elsewhere. There needs to be space for both continuities and ruptures in the relations between metropole and (former) colonies up until the present day in an analysis of the postcolonial

(Shohat 1992)[1]. Following Sen, here postcolonial as a descriptor for Europe, Jordan, and the relations between them "also refers to the resilience of colonial structures, institutions and discourses whereby, even in the era of the postcolonial state, impressions of the era of colonisation persist" (2021, 50). In this article, I hope to highlight these legacies in Jordanian-European interactions as they present themselves in development discourses as well development work's material underpinning.

On analysing the figure of the empowered female Jordanian citizen who emerges in the discourses of these interventions as well as the structures that condition her appearance, it becomes clear that both Europe's geopolitical interests in the region and its self-image are preserved through this figure. As the marker of both change and stability, she is supposed to consolidate the status quo insofar as the present situation lets Europe simultaneously uphold its identity as the promoter and exporter of democracy and liberal values, ensure that the change it actually seeks to make does not interfere with its foreign policy strategies, and maintain its inward-looking gaze that is inattentive to a postcolonial analysis of its role in the region.

1 As such, I take seriously Shohat's reflections on the potential of 'postcolonial' to universalise and depoliticise the analysis of a variety of historical and geographical contexts. Yet as a category, it is useful here in order to question Eurocentric claims to universalism by highlighting the particularity of European (citizenship) values and provincialise them in their application in the specific Jordanian case.

The development projects funded or implemented by European actors[2] in Jordan that target women's empowerment as citizens include a range of interventions. A lot of particularly the European Union's work focuses on strengthening institutions such as the Jordanian parliament but more broadly this also includes interventions to train and support female candidates for parliament or other elected bodies ahead of national or municipal elections; to support particularly youth and female members of political parties; projects in local development whereby women are trained in soft skills, (social) media usage, grant and project proposal writing for CBOs, or which implement discussion sessions in rural areas, e.g. about gender equality and women's role in politics. So while many of these projects seek to integrate women into formalised politics, there is also a strong focus on strengthening civil society through facilitating women's involvement in different forms of associations and organisations. Most of these interventions also describe their work as citizen empowerment or encouraging ac-

2 This refers to the European Union as a direct development actor (such as through the European Centre for Electoral Support or the programme "EU Support to Jordanian Democratic Institutions and Development, EU-JDID"), as well as individual EU member states' development agencies and organisations directly funded by them. German and Dutch organisations are for instance particularly active in this kind of political development work through projects that seek to strengthen political parties in Jordan and the role of women and youth in them, but women's political and civic empowerment is also a component of Danish or Spanish development strategies in Jordan, among others.

tive citizenship in some capacity. These interventions to promote democracy and women's political participation happen in the context of Jordan as a constitutional monarchy with deeply authoritarian political structures. Power lies predominantly with the Royal Court and the intelligence services, not with an elected body. Apart from a political system that is in large part undemocratic, Jordanian civil society is repressed and closely state-monitored so that there are very limited avenues for contentious political activity (Schuetze 2019).

In this paper, I want to explore whether the idea of training someone from the Global South as to how to be active as a citizen is conceptualised in accordance with Eurocentric citizenship discourses, as critiques of developmental models that make Europe its centre and reference point would contend (e.g. Escobar 2015; Mignolo and Walsh 2018). My way of approaching these interventions is informed by literature which critically engages with the term and effects of women's 'empowerment' in development, taking seriously its "disempowering work" particularly in neoliberal development discourses (Miraftab 2004, 239; Batliwala 2007; Cornwall 2018; Sardenberg 2009; Sharma 2006). I want to explore the structures from which the female Jordanian citizen emerges in these development projects, what her assigned role post-'empowerment' might be, and what this can teach us about postcolonial Europe and the way it sees itself.

This paper is based on qualitative research with multiple organisations in Jordan and Europe, including qualitative interviews with development professionals in different organisations, participant observation of events and trainings (all of this both online and in-person), and an in-depth discourse analysis of the organisations' communication materials and online presence. Data collection took place between September 2019 and March 2020 in Amman, Jordan and between October and December 2020 remotely and online. All my interlocutors, unless otherwise requested, have been anonymised. All translations into English, where applicable, are my own.

Postcolonial Europe and Citizenship

Postcolonial theorists have suggested that the construction of Europe's Other reveals more about those doing the constructing than about this other subject that is conceived in colonial and postcolonial endeavours (Mbembe 2001; Spivak 1999; Said [1978] 2003). Similar arguments have been made about the Western or European, developed, benevolent subject that comes out of international development interventions in which it seeks to develop or empower its Other (Loftsdóttir 2016; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 2006; Kapoor 2008; Tabar 2016). Based on this thinking, I use the category of citizenship here as a lens to turn back to its origins in Europe. I contend that postcolonial Europe reveals itself through its development interventions targeting

Jordanian women as citizens (to be), particularly in view of the expressly colonial and gendered character of citizenship as a concept which is what I now briefly turn to.

When citizenship as an institution governing the relationship between the state and the individual took shape in Europe after the French Revolution, "the subsuming of women's rights under male authority was formally codified" as women were classified as passive citizens and largely relegated to the private realm conceived as the opposite of the public sphere (Boatcă and Roth 2016, 194). They remained devoid of the political rights that (certain) men were awarded (ibid.). The fundamental assumption of the citizen as male then relied on the exclusion of women from political subjecthood and despite the incremental wins of citizen rights for women and their acknowledgement as political actors and subjects, the institution of citizenship remains a fundamentally gendered one that is underpinned by the tension between its premise of equality among citizens and a gendered hierarchy of difference (Brown 1995; Lister 1997; Vogel 1994).

Other hierarchies have structured European citizenship from the beginning but began to crystallise along racial lines in particular through Europe's colonial projects. The colonial subject contrasted with the European citizen was essential to generate ideas around civilisation and superiority associated with European modernity,

and to position the European citizen as the bearer of political legitimacy and authority (Dussel 1993; Mezzadra 2006; Sadiq 2017; Taylor 2013). Citizenship in its liberal European construction has therefore historically needed this juxtaposition, engendering a spatial and ontological division of Europe into white, Christian, modern, and developed as opposed to its Other outside of Europe's borders (Boatcă 2019)[3]. In this construction, modernity, civic rights, democracy, and citizenship rights are situated as occurring initially within Europe and consequently translated to the non-European world, omitting the violence of imperial and colonial structures through which they were allegedly exported outside of its borders (Bhambra 2009). The 'white man's burden' of Europe's civilising mission in its colonies is worth examining here to highlight the confluences of European citizenship, race, gender, and development. To legitimise colonial endeavours, racialised notions of civilising colonial subjects or supervising their progress were mobilised, measured according to Eurocentric standards (Wilson 2011). This construction also co-constituted the inferior racialised subject and the European man's whiteness. Non-white women were thereby turned into objects of liberation from patriarchal regimes and their

3 It is important to note that these seemingly stable borders need to be treated with caution as the European Union for instance in its inception still consisted mainly of colonial powers with overseas territories and its borders until today stretch into the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Africa (Bhambra 2009; Boatcă 2020).

backwards-minded men who were upholding them (e.g. Spivak 1999). Post-independence, even "as the binary oppositions of race went 'underground' within dominant discourses" the emergence of modernisation theory meant that these racialised hierarchies "were mapped onto those of development/underdevelopment" (Wilson 2011, 316). These colonial legacies subsist in racialised and gendered development theory and practice albeit now cloaked in terminologies such as traditional vs. modern(ised) or under/developed. Indeed, contemporary "humanitarian and development discourses reinforce a *post-racial* ideal" whereby "racism is no longer recognised as a cause or condition of global poverty" and humanist ideals are equated with "the transcendence of racial thinking to value and care for all humans" (Jefferess 2015, n.p., emphasis in original). This postcolonial (as the problematic, concluded temporality against which Shohat cautions us) amnesia about how development interventions' subject came to be in her racialised and gendered construction is also tangible in the Jordanian case.

The citizen that supposedly materialises in the projects that target Jordanian women's political participation and subjecthood is then Europe's gendered and racialised other citizen. European actors are funding and implementing these projects and thereby are directly involved in constructing her. Female citizens are either positioned as citizen-to-be who are still outside of the political

realm in the first place and need to be activated by way of development projects. These projects to advance her knowledge about the political system and train her in the skills to actively participate in it as a modern subject particularly target rural women, as the website of a German political foundation in Jordan that acts as a funding body for such development projects describes: Jordanian "[w]omen often lack sufficient knowledge and experience to be professional in political and social issues. They have knowledge gaps in terms of constitutional, national and international rights, lacking basic knowledge of policy-making processes and policy tools" (Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung Jordan, n.d.). These development interventions then assist her to enter the public sphere and purse politics there. If the targeted participants are already active in either civil society or in some capacity within the political system (e.g. as members of political parties or office holders in governance bodies), interacting with institutions is framed as meaningful political activity. Enhancing women's skills to do so effectively is seen as development intervention's contribution to making active citizens out of Jordanian women.

The European Union has made the promotion of rule of law and democracy one of the primary goals of its foreign policy, reasserting the image of Europe as a global champion of these foundational liberal, democratic values (Kleinfeld and Nicolaïdis 2009; Nicolaïdis 2015). After all, Europe's way of seeing its own iden-

tity as underpinned by "values believed to be quintessentially European" such as its commitment to human rights and liberal democracy ultimately endows it with the authority for this "European culture to be exported to the rest of the world" (Bhambra 2009, 76). This is also the case in Jordan where the European Union as a whole and in particular Germany as a bilateral partner are major foreign aid donors (OECD 2021). The results of direct democracy promotion interventions, but also of general democratisation processes such as the current decentralisation reform that is directly and indirectly supported by European actors, have not been very promising though[4]. Rather than bringing about new democratic openings, these reforms and interventions have reinforced authoritarian structures and helped consolidate the power of the current regime (Karmel 2021; Karmel and Linfield 2021; Schuetze 2019). Largely out of its financial dependency on these donors emerges "the regime's commitment to a democratic minimum and an image of reform" which is an image that serves both donor and recipient (Karmel 2021, 13). European

4 The decentralisation law that was passed in 2015 introduced new local and governorate councils that are directly elected. Despite the fact that these new subnational governance bodies were praised for their democratising potential by Jordanian and international stakeholders alike, observers have noted how decentralisation in Jordan effectively centralised and solidified existing power structures (cf. Karmel 2021 for an overview of these analyses). These decentralisation reforms are also often framed as an important opportunity for women's political empowerment.

donors can claim their efforts at aiding democratisation outside of its borders and thereby reinforce the image of the liberal European self committed to its democratic values, whereas the Jordanian regime can point to the large number of development interventions which on paper promote democratic structures and as in the case of this study, women's integration in them, positioning themselves as committed to gender equality and democratic values while changing relatively little about the authoritarian status quo.

The development work of European actors in Jordan does not only buttress the image of Europe as rightful promoter of these foundational values, it also serves its geopolitical interests in the region. In the following sections, I want to examine these development interventions in the country from a postcolonial foreign policy perspective.

Geopolitical Development and Docility

> S: What is Germany's real political interest in Jordan? I'm not sure whether I'm supposed to be this honest, but is it really structural change in Jordan? Which would be very very desirable, from my point of view? Or is it rather Jordan taking care of Syrian refugees in the best possible way so that they stay in the region and do not come to us?

> B: Well I guess you can't really deny that this is precisely the principal interest not only of Germany but also of Europe.

S: Yes… exactly. And that is also part of the problem[5].

Seen from across the Mediterranean, Jordan serves as a geopolitical buffer for countries of the Global North, most notably for European countries and the United States. Jordan has retained Palestinian,[6] Iraqi, and Syrian refugees, absorbed local conflicts yet remained a stable ally for Europe and America's interests in the region, making sure that their military and geopolitical interests are safeguarded while conflicts and wars do not reach Europe directly, least by migrants arriving at its borders (Jabiri 2016). Still, I was surprised when Stephanie, who works at the Germany Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, was so frank (though somewhat hesitantly so) in our conversation and openly acknowledged the underlying foreign policy priorities of Germany's involvement in Jordan: neither a humanitarian responsibility for Jordanians or Syrians in need of assistance nor a commitment to democratisation, but an interest in Jordan's stability and thus ability to retain refugees in the region. But this was a very rare statement that was rarely mirrored by any similar acknowledgement by people working in Jordan on the funding or implementation level of development work, indicating

5 Stephanie, development policy official at the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, online interview, November 2020.
6 More than half of Jordan's population consists of Palestinians (some of which hold the Jordanian passport) that were violently displaced from their homelands west of the River Jordan, most during the nakba in 1948 and the Six-Day War of 1967.

that a more substantive optimism about their work, its outcomes and underpinning values conditioned their attachment to it.

In the European-Jordanian development coordination, there is no mentioning of the structural economic and political conditions that render Jordanian women (and Jordanians as well as other residents more generally) allegedly in need of foreign assistance and the role institutions of the Global North have played in bringing about such a state. The authoritarian system of Jordan as a postcolonial state and the ways in which the British colonial project in the region has entrenched these authoritarian structures (Massad 2001), the neoliberal restructurings imposed by international financial institutions such as the IMF over the past thirty years that have exacerbated people's economic hardship and their lack of social security (Ababneh 2018; Martínez 2017), or the substantial dependency on foreign financial flows of the Jordanian regime that puts it in a position of dependency vis-à-vis the US and Europe are not openly acknowledged (Paragi 2016). Rather than discussing the structural reasons behind their presence in the country, European actors instead focus on a particular form of stability as desirable, both as condition for and outcome of their work (ibid.). European development work in Jordan prioritises social peace over social justice as its main interest lies in keeping Jordan and its political system largely as is.

My European interlocutors stressed the importance of stability and social cohesion for long-term change as opposed to more disruptive and antagonistic processes, for instance the popular protest of the Arab uprisings in Jordan and across the region that started in 2011. Christine, a senior development official based in Amman who was working for a large European development agency, for instance argued that in view of the events of 2011, "I am convinced that for people here [in Jordan], it is really more important to have an economic basis and a perspective and concomitant with this, to demand changes and implement them as a slow kind of progress"[7]. While she and her colleagues acknowledged the impact the uprisings had on the region and on people's political vision across the countries where they occurred, they pointed to the current situation that was less stable and more violent or repressive in most countries compared to pre-2011, particularly in Syria, Egypt, and Yemen. But the uncertain or negative outcomes of large-scale protests are not the only factor strengthening their belief in incremental change, brought about (in part) through development work, over disruptive political action. The overall stability, the coherence of the political system and the certainty about particular political processes that are threatened by large-scale, people-led movements condition much of the work their organisations are doing in Jordan. In Christine's work, this includes support-

7 Christine, European international development professional, online interview, November 2020.

ing women holding public office in local governance institutions particularly through soft skill trainings and offering mentoring programmes led by local women in decision-making positions. These kinds of programmes aimed at successfully integrating women into the state apparatus of course both hinge on and further reinforce the smooth workings of government institutions. Consequently, Christine and her fellow development professionals shun uncertainty and antagonistic action, also in the form of popular protests. The focus on social cohesion then serves both the Europe-funded development system that can subsist as well as the geopolitical goals of its funders as a Jordan that is stable can continue to play its role as the Global North's reliable ally in the region. The kind of stability that the European actors construct as desirable necessitates a balance between largely leaving the political system unchanged but allowing for enough reform (or its appearance) and change to prevent large-scale contestation.

What does this mean for the role these actors envision for the female Jordanian citizen post-empowerment in the country's political system then? Political empowerment projects for Jordanian women largely envision women as active participants in formalised or institutionalised politics and organising, such as in elections on all governmental levels, joining formal associations, organisations, and political parties; or as active members of civil society in organisations such as NGOs or community-based associations. This of course strengthens and lends cred-

ibility to the political system and anchors it in the population it seeks to govern. It is important, nonetheless, to explore in more detail what it means for women to be integrated into civil society organisations. The Jordanian state closely monitors all international and local development organisations working in Jordan as well as political parties and civil society organisations by controlling budgets and activities through the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Social Development which need to authorise and formally approve them. Through the bureaucratic localisation, classification, and governance of development and civil society actors, the Jordanian state remains omnipresent in the development sphere even as it can hide behind its paper trails while monitoring all development actors, relationships and activities through bureaucratic governance. This means that women who 'successfully' participate in those projects and consequently start or join a civil society organisation or association become governable in important ways as they become localisable through bureaucratic approvals and activity monitoring. Through the work of development actors, the Jordanian state can "governmentalize women's everyday lives and tie them to the networks of bureaucratic power and disciplinary rule"; the women, their ambitions and interests enter the reach of state governance (Sharma 2006, 75; Cruikshank 1999).[8]

8 Similar points have also been made about youth empowerment projects in Jordan whereby neoliberal entrepreneurship initiatives serve to renew a social contract between the authoritarian Jordanian regime and its elite subjects (İşleyen and Kreitmeyr

Overall, the female citizen constructed in European development interventions is not one whose citizenship finds expression in civic action and contentious or antagonistic practices of citizenship. Instead, the neoliberal female agent of development as a "hyper-industrious, altruistic, entrepreneurial female subject[…]" emerges (Wilson 2015, 807). This newly empowered female citizen is supposed to work towards her own betterment and that of the people around her, yet remain docile and in reach of the Jordanian state, sometimes as part of the current political system.

As discussed, these toothless interventions mean that Europe can simultaneously safeguard its "real political interest" in Jordan, as Stephanie remarked, and reinforce its image as a promoter of certain quintessential European values, thereby also positioning these values as exportable, universally applicable, and desirable. But if Europe's involvement in democratisation and citizen-making outside of its borders implies a certain universality of the values mobilised there, this "always remains an impossible universal" as it is dependent on the production of difference between that which is modern/Western/European and its other, producing an ever-present "possibility of some shift, displacement, or contamination" (Mitchell 2000: xiv). In a sense, this failure to produce a Jordanian female citizen who mirrors the European universal subject but who is positioned as

2020).

aspiring to this model reinforces the European imaginary of citizenship. It reproduces the difference between the universal and its non-modern other, simultaneously reinforcing its universal desirability and its unattainability in a context allegedly marked by tradition as modernity's negative. If tradition is to blame for the female citizen not fulfilling her democratising potential, this means that the authoritarian character of the Jordanian state as obstructing this potential also remains unspoken. I will expand on the role of modernity in this some more in the following.

Approximating Modernity, Approximating the Public Sphere

It is worth looking at the Jordanian female citizen in a bit more detail, at what characterises her, or the structures from which she emerges, and what does this potentially tells us about the European actors who conceive of these discourses that fashion her emergence. The empowerment projects that target Jordanian women envision two possible starting points for them. Either they are already a member of a political party or a comparable high-profile association in the political system or civil society, meaning that they "are so close to become leaders" as Abeer, a Jordanian employee of a European development agency supporting women's political empowerment, put it during our interview in Amman in

January 2020. They might be in need of some rhetorical skills training or other soft skill fine-tuning but are largely ready to be politically active. The second starting point is that of a Jordanian woman constructed as agent-to-be who is yet to become an active citizen or, as Abeer contrasted it, "other women where we really need to start from scratch. To build them up."[9] In both cases, the woman to be empowered is fundamentally characterised by that which she is not (yet) and by the lack that defines her: of the knowledge, the skills, even the self-esteem to be what constitutes an active citizen and to actively participate in society and the public sphere. These projects are then designed to 'activate' them politically and to make them from deficient subjects into active ones.

This is more so the case for the second set of projects which seek to construct pathways out of the pre-political space their targeted participants seem to inhabit. My interlocutors often named this as the home and the sphere of the family, a conceptualisation that is productive of a strict division between a public or political and a private sphere. This assigns different activities to their particular place where they can authentically unfold, either the political sphere or the private, yet transgressing them seems largely precluded (Arendt [1967] 2019; Benhabib 1993; Cruikshank 1999). The women's perceived subordination within their family, often described as a

9 Abeer, Jordanian employee of a European development agency, interview in Amman, January 2020.

rather closed-off sphere they inhabit, together with their lack of knowledge and skills constitute a barrier in these women's way towards becoming active, political citizens and it is precisely this barrier that European development actors seek to dismantle. The idea of Jordanian women in the pre-political familial private sphere makes interventions to construct a path out of their homes necessary, even indispensable. As argued above, these women consequently become governable not only by the development actors but, importantly, by the Jordanian state as well.

In addition, this way of thinking is taking Eurocentric capitalist modernity as its reference point where the emergence of the public thus political sphere relegated the home to a purely private realm and assigned it apolitical, emotive qualities. The public sphere was in turn inhabited by the rational modern (male) self. As such, the idea of overcoming tradition to aspire to modernisation by way of entering the public sphere follows this conceptualisation, particularly for women for whom modernisation often means that as the "traditional woman bound by the past," they finally must be folded into the advancement of history too (Mitchell 2000, xiii). This is not to say that there is no such thing as a Jordanian public sphere or that women should not enter it, but rather, to point to the inability of this particular conceptualisation to destabilise a public-private division in the first place. If we take the feminist critiques of androcentric

European citizenship seriously (Pateman 1988; Lister 1997; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999) and apply them in a postcolonial context, we must ask what a gendered, differentiated way of thinking about citizenship specific to the Jordanian context might look like instead of assuming that the private sphere is a fundamentally apolitical or at least politically neutral space. After all, this idea has been challenged in important ways by feminists of colour and Black feminists as a white bourgeois way of thinking (Anzaldúa 2012; hooks 1990; Mohanty 2003; cf. also Boryczka 2017). Indeed, homes become spaces of care where oppressed people's dignity and sense of self can be restored given the injustice and hardship they systematically face in public. The private sphere of the home can in particular serve as a space to develop political subjectivity, often in relation to other members of the family, when the structure of the public sphere is predicated upon inequality and marginalisation (ibid.). Thinking about women as 'stuck' at home with their families holding them back from becoming politically active means being unable to account for the potential of the home to be either a site of political subjectification or even resistance, and to question the very idea that being at home is in itself an apolitical state. Importantly, it also neglects the question as to why extended family networks might be important for Jordanians and Jordanian women in particular to rely on. The material structures underpinning the familial connectedness of Jordanians are deeply marked by the neoliberal restruc-

turing programmes that have meant the steady decrease of state subsidies and a shrinking social security network for large numbers of the population. In view of the demise of the welfare state and the socioeconomic hardship and insecurity of many Jordanians, it makes sense for women to be embedded in a close-knit kin network to ensure their families' survival and wellbeing.

The reasons cited in development discourses for why women are allegedly held back by their families and why they are not-yet political agents in a way that is discernible to European eyes are different from those mentioned above though. The predominant explanation is "tradition" or "culture" which finds expression in backward societal norms connected to women's position within their families. Project objectives along the lines of challenging cultural norms and traditions that prevent women from becoming active participants in Jordan's social and political life is an omnipresent descriptor in development interventions: "prevailing cultural and religious norms" are blamed for women "confin[ing] themselves to submissive roles" and for being "discouraged by their families and community members from attempting to assume leadership positions" (Hivos, n.d.). Here, vague concepts such as "culture" or "tradition" are able to absorb all other explanations for why these women are not active political actors (yet). It is not the limited possibilities for meaningful political participation in the Jordan political system, or the ways in which local

and international actors enable the techniques of control to foreclose it, or even the economic and political structures underpinning women's position, but rather an often unspecified 'traditional' or 'tribal' mindset. "Families" and sometimes "tribes" are then quoted as structuring Jordanian society which become markers of its Otherness and Jordanian local "culture" is turned into the thing despite which women have to become politically active, reflecting the entrenched Eurocentric notion "which equates tradition with ascription and modernity (as its overcoming) with achievement" (Boatcă and Roth 2016, 198). This discourse is subsequently productive of a connected, familial, traditionally-minded Arab or Jordanian self.

It is at this moment that the European citizen quietly enters the stage again. A connected, traditional Other only makes sense in opposition to an individualistic, autonomous, and modern subject. The quintessential liberal values of the European citizen serve as a benchmark when talking about Jordanian 'culture' and how it holds back Jordanian women from approximating the modern, autonomous citizen that has its origins across the Mediterranean in Europe. While it might not be a form of citizenship that is directly replicated in development work in Jordan, it nevertheless shapes how development actors think of public and private spheres and the skill set and characteristics a woman needs to possess to undertake the necessary crossover. The private sphere, in

this way of thinking so deeply anchored in Europe, cannot serve as a political space and the elect way to leave it is one that means leaving behind some of that which marks her as Europe's Other, namely the familial connectivity.

Of Eurocentrism: Development structures and designs of denial

> Zahra: We know best what we need in the governorates.
> Basma: In development work, it is usually people in their offices in Europe or America who decide what's the problem or which project to do.
> Zahra: Yes, we know best.[10]

Zahra and Basma are two young Jordanian women around the age of twenty, both from the governorate of Karak southwest of the capital Amman. I met them at an event where they presented their project idea to empower women in taking on leadership roles in the Karak governorate. This event, organised by a local NGO, was the culmination of a competition between groups of young Jordanians from eleven of the country's twelve governorates in cooperation with other local and European organisations, using European funding. The groups' ideas ranged from connecting existing civil society initiatives, to locally strengthening political par-

10   Conversation with Zahra and Basma, cultural centre in Amman, January 2020.

ties, to creating job opportunities in the tourism sector for women. When I spoke with Zahra and Basma, they expressed very quickly and very clearly their awareness of one of the most obvious inequalities in Jordanian development work, namely the fact that it is often not people's lived experience of their political, social, and economic reality that determines what kind of projects are implemented in the country, but the priorities of donors situated in the Global North.

Of course, the domain of international development has not been ignorant of its (postcolonial, decolonial, and postdevelopment) critics so that within the sector, there seems to be widespread awareness of the criticism aimed at its imperial roots and lingering neocolonial discourses, or at least of the power imbalances enshrined in the North-South funding flows and epistemological hierarchies between Eurocentric development models and the Global South that Basma and Zahra also point to. Influential development actors in recent years have been organising large conferences on decolonising aid and most international organisations by now explicitly proclaim that they aim for sustainable and locally rooted approaches in their work. Reflective of this growing overall awareness in the sector, many of my interlocutors brought up questions about localised approaches in our conversations and shared their thoughts on them, stressing that their goal was not to directly apply solutions from their home countries and that they did not

have all the answers for questions that arise in the context of Jordan: "we do not stand for the idea of exporting [a certain model of development]. You need to look at things holistically and not as an opportunity to copy-paste a solution" as Helen, a senior western European development professional, told me for instance[11]. Often without me prompting them, Helen and her fellow development professionals argued that local knowledge and solutions as also using local structures and networks was central to their work. Similarly, Abeer, who is Jordanian but works for a European organisation, opined that Jordanians would "take what's applicable, they adopt the international experience […]. Because you can't impose and you can't say, this is the best way to do it." [12]

Yet for European development actors, this seeming rejection of European standards also meant that in order to measure the success of development projects, "[y]ou should definitely not make the mistake of applying Western standards," as Carl, the head of a European development organisation in Jordan, put it. He affirmed that in international development, "there is no universal approach."[13]

11 Helen, European international development professional, online interview, November 2020.

12 Abeer, Jordanian employee of a European development agency, interview in Amman, January 2020.

13 Carl, European development professional, interview in Amman, February 2020. Interestingly, the Eurocentric standard continues to loom in the background in this statement: it might

So, by way of stressing local knowledge, local ways of doing things, and participatory workflows with their local partner organisations, the epistemic domination and Eurocentrism of development work more broadly was denied. Interestingly, many development officials also drew parallels between their work in Jordan and similar aspects of gender inequality prevalent in European societies such as the gender pay gap or the lack of women in politics and elected offices. This active deconstruction of the binary between Europe as a model place for women's political participation and gender equality and the *other* place Jordan which lags behind this development produces a certain connection between development trustees and recipients, between the European and the Jordanian self by way of stressing common challenges and implicitly also the shared goal of gender equality.

All these instances of denying Eurocentrism and emphasising the localisation of empowerment work raises the question as to whether this is productive in a context where the aforementioned allegedly localised ways of knowing and doing citizen empowerment are still deeply structured by Eurocentric assumptions around modernity, the political or public sphere, and women's citizenship. On a material level, the development sector oper-

have been discarded as a measuring stick for 'progress' but still seems to implicitly frame what kind of results count as successful.

ates as a system of deeply uneven financial flows and material assets which also reflect powerful geopolitical interests as most donors and funding organisations hail from the Global North. Many Jordanian development professionals and activists criticise unsustainable project-based funding patterns, donor agendas' alignment with government priorities, and the strong competition between local organisations for funding opportunities. These severely restrict their ability to determine their own, locally rooted priorities in their work and create a sustainable and meaningful impact (Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development 2021; Bruschini-Chaumet et al. 2019; Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, n.d.) These material factors further make the production of dissent and contention within this system extremely difficult – after all, a truly participatory, localised approach to development that centres Jordanian (recipient) priorities should be able to allow for exactly this. I therefore believe that the denial of Eurocentrism in the form of localisation is largely non-performative, meaning that "the appeal of" anti-Eurocentrism "is looking good and feeling good, as an orientation that obscures inequalities like the obscuring of a rotten core behind a shiny surface" (Ahmed 2006, 121). By this logic, the declaration of something – the localised, non-Eurocentric approach to development work – forecloses an interrogation of the material realities of the system in which it occurs and obscures the fact that even though small-scale acknowledgments and changes to the overall system might be

possible, these fixes ultimately strengthen it and ensure that development work can continue to operate without systemic challenges. The presence of the European epistemologies is denied as if to say that the European actors' decolonial 'homework' has largely been done. Because it prevents a more systemic interrogation of the structures underpinning the development system in Jordan, this non-performativity of denying Eurocentrism ultimately helps to sustain power inequalities within this system.

The localisation approaches and participatory work flows some European development actors pursue potentially remedy some of these power imbalances. However, they do not fundamentally change the funding ecosystem, decrease the competition of local organisations over funds, or put decision-making power in the hands of those at the receiving end of development interventions, all of which are crucial elements for meaningful localisation efforts (Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development 2021; Bruschini-Chaumet et al. 2019). Given the context, concepts such as "participatory approaches," usually used when referring to the participants of development interventions but also applicable to the work flow between donors and implementing organisations, are reduced to mere buzzwords. They lend development interventions new legitimacy particularly in view of previous 'failed' projects and the emerging criticism at extant power imbalances and legacies of

sustained inequalities while not necessarily doing any-
thing to bring about substantial changes to the system
(Cornwall and Brock 2005; Rahnema [1992] 2010; Ka-
poor 2008; Wilson 2015). Some European organisations
whose employees I spoke to had long-standing part-
nerships with local organisations that surely gave them
more security beyond the typical three-year project cy-
cle; there was, as one development professional put it,
more room for trial and error, more time for meaningful
learning experiences and also for capacity building activ-
ities led by the European partners for those local organ-
isations[14]. On this smaller scale of cooperation between
European development organisations and their local
partners, there might be room for collaborative work to
counter some of the systemic asymmetries in structures
of development work that render Europe its material
and discursive centre. At the same time, if European
actors envision these participatory work flows to mainly
consist in additional training and capacity building for
their local partner organisations, the ultimate horizon of
such collaborations can only be their optimised perfor-
mance within the development system, for instance with
regard to writing project proposals and being awarded
grants, and an increased efficiency in their delivery of
programmes and services, all of which will not funda-
mentally lead to questioning or changing a deeply asym-
metrical development system.

14 Sylvie, European development professional, interview in
Amman, February 2020.

On a larger scale, the denial of Eurocentrism by European development actors also draws attention away from the geopolitical and material power they possess in the Jordanian context. The stressing of equal partnerships and localised approaches, however sincere, does not remedy the material, epistemological, or even paradigmatic dominance European actors possess in Jordan. It further ignores the historical emergence of this imbalance by refraining from interrogating Jordan's positioning in the global political system as partly resulting from its relations of domination and/or dependency in political and socioeconomic terms with Global North countries. This denial is another way in which international development demonstrates "its 'forgetfulness' of colonial histories and postcolonial entanglements" (Loftsdóttir 2016, 234).

The European Self, Looking Inward

The Jordanian woman-turned-citizen in development discourse is then made to inhabit the narrow space designated for her where she is the marker of both change and stability. She embodies a certain kind of progress and approximation of modernity as defined within Eurocentric frameworks but also becomes or remains intimately tied to the authoritarian Jordanian state. But the figure of the Jordanian female citizen who is constructed as a newly empowered active participant in the political system of the country while remaining largely docile ful-

fils another function: she delineates the European self as one that may continue to look inward as its self-referentiality remains untouched. The essence of the European self as agent of superior values which it aims to spread through democratisation and women's active citizenship promotion in Jordan is unchanged as Europe can ignore the importance of its borderlands, i.e. of its others for the constitution of its identity and its image, both internally and globally, as an agent and promoter of liberal democratic values. These can be constructed as an inherent part of the European self that it naturally possesses rather than drawing attention to the need to constantly reaffirm them in relation to its other. Instead, it is these liberal democratic values that serve to justify Europe's presence and role in developing Jordanian women while allowing European actors to gloss over the functions and effects of their interventions that would pose a dissonance to those values.

If the empowerment work European actors are doing in Jordan is a way to ensure that the Jordanian political system changes enough for nothing major to change, this also has an internal effect on Europe. As long as Jordan continues to remain politically stable without open contention or resistance to its hegemonic, repressive political and economic system, difficult questions that would require Europe to wrestle with its colonial history and the postcolonial entanglements of its presence, or absence, in the region do not need to be addressed. What

does it mean for the self-declared "peaceful, cooperative Europe" (Habermas and Derrida 2003, quoted in Bhambra 2009, 73), the place where modernity and rule of law were pioneered, for its foreign policy to fail so utterly that more than ten years of war and violence in Syria could happen? The consequences of this in the shape of hundreds of thousands of Syrian people becoming refugees is largely felt by Jordan; only a minority of displaced Syrians actually reached European borders and brought the immediacy of Europe's failure with them. Or how would Europe deal with Palestinian demands for their right to return if it took its postcolonial critics seriously enough to face its own involvement in their displacement, or its continuous failure to engage with their plights? These are questions that are grounded in Jordan's everyday reality as well as that of a considerable number of its inhabitants. Yet, they never reach Europe in all their consequence. If Jordan remains stable and keeps fulfilling the role as Europe's buffer in the region, absorbing conflicts and the people suffering from them, Europe is able to externalise conflicts and violence that it has had an instrumental role in bringing about or perpetuating. Ultimately, this also means that Europe's colonial past and legacies in the region remain unspoken and the European sense of self is thus untainted by the continent's colonial and postcolonial entanglements and continues to be rooted in a declaration of commitment to liberal, democratic values, their global promotion, and the embodiment of modernity rather than considering

their co-constitution with and dependence on its others outside of Europe's borders. The Jordanian female citizen that emerges from the development work European actors are doing to empower her tells us more about those actors and their self-image than about the citizen herself. Reflected in her docility and her role to ensure the efficient and smooth workings of the political system into which she has been integrated are Europe's ambitions for her to consolidate the status quo. This lets Europe simultaneously uphold its identity as a promoter and exporter of democracy and liberal values, ensure that the change it actually achieves does not interfere with its foreign policy strategies, and maintain its inward-looking gaze that is inattentive to a postcolonial analysis of its role in the region.

Conclusion

The European Commission has made migration control one of its priorities during its 2019-2024 term. It has actually subsumed the goals of "[s]trong borders, modernisation of the EU's asylum system and cooperation with partner countries" under the theme "Promoting our European way of life" with the subheading "Protecting our citizens and our values" (European Commission 2021). The confluence of the European citizen's self-image, stressing *our* values and way of life, and securitised geopolitical interests that are translated into strong borders and protection once more imply an

other (citizen) against whom reinforcing these material and discursive borders is necessary in the first place. In this paper, I have argued that this reinforcement can take the shape of seemingly unrelated development interventions targeting women and their empowerment as citizens. Undoubtedly, the female Jordanian citizen that comes out of these interventions might have undergone a comprehensive soft skills or media training, could be ultimately elected to a municipal council, knows how to write grant proposals, or holds an office in a political party, all of which might have a positive effect on her and the people around her. But she also fulfils another crucial role in her function, which is to give authority to and enter the governance of the Jordanian regime and the authoritarian political system, and allow Europe to simultaneously present itself as a promoter of liberal, universal democratic values yet avoid questions about how this understanding is compatible with its colonial and postcolonial legacies in the region. The cooperation with partner countries that the European Commission stresses is indeed one that benefits both the stability of the Jordanian regime as well as that of Europe's identity. In this way, the coloniality of both the citizenship of the empowered Jordanian woman and of European-Jordanian relations can remain unspoken as long as she gratefully occupies the narrow space constructed for her.

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Articulating the "Problem of Immigration": Nationalism and Dominant Mythological Formations around Immigration in France

Marina Choy

Introduction

Over the past few years, rising nationalism has widely been discussed as a prominent phenomenon of the global landscape. From the elections of Donald Trump in the United States, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, and Narendra Modi in India to the Brexit and the rise of far-right parties across Europe—in Italy, Austria, Hungary, Finland, Sweden, Spain, France, and elsewhere—the momentum of nationalist and populist politics has been felt across the globe and become visible through

"the rise of new parties, the electoral success of nationalist candidates, or the shift of public discourse of established parties" (Bieber 2018). In France, rising nationalism has manifested itself through the consistent growing presence of the far-right party Rassemblement National (RN), but also and—maybe even more significantly—through the spread of nationalist rhetoric, issues, and politics across the political spectrum and beyond parties such as the RN that are traditionally nationalist and security-centered. In particular, one issue that simultaneously reveals and fuels the rise of nationalism, as it has dominantly been articulated as one of the strongest threats to the Nation and the national community, is immigration.

The construction of immigration as a threat to the Nation and its "natives" is not a new phenomenon. The widespread popularization of different types of myths constructing immigration as a problem or a threat first occurred during the late decades of the 19th century, during the later stages of development of France as a nation-state and a period of strong expansion of nationalist frameworks (Noiriel 2007). Today, in a global and national context marked by globalization and the intensification of migratory movements, mythological formations that articulate immigration as a threat are made particularly salient as the "problem of immigration" prevails in the political and cultural landscapes and finds itself at the center of public conversation, political

debate, media discourse and electoral campaigns. This understanding of and approach to immigration leads to increasingly nationalist and security-centered policies and logics of exclusion[1].

Whether in the past or in the contemporary context, the "problem of immigration" stands as the crystallization of mythological formations enabled by and entangled in situated, concrete, material phenomena, articulated as threats to the existence, wellbeing, or preeminence of the Nation and of the national community. As such, the "problem of immigration" simultaneously reveals and fuels virulent nationalism. In this paper, I deconstruct three types of mythological formations that have articulated immigration as a threat to the Nation: mythological formations that 1. frame immigration as a threat to economic and material welfare, 2. frame immigration as a threat to social peace and security, and 3. frame immigration as a threat to national identity. My analysis is informed by the method and theory of articulation as

1 Since 2017, the centrist government of Emmanuel Macron has consistently toughened its stance on immigration, which critics have widely interpreted as a way of appealing to right- and far right-wing voters. Recent measures and policies include the implementation of quotas for economic immigration, the stricter and faster implementation of deportation procedures as well as the widening of criteria for deportation, increased restrictions applied to healthcare access for asylum seekers, and consistent dismantling and "clearing" of migrant camps (Vie Publique 2018, Fisne 2019, Onishi 2019, Piser 2019, Lhaik 2021).

developed in cultural studies (e.g. Hall 1986; Slack 1996; 2016), as well as a Barthesian conceptualization of myth, which I will define in the following section.

On the Concepts of Myth and Articulation

Contemporary scholarship on immigration and nationalism is rich and prolific. Important work is done at the macro-analytic level which engages state actors, national politics and international relations, and economics and historical perspectives, exploring and deconstructing mechanisms of immigration control and policies (Kaushal 2019; Hollifield 2020), the use and implications of discourses around immigration and nationalism by populist parties (Yilmaz 2012; Lochocki 2018; Halikiopoulou 2019), as well as different frameworks of nationalism, their ramifications and ethical limitations (Triandafyllidou 2001; Larin 2020; Joppke 2020). A substantial body of literature also engages with survey and public opinion research to identify and analyze popular attitudes towards immigration and nationalism in the contemporary context: looking at citizens' sense of nationhood, sense of identification with Europe, and their attitudes towards immigration (Bonikowski 2017; Visintin et al. 2018; Gustavsson and Miller 2020; Coenders et al. 2021), exploring the relations between citizens' exposure to immigration and their attitudes to the topic (Clayton et al. 2021), exploring connections between the level of skills of immigrants and citizens' nationalistic

attitudes (Moriconi et al. 2021), investigating the impact of the refugee crisis on attitudes towards immigration and national identification in Europe (Conti et al. 2019; Van der Brug and Harteveld 2021), or comparing the stability of immigration attitudes with other contemporary potent socio-cultural issues such as gender egalitarianism (Lancaster 2020).

Looking at immigration and nationalism through the framework of myth, such as developed by Roland Barthes in Mythologies (1972), offers a perspective that complements the macro-analytic and survey-based, quantitative literature, in that it engages more closely with the cultural domain and the mechanisms of cultural imagination. Myth offers a lens through which one can better understand and deconstruct a particular context by giving insight into the processes of formation of collective values, fears and aspirations, and their implications. It enables to uncover the historical and political dimensions of those dominant premises and narratives that stand out in a particular cultural context as commonsensical, natural, and almost unquestionable.

Barthes (1972) defines myth as a "semiological system" (a system of signs) and a "type of speech" (that is, "any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual") that conveys particular meaning in a given context (109). A few key aspects of Barthes's definition of myth are especially relevant to this analysis. The idea that myth is

a "type of speech" entails two things: 1. that anything "conveyed by a discourse" can become a myth; and 2. that myths have a "historical foundation": therefore, they can be ancient or recent, strong or weak, they can change, they are not eternal, they are not fixed (ibid., 108, 119). In addition, and most importantly, myth has a distorting function: "it transforms history into nature" (ibid., 128). Myths de-historicize their own foundations, and as such seem to carry obvious, immediate, and present significance that disavows historical complexities. In myth, the historical-cultural associations that are made between a signifier (form) and a signified (concept) become naturalized. In this way, myth is perceived as "innocent speech" and constructed as "depoliticized speech" (ibid., 142). According to Barthes, "myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (ibid., 143). The power of myth thus lies in the fact that "myth is read as a factual system" whereas it is a "semiological system"; that is, a "system of values": through myth, nature supplants culture (ibid., 130). However, myths should not simply be understood as "widely accepted falsehoods" (Rodman 1996, 30). As Gilbert Rodman (1996) puts it, "one of the things that distinguishes 'myth' from 'fact' isn't that the latter ('fact') is true and the former ('myth') isn't, but that the truth value of facts can [generally] be readily

verified, while the truth value of myths isn't necessarily subject to straightforward proof or disproof" (31).

I use myth to refer to the various cultural and semiotic associations, or articulations, that emerge from factual and material events and experiences, and that "naturally," or "commonsensically" come with the word immigration. In addition, I refer to *mythological formations* as clusters of myths—myths that intersect, interact, nourish each other, and articulate complex formations that become frames of intelligibility. Developing an analysis focused on myth and mythical formations enables to highlight the ways in which semiotic connections are grounded in historical contexts and events that become erased, thus naturalizing and depoliticizing those connections through discourse. Myth explains why factual, "evidence-driven" discourse can remain ineffectual in framing and understanding particular issues or events. It helps explain and deconstruct particular cultural approaches and ways of making sense of concrete phenomena. I combine this definition with the concept articulation, that enhances the interconnectedness and dynamic character of myths.

Scholars in cultural studies have proposed articulation as a concept, methodological framework, or theory of linkage (Slack 1996, 113). Scholarship around the theory and/or method of articulation has mostly been influenced by the work of Stuart Hall, who famously defines

articulation as "the form of a connection or link that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions" (1986, 53). Jennifer Slack (2016) writes that "the rudimentary insight in articulation theory is that any unity (or identity) is constituted in and by linkages with other elements or forces in a social formation" (2). Articulations are linkages, relationships, connections between various elements that constitute a particular unity or identity in a particular context. They are linkages that are "not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time" (Hall 2016, 121). Articulations are thus ongoing processes of linkage which can be broken, transformed, re-created in ever changing historical contexts and situations. Unities are constructed through and by processes of articulation, but also through and by processes of disarticulation and re-articulation. Articulation is a "theory of context" that enables one to look at "how elements in a social formation are linked," emphasizes "the process of linking elements together" and considers "the unities (or identities) formed in and by the process of linking elements together" (Slack 2016, 1). In other words, articulation serves to "map out" a context by identifying and analyzing the unities or identities that bring the context into being, as well as the links that form those unities, while recognizing that they are always in the process of being constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. In this essay, I focus on the articulation of various types of myths into mythological formations that stand out as hegemonic frameworks

through which immigration is approached and under-stood. To that purpose, I also attempt to "map out" some of the cultural and political context that enables the articulation of particular myths constructing immigration as a threat or a problem. The first mythological formation that I turn to revolves around the economic and material implications of immigration, as the opposition between immigration and the Nation's economic and material welfare is historically one of the first and most powerful formations articulating immigration as a threat.

Immigration as a Threat to Economic and Material Welfare

Debates around immigration often come with myriads of postulations as to what immigration will *cost*: whether literally, in terms of a country's economic, material and financial resources, more metaphorically, in terms of the wellbeing of the national-citizen population, or both, as these two aspects often come closely articulated with one another. Looking at discourses around immigration in the French public sphere today, the myth that immigration occurs at the detriment of the national-citizen population (and in particular of its lower classes) in terms of economic and material welfare is strikingly prevalent. The construction of an opposition between the economic and material welfare of the Nation and its "natives" and that of immigrant populations is histori-

cally well-entrenched, and it has structured immigration discourses and practices since the late 19th century and the very emergence of the "problem of immigration" in the public sphere (Noiriel 2007). It continues to be potent in the contemporary cultural landscape around immigration. This opposition has been articulated through myths according to which foreign workers deprive the national-citizen population of employment and, more recently, through myths according to which foreigners use up welfare resources at the detriment of the average citizen.

The ideas that "immigrants take national jobs" and that "there would be less unemployment if there was less immigration" are commonly expressed and encountered today, even though they have been factually disproved (de Blin 2013; Harnouze 2012). Historically, in France, the concern with the protection of national employment has been an important aspect of (anti-) immigration discourses and policies, and arguably emerged as one of the first articulations of the "problem of immigration" in the public space. Gerard Noiriel (2007; 2008) finds that the emergence of the "problem of immigration" is inherently tied to the dramatic reconfiguration of the French political landscape that occurred in the 19th century, paired with the completion of important processes of nationalization of the country, and the emergence of a widely accepted conception of France as a nation-state across all classes of the population. In this context, he

argues, recurrent conflicts between local and migrant workers during the last decades of the 19th century began to be looked at through a *national* lens. More specifically, the question of immigration and its impact on national jobs emerged in the political and public spheres following a particularly violent movement against Italian industry workers in Marseille, in 1881 (Liens 1967, 14). Known as the *Vêpres Marseillaises* affair, the conflict marked the emergence of immigration-related issues in the press, framed in nationalist terms. According to Noiriel (2007, 2008), the abundant press coverage of topics related to labor conflicts between local and migrant workers, relevant to a great portion of lower- and working-class populations, was a powerful way to expand the reach of nationalistic narratives to all classes of the French population and was part of the larger process of nationalization of the country. The concern with the protection of employment, structured for the first time in terms of a national/foreigner dichotomy, appeared as an effective vector for mobilizing lower- and working-class groups to that end and framed immigration as an inherent problem, even threat, to the French population.

The nationalistic binaries that emerged in the late 19th century, tied to the later stages of the construction of France as a nation-state, are "lines of tendential force" that articulate the hegemonic understanding of immigration today (Slack and Wise 2007). The myth that

immigration is a menace to national (blue-collar) jobs continues to be potent and powerful, as it circulates and emerges in (anti-)immigration discourses despite factual counterarguments and evidence presented to disprove it, and despite the fact that economic immigration is strictly regulated, precisely in order to preserve national employment. This simultaneously reveals the importance of the myth in concrete approaches to immigration, and its persistence.

Additionally, in the contemporary context, the discursive opposition between immigration and the economic and material welfare of the Nation and its population is articulated by and through a few other pervasive myths and narratives. Immigration is more often than not approached in superficial cost-benefit terms where what would benefit migrant populations is deemed too big a sacrifice for the national-citizen population. The ongoing claims of dominant right-wing parties for the need to suppress or restrict the aide *médicale d'état* (AME), a social benefit that exists to cover some medical expenses of undocumented or irregular foreigners, are a good example of this type of perspective and its prevalence in contemporary immigration discourses. Although AME expenses only represented 0.5% of the French health insurance fund (*Assurance Maladie*) total expenses in 2019, and although multiple restrictions already apply to be eligible to get the benefit, les Républicains and Rassemblement National both argue that it is too large an

expense, that it is robbing French nationals of their own resources, and that it furthers the growth of so-called "medical tourism," nourishing the myth that foreigners seek to come to France to use (and abuse) its advantageous healthcare system (Binhas 2021; Costard and Savoye 2019; Rassemblement National 2018).

These lines of argument tie into the wider myth, prevalent in anti-immigration discourses, that foreigners have easy and unlimited access to social welfare—in particular healthcare and housing—without contributing to society, and that this access is to the detriment (material and financial) of the national-citizen population. The narrative has even been pushed further as the status of undocumented/irregular migrant populations has been put at odds by some political leaders with that of poor, lower-class or marginalized French citizens. During the 2019 European elections campaign, Marine Le Pen stated in a speech that "incoming migrants make more money than a retired pensioner who has worked his entire life" (Le Pen 2019). In 2017, Nicolas Bay, Vice-President of Rassemblement National and representative at the European assembly, tweeted his indignation regarding the "fact" that "in the middle of winter, illegal migrants stay in hotels while the homeless sleep on the street" (Bay 2017). Such types of claims, amplified by the media, have generated ongoing national controversies and conversations around the presupposed abundance of resources made available to undocumented migrants upon

their arrival, as opposed to the lack of resources made available to other national-citizen groups in need.

These myths that contribute to articulating a dominant discursive opposition between immigration and the economic and material welfare of French citizens simultaneously frame any sort of humanistic approach to immigration negatively, as a form of unrealistic bourgeois fantasy. This has been a distinctive rhetorical strategy in contemporary far-right discourses around immigration: anyone who does not seek to solve the "problem of immigration" by implementing stricter immigration policies is oblivious or indifferent to the precarious material realities of the lower classes of the population. Within that line of argument, being "in favor" of immigration becomes a symbol of privilege and of higher social status—a sign of one's belonging to the elite, whose standpoint on immigration shows the lack of care and consideration for authentic hard-working people. Although such populist appeals and mythological constructions generally emerge from right and far-right discourses, they have also been taken on by other parties and structure debates around immigration in significant ways, as their opponents find themselves responsible for disproving, deconstructing, and arguing against them. This illustrates how, despite their non-factual nature, mythological constructions become part of arguments that hold sway in public debates, and against which factual discourses and arguments often remain quite powerless.

This equally holds true for the mythological formation that I turn to in the following section, and which articulates immigration as a threat to the wellbeing of the Nation and its native community through myths that revolve around crime and insecurity.

Immigration as a Threat to Social Peace and Security

The articulation of immigration as a threat to social peace and security is a powerful, dynamic and complex construction shaped by the articulation of various cultural-historical myths. It is certainly not exclusive to France: the premise that immigration threatens and disrupts social peace and security has broad ramifications, easily visible in immigration discourses and policies across the world. In the case of France, myths associating crime, violence, terrorism, and the *banlieues* are especially potent in the contemporary context.

The association between immigration and crime is not peculiar to contemporary discourses or approaches to immigration. Rather, it stands out as another "line of tendential force" that articulates the hegemonic understanding of immigration. Historians who have studied media representation and public discourses around immigrant populations in the 19th and 20th century in France find that foreigners were dominantly represented

as aggressors and criminals—vagabonds, spies, traitors, charlatans, and so forth. Noiriel (2007; 2008) talks about the emergence of a "figure of the barbarian" in the press and in educational materials of the time, that clearly articulates foreignness to criminality. He ties the emergence of this figure to both the expansion of nationalist/ic frameworks and the particular media economy of the late 19th century—when reporting and sensationalizing crime emerged as a powerful means to audience maximization. Today, and taken out of their particular historical context, figures like foreign spies or itinerant peddlers that linked immigration, crime and insecurity at the time might appear less relevant: the suspicion of foreign spies, for example, is less prevalent in the current cultural landscape than it was during parts of the 19th and 20th centuries. But it is not difficult to think about contemporary figures of the (im)migrant that maintain and nourish an articulation between immigration and crime in the 21st century—the prevalence of discourses about terrorism on the one hand and illegal migration on the other, for example, offer viable insights into what those figures may be.

In the case of France, the ongoing question of the *banlieues* also stands out as one of the most visible and powerful formations through which immigration, crime, violence and terrorism are invariably articulated together in political and media discourse. The word "banlieue" itself has a long history and no simple meaning. It

could roughly and in its most literal sense be translated as "suburb", referring to the neighborhoods or townships peripheral to a large city. In usage though, *banlieue* refers more often to a "vaguely urban zone that is on the margin and folds onto itself": it refers to a form of spatial entity but connotes social peripheralism more than it does spatial peripheralism (Vieillard-Baron 2011). In common usage, especially in media and mainstream political discourse, "banlieue" refers to those "problematic" urban areas in the periphery of large cities, where the majority of people are immigrants or "come from immigration" (the difference is rarely made in public discourse), and where poverty, crime, delinquency, insecurity and violence are particularly salient. In itself, the banlieue is a complex mythological construction that gives a particular set of meanings to real and concrete social phenomena: it appears as the crystallization of all the social problems that weigh down French society (Avenel 2009).

Media and political discourses since the 1980s have linked the "problem of the *banlieues*" with the "problem of immigration" (Avenel 2009). Various experts, intellectuals, politicians and journalists have contributed to the establishment of a relationship of causality between the social problems that characterize the *banlieues*—crime, delinquency, violence, poverty—and immigrant populations. Many have consistently entertained the idea that if areas where immigrant populations are

concentrated are the most affected by these problems, it is at least partly because of these populations themselves (Liogier 2012). As several scholars have pointed out, that relation of correspondence is (unsurprisingly) flawed and false—criminality and violence levels rise with higher levels of poverty, and high levels of poverty are predominantly concentrated in those urban areas where immigrant populations live (Liogier 2012; Hajjat and Mohammed 2013). Nonetheless, in dominant media and political narratives, criminality, violence and other social phenomena more salient in the banlieues are explicitly associated with the ethnic and cultural identity of banlieue populations, rather than with the social realities (poverty, unemployment, lack of access to public services in those urban areas) that affect those populations (Cesari 2005; Deltombe 2007).

More particularly, in the 21st century, the focus has increasingly been on the articulation of the *banlieues* as self-segregated communities where religious radicalism and terrorism emerge. The notion of self-segregation is omnipresent today through the word *communautarisme*, which is used to broadly refer to the affirmation of ethnic, cultural or religious differences by a few minorities over the rest of society or, in the recent words of Emmanuel Macron, to a separatism, a "will of secession from the Republic" ("Macron appelle…" 2019). Debates over the threat of *communautarisme*, most often targeting the Muslim community, have thus dominated

conversations about immigration and the *banlieues*, with the various terrorist attacks of recent years held as tangible evidence that the phenomenon is real. In 2021, the bill on separatism proposed by the Macron government seems to concretize these discourses. Aiming at "fighting separatisms," "strengthening secularism" and "consolidating Republican principles," the bill includes several measures that have raised controversy in France and internationally: restricting homeschooling on the grounds that it favors Islamic radicalism; intensifying oversight of religious practices and of organizations; reinforcing the principles of secularism neutrality by forbidding public service providers to wear any sign of their religion, and more. Numerous major organizations, as well as various academics, administrators and journalists, have opposed the bill, criticizing its security-centered rationale and arguing that it "will further fragment French society" on top of "throwing generalized suspicion against the Muslim community" (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme 2021). In contrast, conservative leaders consistently claim that "there is a link between terrorism and immigration" and that "immigration, communitarianism and Islamism" are directly related, perspectives that seem to be shared by the political majority ("Attentat…" 2021; les Republicains 2021).

The construction of immigration as a threat to social peace and security principally occurs through the articulation of myths that link immigration to crime, violence

and terrorism, crystallized in dominant discourses and narratives around the French banlieues. Through these associations, immigration emerges as a cause of insecurity, but also as a cause of fragmentation of French society through recent discourses on *communautarisme* and the said self-segregation of *banlieue* populations. The cultural identity of these populations is framed as inherently problematic to French society in terms of its physical security, but also in terms of the very identity of the Nation. In the following section, I deconstruct the ways in which immigration is articulated as a threat to national identity.

Immigration as a Threat to National Identity

National identity is a mythological formation that is inherently tied to the ideal of the Nation, and that has been utilized by conservative leaders pushing nationalist, anti-immigration discourses and policies into the mainstream in recent decades. The articulation of immigration as a threat to national identity occurs through and by myths that hold the figure of the (im)migrant as inherently inassimilable to the values and culture of the Nation. Today, as I will describe, this construction is most visible in debates and policies that antagonize French secularism (*laïcité*) and Islam, constructed as the most incompatible identity factor of immigrant populations.

During the 2007 Presidential elections, Nicolas Sarkozy made national identity a central theme of his electoral campaign, an act widely described in the media at the time as the "return" of debates around national identity in France. Vincent Martigny (2009) finds that Sarkozy's presentation of national identity during the campaign was centered around three main themes: 1. the assimilation of the Nation to French Republican principles (following the Constitution of 1958 which states that "France is a Republic that is indivisible, secular (*laïque*), democratic and social"), which asserts preeminence of civic principles and values over ethnocultural ones; 2. the refutation of colonial memory and the celebration and glorification of French history; and 3. the injunction to cultural assimilation for foreigners and the implementation of immigration policies aimed at further restricting access to residence and citizenship (Martigny 2009, 33-34; Bonichou 2006). Once he became President, the creation of the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-development—which was one of his electoral promises—raised controversy and faced strong opposition coming from parties of the Left, academics, journalists, and the nonprofit sector, who denounced the creation of the Ministry as the institutionalization of xenophobia and racism. The Ministry was abolished by the government in 2010, and while some critics saw that as the proof that its creation was just part of Sarkozy's electoral strategy, others deplored that Immigration was then placed under the umbrella of the

Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministère de l'Intérieur), thus clearly linking immigration to questions of national security (Vampouille 2010).

What is interesting about Sarkozy's discourses and actions, aside from the demonstration of how to bind immigration to national identity, is that his approach highlights the way in which the Nation has been conceptualized more broadly in French political history. Martigny highlights how Sarkozy's approach to national identity continued the discourses and practices carried out by political leaders since the 1970s, both on the Right and on the Left, and further shows that his presentation of national identity was "extremely typical of an authoritarian civic republicanism inscribed in French tradition" (2009, 24). Historians and political science researchers have long explored and analyzed the processes of formation of the Nation and national identity in France. The works of Noiriel (2007), Thiesse (2007), and Martigny (2009) highlight two foundational myths of the Nation that can be traced back to the late 18th century: one that holds it as a political entity structured around republican, universalist values and principles, that assimilates nationality to citizenship; and the other that holds it as a cultural entity through an emphasis on French history and the idea of an exceptional and unique cultural heritage and identity. The Nation is thus articulated as a unified, indivisible, homogeneous entity structured by fixed and unquestionable civic principles

(democracy, secularism, and so forth) and by (often glorified and romanticized) cultural elements that construct Frenchness—among them the French language, particular events and figures in French history, an imagined French "way of life", etc.).

In discourses around immigration, the mobilization of these myths of the Nation thus easily pose immigration as a problem or as a threat, in the sense that any body external to this "imagined community" can bear cultural differences that may compromise or disrupt its fixed, "core" identity (Anderson 1983). It is precisely this line of argument that Nicolas Sarkozy and other members of the political and intellectual elite have brought forward over the past decades, as new migration phenomena have emerged and anxiety around globalization has continued to intensify. The emphasis on the "incompatibility" of migrant populations with French society, grounded in the presupposed cultural identity of these populations, has become increasingly central to debates around immigration. Coupled with the pervasive idea that immigration has significantly and uncontrollably been increasing over the past years (a widespread, but false belief), it directly articulates immigration as the executioner of national identity, and even of Western civilization at large.

In particular, the "incompatibility" or "inassimilable" character of immigrant populations to the Nation and

its identity have been articulated in the 21st century through discourses that antagonize French Republican principles (especially the idea of secularism) and Islam. One of the vectors of the myth of immigration as a threat to national identity has, in fact, undeniably been centered on Islam—or rather on Islam*ism,* that is, "Islam as an enemy ideology rather than Islam as a religion" (Fieschi 2020). The spread of a nationwide anti-Islam or anti-Muslim sentiment and the emergence of conversations on the place of Islam in French society are commonly situated in the late 1970s and early 1980s, almost two decades after postcolonial immigrants were first largely recruited to fill the demand for cheap workforce (Deltombe 2007; Liogier 2012). The 1990s and the first decades of the 21st century have been marked by countless controversies, several legislative and juridical measures, and the anchoring of discourses around Islam/ism as a threat to national security and identity in electoral campaigns.

Controversies on the "Islamic veil," as it is called in French, started in 1989 with the Creil affair, when three middle schoolers were suspended from school as they refused to remove their headscarf. In 2004, a law was passed to prohibit students in public schools to wear "signs or clothing through which [they] ostensibly express any religious affiliation" (Art. L.141-5-1; Loi 2004-228; 2004). Since 2006, ongoing conversations on whether mothers who wear the "Islamic veil" should be

allowed to attend school meetings and other extracurricular events have divided both political leaders and public opinion. In the early 2010s, conversations on whether long skirts constitute an "ostensible" religious sign have followed the expulsion of a few Muslim girls from their respective schools. Since 2017, each summer, controversies arise around the Burkini, a full body covering swimsuit now prohibited in several townships. At the core of these debates is always the premise that the Republican principle of secularism (*laïcité*) is threatened or violated by the religious practices of Muslims, which is framed and understood as a problem not only by the Right, but across the political spectrum as a whole (Fieschi 2020). And if the events described here essentially target Muslim women and their bodies, other topics—such as halal food in school cafeterias, the construction of Mosques, the prayer, the offering of Arabic as a foreign language in schools—are also consistently brought forward and presented as both immediate threats to French secularism and signs that France is undergoing a process of "islamisation" synonymous with the loss of national identity, and caused by immigration (Liogier 2012). In addition to these discourses, the ongoing conversations and current legislative measures taken against Islamist radicalism and terrorism (discussed in 2.) add to the formation of a strong prejudice against Muslim minorities in the contemporary context.

Conclusion

Myths that dominate the contemporary social, political and cultural landscape on the question of immigration and that articulate immigration as a threat or problem in various ways are deeply rooted in France's history, and more particularly in the later developments of its formation as a nation-state. The emergence of an ideal of the Nation, and the development and spread of nationalist frameworks in the 19th and 20th centuries, have structured the ways in which foreignness, ethnic and cultural diversity, and migration are hegemonically approached in French society. Whether in the past or in the contemporary context, the myths that have shaped the "problem of immigration" are enabled by, and entangled in, situated, concrete, material phenomena collectively approached and represented as threats to the existence, wellbeing, or preeminence of the Nation and of the national community. Three dominant mythological formations that have shaped the "problem of immigration" since the late 19th century, and that continue to be active and prevalent today, are articulated by discourses and myths on economic and material welfare, social peace and security, as well as national identity.

Discourses focused on the economic aspect of immigration are often grounded in populist appeals and a strong discursive opposition between the material wellbeing of national-citizen groups and that of (im)migrant popula-

tions. Discourses that focus on social peace and security, typical of conservative approaches to immigration and international affairs, have established a powerful mythological connection between immigration, crime and insecurity, most visible and active today through debates and legislation on the banlieues, separatism, and Islamist terrorism. Finally, discourses focused on national identity emphasize an incompatibility, a form of inassimilable character of the (im)migrant grounded in a different cultural identity, assumed and represented to be fundamentally at odds with French culture and Republican values. In 2021, Islam/ism stands out as the vector that most powerfully articulates this myth, as the fear of an "islamisation" of French society has become one of the most powerful anti-immigration arguments.

There is no doubt that myths of the Nation are not the only "lines of tendential force" that have articulated the "problem of immigration" in France. The three anti-immigration narratives analyzed in this essay emerge from nationalist frameworks, interwoven with other forces that are historically situated. Frameworks of white supremacy, colonialism, eurocentrism and orientalism are constitutive of the ways in which difference and foreignness have been approached and constructed. Today's fixation on Islam and the Muslim community, for example, needs to be understood in a broader framework that considers French colonization and decolonization, post-colonial immigration, the politicization of Islam at

the global scale, and the Eurocentric and orientalist bodies of knowledge and frameworks articulated to those events.

In addition, the dominant mythological formations that articulate the "problem of immigration" today in France are likely to be found and echoed beyond the French national context. If nationalist frameworks and discourses have historical peculiarities and mechanisms attached to the construction of particular Nations, immigration—by posing questions of inclusion and exclusion inherently attached to the concept of nation-state—easily finds itself at the center of nationalist discourses and politics, regardless of the individual context of a nation. One might find that the mythological formations that articulate the "problem of immigration" in France operate elsewhere in similar ways. For example, they might echo powerful narratives and discourses on immigration found in other individual European countries, or discourses found at the level of the European Union. Further, the impact, influence, or role of a supranational entity such as the European Union in the articulation of dominant and nationalist myths and narratives around immigration, is certainly consequent and also worth exploring.

Finally, 21st century discourses and practices around the "problem of immigration" point out the resurgence of strong nationalist frameworks that increasingly seem to

be pushed into the mainstream. As Anne-Marie Thiesse (2009) argues, the ideal of the Nation provides a lens through which one can understand a particular context that is complex and difficult to grasp. It stands as a hegemonic formation that has provided frameworks for organizing and making sense of French society as a nation-state, constructed for several centuries as a "territorially bound" community with a unique national identity (Mendelsohn 2017). In the face of unprecedented historical circumstances that seem to challenge the foundations of the nation-state, nationalism emerges as an attempt to preserve the ideal of the Nation and the frameworks of meaning-making that it provides. This is certainly true beyond the French context and its particularities, as the rise of nationalist frameworks, discourses and politics appears to be a global phenomenon. But as globalization and migration are contemporary phenomena that call for new ways of understanding and organizing our societies, it becomes increasingly necessary to think and develop frameworks of intelligibility that break with the systems of dominance and oppression attached to virulent nationalism.

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From Nation States to Communities of Interest: Solidarity and Human Rights Declarations in Wolfgang Fischer's Styx

Isabell Sluka

According to the United Nations, in 2018, every minute of every day, around the world, 25 people were forced to flee their homeland. This means that on any given day, an average of 37,000 people, and, by the end of the year, 13.6 million people were newly displaced from their country of origin (UNHCR, *Global Trends* 2019, 2). In comparison to previous years, this marked yet another record high. In most cases, forced displacement is due to persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations

(ibid.). In addition, there is a significant number of migrants who aim to escape economic hardship[1]. Whether these flights are undertaken in order to seek protection and/or a higher living standard abroad, many migrants set out on extremely dangerous, often fatal journeys. The journey to Europe has proven to be particularly hazardous in recent times. In fact, the International Organization for Migration has named the Mediterranean Sea the world's most dangerous and heavily guarded border: "between 2000 and 2017 (30 June), 33,761 migrants were reported to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean during their journeys" (IOM 2017, 1). It is in light of this harrowing situation that human rights and especially the notion of who has "the right to have rights" (Arendt 1949, 30), first formulated by Hannah Arendt in 1949, has acquired new urgency.

Aside from political debates, human rights and migration have also found their way into cultural products, literature and film. In the German-speaking context, examples of such films are classics like *Shirins Hochzeit* (Germany, 1975) and *Reise der Hoffnung* (Switzerland, Turkey,

1 The UNHCR differentiates between migrants and refugees based on whether they are presumed to have left their country of origin voluntarily or not (see Edwards 2016). This differentiation has been contested, especially in the case of economic migrants (for an overview of the main arguments see Hermann 2016). In this article, I will employ the term "refugee" for both "persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution" (Edwards 2016) and economic hardship.

UK, France, 1989), as well as more recent productions that include both documentary and non-documentary formats. Among them are the dramas *Die Farbe des Ozeans* (Germany, Spain, 2011) and *Die Piroge* (France, Senegal, Germany, 2012) and the documentaries *Als Paul über das Meer kam* (Germany, 2017) and *Iuventa* (Germany, 2018). What many of the more recent productions have in common and what makes them distinct from earlier films is that they depict not only the migrants' journeys but also the entanglement and responsibility of Europeans. The German-Austrian film production *Styx* (2018), directed by Wolfgang Fischer, is a significant case in point.

Here, I analyze how human rights and rightlessness in particular are presented and negotiated in *Styx*, the story of one German woman's tragic maritime encounter with a group of African refugees fleeing to Europe. The film engages with human rights critically and calls attention to fundamental problems, especially the question of who is granted the right to have rights. *Styx* also suggests a reconceptualization of human rights that demands political actions based on solidarity, and thereby conforms to Arendt's understanding of politics as civic engagement and collective deliberation. In fact, the film is profoundly Arendtian in that it stresses the responsibility of individuals and their active role in politics and, more specifically, their role in putting human rights into practice.

During my analysis, I will focus specifically on the situation of rightlessness that many migrants, and in particular economic migrants, find themselves in. My contention is that rightlessness is due to a conceptual problem of human rights, as well as a good faith belief in the actions of nation states. In addition, I will demonstrate how the film proposes an alternative form of political action that is based on the concepts of solidarity and friendship as described by Hannah Arendt. This approach, further developed by Ayten Gündoğdu (2015), centers on individuals and their role in establishing communities of interests through declarations of human rights. I will explain in further detail how this affects our understanding of human rights and contributes to their "founding" (Gündoğdu 2015, 22). Finally, I discuss my findings on a broader level and address the question of what kind of role the film *Styx* in particular and film as a medium in general can play in the (re)conceptualization of human rights and their enforcement.

Human Rights and "The Right to have Rights" in *Styx* by Wolfgang Fischer

Styx is a 2018 production by Austrian screenwriter Wolfgang Fischer, starring German actress Susanne Wolff. The protagonist of the film is Rike, an emergency physician in her 40s. Fascinated by Charles Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*, she embarks on a solo sailing trip from Gibraltar at the southern tip of Spain to Ascension Is-

land in the South Atlantic Ocean. While off the coast of Cape Verde, Rike finds herself in the vicinity of a fishing boat that is overcrowded with refugees and in danger of sinking. She reaches out to the authorities to request emergency assistance, but the only answer she receives is an appeal to maintain her distance from the distressed craft, ostensibly for reasons of her own safety. Rike knows how dangerous the situation is. Her sailing boat *Asa Gray* is small, so if she tries to rescue the refugees it will most likely sink as well. On the other hand, Rike is acutely aware that time is of the essence and if the authorities do not come to the rescue fast enough, it will be fatal for the occupants of the fishing vessel. In this emergency situation, Rike is able to rescue and provide medical treatment to a boy named Kingsley, who had jumped off the sinking boat and swam over to her. After numerous other unsuccessful attempts to obtain assistance from the coast guard and several nearby ships, Rike realizes that none of them intend to help the refugees. She decides to set out to rescue them herself and to force the authorities into action by falsely claiming that it is her own boat that is sinking. By the time Rike eventually boards the refugees' boat, she recognizes that it is too late for many of the passengers; they are dying or dead already, while others can be saved. At the end of the film, Rike finds herself in the custody of the coast guard. Traumatized and unable to answer the questions that the authorities have, Rike realizes that she herself is the subject of an inquiry and placed under guard.

Cinematographically, *Styx* is set up in such a way that the viewers are always closely connected to Rike and her surroundings. They witness many of the most essential scenes, such as the spotting of the refugees' boat, from her perspective through point-of-view shots. The near-absence of non-diegetic sounds amplifies the effect: The audience hears exactly what Rike is hearing in each moment, which is either the sounds of the ocean, the rain, or, at the beginning, the sounds of the jungle which she imagines as the destination of her trip. The latter are accompanied by visual shots of the jungle which are inserted into the otherwise rather bleak mise-en-scène. This has the effect that the viewers feel like they are looking into Rike's head, imagining the paradise scenario at the end of her trip as if it were their own. Due to the frequent long and oftentimes extreme long shots, the audience also gets a good sense of the surroundings and the circumstances under which Rike's voyage is taking place. Typically, these shots show the respective scenes from a bird's eye view. In the many scenes in which Rike's boat is shown in the middle of the ocean, this perspective adds to the perception of how vast the ocean is, and how small, in contrast, the individual – in this case Rike and her sailing boat. Overall, the cinematic techniques allow the viewers to identify with Rike and to empathize well with her situation both at the beginning of the film and as the plot unfolds.

In terms of content, *Styx* captures the horror scenario that refugees in the Mediterranean and elsewhere expe-

rience on a daily basis. In addition, it touches upon the point of how such misery can be possible and generates a questioning of human rights, especially in regard to the effectiveness of treaties and frameworks. In the case of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this holds true for not only one but several Articles[2]; the problem becomes particularly clear, though, with the right to asylum which has been established formally in Article 14 of the declaration. It states, "1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution," and "2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations" (United Nations 1948). Since the latter is not relevant with regard to the refugees portrayed in *Styx*, one needs to have a closer look at the first point; and while the question of what falls under persecution is a discussion in and of itself[3], it is the first part of this particular passage, namely that it is "the right to *seek* … asylum" (emphasis added) that is of importance here. As Seyla Benhabib has pointed out "the right to seek asylum is recognized as a human

2 Among them Article 1-3, 6-7, and 13-15.

3 Economic migrants, for example, are not included in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. This means that they do not have the right to asylum, unless it can be proven that the economic conditions have caused a "seriously disturbing public order" which under Article I (2) of the 1969 OAU Convention would render them eligible for international refugee protection (see UNHCR, *OAU Convention* for details).

right" (Benhabib 2004, 69); this does not mean, however, that granting asylum by a potential host nation is an automatic expectation. Instead, "*the obligation to grant asylum*, continues to be jealously guarded by states as a sovereign privilege" (ibid.). It is precisely this discrepancy between "the right to seek asylum" on the one hand and the optional "obligation to grant asylum" on the other that is the main subject matter in *Styx*. In fact, the plot lays bare this conceptually problematic aspect of human rights law; but not just that, the film also shows that the discrepancy does not remain on a conceptual level, but comes with devastating consequences for real lives and people, to the extent that it becomes life threatening.

As mentioned before, the discrepancy between "the right to seek" and the missing "obligation to grant asylum" is not limited to Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights only, but inherent to human rights law in general. Benhabib, in this context, speaks of "the conflict between universal human rights and sovereignty claims as being the root paradox at the heart of the territorially bounded state-centric international order" (Benhabib 2004, 69). It is a paradox that has been described by Hannah Arendt and in part by Immanuel Kant as well[4], one that manifested at the end of the 18th-century with some of the most important and influential precursors of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

4 See Kant's essay *Perpetual Peace* (1796) and especially the discussion of *Weltbürgerrecht* in its Third Definitive Article.

"The Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen" (1789), "The United States Declaration of Independence" (formally, "The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America") (1776), as well as "The Constitution of the United States of America" (1787), and "The United States Bill of Rights" (1789). What all of these documents have in common is that they are grounded in what Arendt calls "a kind of human 'nature'" (Arendt [1951] 1973, 298). As DeGooyer et al. explain, this means that these rights are "not bestowed by an earthly power [and that they] cannot ... be taken away by any earthly power" (DeGooyer et al. 2018, 6); they are "inalienable" (ibid.). While in theory, this conceptualization uncouples humans and their rights from citizenship and the State, in practice, human rights have often been insufficiently protected, or worse, human beings have been attacked precisely because of their human nature (ibid., 7). In light of missing alternatives, rights enforcement therefore became a matter of the State again, and, despite changes in international law and politics[5], mostly remains so. In practice, this means that until today states can decide to protect human beings but also decide not to – and thereby undermine the claim that human rights are universal.

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5 These include, inter alia, the before-mentioned resolution of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol in 1967, the creation of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), and the formation of the World Court, as well as the International Criminal Court.

While the paradox between universal human rights and state sovereignty seems to be irresolvable, at least for the time being, it does bring forth a fundamental problem of human rights, namely the fact that they are not available to all human beings. In *Styx*, the refugees are denied access to human rights despite the term's implication and the variety of legal frameworks and institutions that exist to promote them. Hannah Arendt addresses this aspect in chapter 9 of *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) when she argues that human rights do not protect humans per se, but only those who belong to a polity granting those rights. One's access to human rights is thus preceded by what she calls "the right to have rights" (Arendt [1951] 1973, 296). In light of the masses of national minorities and stateless people at the end of World War I and in the decades that followed, Arendt explains this as follows:

> We become aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means *to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions)* and a right *to belong to some kind of organized community,* only when millions of people emerge who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation. (Arendt [1951] 1973, 296-297; emphasis added)

The importance of both conditions that are named as prerequisites for access to human rights here is a major theme in *Styx*. Regarding the refugees, however, none of them is met. Neither do they "live in a framework where

[they are] judged" (ibid., 296) nor do they "belong to some kind of organized community" (ibid., 297). Rather, they find themselves in a situation of complete insignificance and superfluity which, according to Arendt, is worse than that of slaves, for there is only "the abstract nakedness of being human and nothing but human" (ibid). Not belonging to some kind of organized community thus "expels him [man] from humanity" (ibid). In other words, there is not only no access to human rights but also no access to humanity in general, without the right to have rights.

This dehumanization is clearly visible in *Styx*. As the film demonstrates, the refugees are in desperate need of help. Their cries are, in fact, incorporated as diegetic sounds which makes them even more compelling. Despite knowing about the situation, the authorities do not help. *Styx* thus shows the absence of the right to have rights on the side of the refugees, while at the same time, and in stark contrast, it also portrays the full realization of this right in the case of the German citizen Rike. Most strikingly, she is on just the same route as the refugees but traveling in the opposite direction and for completely different reasons, namely for her own pleasure and out of curiosity. This curiosity and the expeditionary character of her passage is reinforced through the many scenes in which Rike is looking: through her binoculars, the porthole or simply into the distance when she is on deck. The refugees are thereby always far away. Just like the audience,

Rike does not see their faces, which makes it possible, at least potentially, to simply look away. It is only when Kingsley boards the boat that this changes and the film carefully establishes a relationship between Rike and the refugees. Until then Rike's entire journey is one big adventure that she could interrupt anytime and return to a very comfortable life if she so desires. In addition, she is not only very well equipped (both technically and in terms of food supplies) but also constantly supported by the coast guard as well as the captain of a nearby container ship named *Pulpca*. Rike's calls are answered immediately, and at one point the captain reaches out to her even before she encounters any difficulties. Warning her of an upcoming storm, he assures her "No worries. We're sharing the same route. ... If you need something, anytime, let me know. I'll be around" (0:20:23-0:22:44). Taking all this into account, Rike is a prime example of what possessing the right to have rights looks like.

At the same time, *Styx* does not cease to emphasize that this right is a privilege that is bound to citizenship. This becomes especially clear in Rike's conversations with the authorities and the captain of the nearby ship. In a short exchange with the coast guard, for example, the authorities explicitly ask about Rike's nationality, whereas they display little to no interest in the plight of the refugees. Alongside Rike, the viewers thus come to realize that the authorities are not only slow and reluctant to help, but they never intended to rescue the refugees in the

first place. The reason for this is their status as refugees which is apparently valued less than, for example, Rike's German nationality. In her famous essay "We Refugees," Arendt describes this scenario as follows:

> ... we actually live in a world in which human beings as such have ceased to exist for quite a while; since society has discovered discrimination as the great social weapon by which one may kill men without bloodshed; since passports or birth certificates, and sometimes even income tax receipts, are no longer formal papers but matters of social distinction. (Arendt [1943] 2007, 273)

The film thus demonstrates that human rights are not granted universally to human beings but rather are contingent on citizenship, and that depending on this factor the extent to which accessibility to rights is granted varies greatly – from a "full-service-package" (in Rike's case) to not receiving help at all[6].

It is in light of this injustice that Samuel Moyn, in his engagement with Arendt, describes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as "a set of pleasant normative assertions" (Moyn 2018, 52). Moyn explains that, from

6 For an estimation of the values attached to citizenship in various countries, see, for example, the Passport Index which, in 2021, ranked the passports from Germany and New Zealand as the #1 passport in the world whereas many African countries, among them Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, rank among the lowest (Passport Index, status: June 26th, 2021).

Arendt's point of view, holding out a list of rights to people who did not hold citizenship in the first place "was something like offering a detailed inventory of the courses of a lengthy meal in the presence of the starving" (ibid.). This metaphor and the associated critique has been directly embedded into *Styx*, especially once the boy Kingsley is on board. As he witnesses how Rike is asking for help and is being rejected again and again as long as this help is supposed to benefit the refugees and not her, it becomes evident how simultaneously close and yet far away access to human rights is. While the cruelty of these double standards is a key theme in the film, it is displayed especially in a conversation between Rike and the captain of the nearby container ship who had assured her of his help earlier. In response to her distress call, he reaches out again:

> Captain: "Pulpca for Asa Gray. What's happening over there? Where is the skipper? What's going on over there?"

> Rike: "Pulpca. Thank god! A ship. A fish trawler. Refugees. Way too many people. The ship is wrecked and about to sink. I repeat. Many people are in serious danger to their lives. We need rescue. Immediately. Over."

> [no response]

> Rike: "Pulpca, these people need help. Over."

Captain: "Unfortunately, our company has a strict policy in such cases. I'm sorry. Over."

Rike: "Pulpca, these people are going to die. Over."

[no response]

Rike: "Pulpca!"

Captain: "Asa Gray, I really cannot risk my job."

Rike: "Pulpca, you can't. You are obliged to!"

[no response]

(1:06:14-1:08:23)

As Kingsley overhears, and partly even partakes in the conversation, he becomes fully aware of the fact that human rights do exist, but not for him and "his kind". He therefore urges Rike not to wait for help that he knows will not come, but to set out to rescue his companions on her own. At one point, he even tries to take control over the boat in a futile attempt to do something. In the end, though, as he throws bottles of drinking water into the ocean, the only emotion he has left is resignation. Knowing that this won't be of any help either, Kingsley mumbles a name with every bottle that goes overboard, and it is clear that with each one of them he is refer-

ring to one of the occupants on the boat. From Rike's perspective, who is below deck and thus only hears the names and accompanying splashings, Kingsley's actions evoke the image of people going overboard. One after the other, just like the water bottles, they will drift along in the ocean and eventually drown. Both the conversation with the captain as well as the scene with the water bottles thus strongly suggest that the refugees have not only lost their right to citizenship, but their belonging to humanity in general. They are treated and valued as nothing more than objects. In other words, it is a precise depiction of what Arendt has described as a condition of insignificance and superfluity that again highlights the fact that humans are not born equal, nor are they equal before human rights law. "Gone. They are gone" (1:21:02) is the last thing we hear Kingsley whisper in this scene before Rike finally takes it on herself to rescue the refugees.

It is at this point and especially when Rike boards the refugees' boat that the title of the film, *Styx*, unfolds its full meaning. Hailing from Greek mythology where it is the name of a river separating earth and the underworld, the living and the dead (Geller 2016), one finds various connections to the film. First of all, it is uncontested that the earth is limited to Europe here; just as in ancient times, it ends in Gibraltar, the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula, where Rike's journey begins. The underworld, on the other hand, is represented by what Rike

encounters on the refugees' boat: suffering, death, and despair. Separated by the water, these two entities could not differ more; there is nothing the refugees' and Rike's world have in common; it is life on the one side, death on the other. This is also expressed cinematographically. For as soon as Rike sets course for and, ultimately, enters the refugees' boat, the scenery changes from day to night and the color scheme from blue to dark red, a color that evokes the image of the underworld. Another aspect is that, according to tradition, one could only cross the river with the help of the ferryman Charon, who needed to be paid for this act. If one could not afford the passage, one was not able to cross (Geller 2016). The situation depicted in the film is an augmentation of this payment: Instead of money, it is citizenship that serves as a currency in *Styx*; and, again, the film leaves no doubt about the fact that a German passport buys one a safe passage, whereas being stateless or not having the "right" citizenship condemns one to eternal waiting, and, as the film ultimately suggests, to death.

Styx thus conveys an expression and a critique of the fundamental injustice that accompanies citizenship and the impact it has in particular on the accessibility of human rights. This does not mean, however, that the film proposes to let go of human rights entirely. What one is encouraged to let go of, though, is a good faith belief in human rights institutions and especially in states which, according to both Arendt and the film, do not

necessarily serve as guarantors for human rights. Since in *Styx* the State, represented by the coast guard, refuses to help in the first place, the film even raises the question if one should hope for state intervention at all, or if this in itself is futile. This, of course, casts not only the local coast guard but also the international community and especially the European Union in a very negative light, namely as countries who are unwilling to help even though they seem to have all the resources necessary[7]. While this impression persists throughout almost the entire film, the situation becomes a bit more complex in the end. As calls for help from other refugee boats come in, the viewers, alongside Rike, learn how excessive demands complicate and oftentimes overload state interventions. Whether it is out of incapacity or unwillingness, though, *Styx* reveals that a good faith belief in the actions of states alone is never an adequate basis for securing the universal observance of human rights. Instead, it puts individuals in need in a very vulnerable position. They are forced to compete with one another

7 This point is, in fact, already implied in the opening scene. Here, the viewers watch a group of baboons moving ponderously and in slow motion through Gibraltar. Among other things, they thereby pass a weathered graffiti that reads "celebrating glorious years" (0:01:11). In light of what is yet to come, this scene can be interpreted as the expression of a ponderous Europe that reacts slowly, or not at all, to the crises outside of its borders. Just like the three wise monkeys in the Japanese pictorial maxim of the same name, Europeans thereby claim to "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" (Mieder 1987). In other words, *Styx* proposes that they lack civil courage and responsibility.

for being seen, or, in Arendt's earlier words, for the opportunity "to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions" (Arendt [1951] 1973, 296-297), just to finally be granted access to human rights.

All in all, the film paints a picture that is extremely critical of human rights, challenging especially the assumption that states treat human beings equally and always meet their human rights obligations, without exception.

Human Rights Enforcement and the Role of Individuals

In an attempt to also outline entry points for potential interventions, *Styx* suggests a reconceptualization of human rights that, first and foremost, takes the right to have rights seriously. It then demands political action that should be based on solidarity and carried out not only by the State or human rights institutions but also by individuals, ultimately, each and every one of us. In that sense, *Styx* is profoundly Arendtian again, as a later passage in Chapter 9 of *Origins of Totalitarianism* shows. Here, Arendt writes:

> The right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself. It is by no means certain whether this is possible. (Arendt [1951] 1973, 298).

While Arendt remains cautious about the success of humanity as a guarantor of the right to have rights, she is certain about the foundations on which acts of granting should be based. In her opinion, that is solidarity. Even though Arendt does not develop an entire theory of solidarity, she does provide important insights into how solidarity may be conceptualized in *On Revolution*. She writes:

> It is through solidarity that people establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited. The common interest would then be "the grandeur of man" or "the honour of the human race" or the dignity of man. For solidarity, because it partakes of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind. But this solidarity, though it may be aroused by suffering, is not guided by it, and it comprehends the strong and the rich no less than the weak and the poor; compared with the sentiment of pity, it may appear cold and abstract, for it remains committed to "ideas" - to greatness, or honour, or dignity - rather than to any "love" of men. … Terminologically speaking, solidarity is a principle that can inspire and guide action. (Arendt [1963] 1990, 88-89)

Of fundamental importance in Arendt's understanding of solidarity is that she distinguishes it from compassion

and pity, both of which she criticizes heavily, in particular for their anti-political attitudes and effects. Instead of practicing an idealized understanding of empathy, she proposes to think of solidarity in what she describes as a "cold and abstract" (ibid., 89) sense here. This emphasis on unsentimentality is something we also encounter in Arendt's writings on friendship. In *Men in Dark Times*, she states that "Humaneness should be sober and cool rather than sentimental … friendship is not intimately personal but makes political demands and preserves reference to the world" (Arendt, 1968, 25). In other words, friendship is not only a philosophical concept but also a political one for it is constantly translated into actions. In this regard, solidarity differs as much from compassion and pity, as friendship does from "any 'love' of men" (Arendt [1963] 1990, 89).

The importance of this differentiation is something Arendt elaborates on in *The Human Condition*. She writes "Love, by reason of its passion, destroys the in-between which relates us to and separates us from others. … Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason rather than its rarity that it is not only apolitical but antipolitical, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces" (Arendt (1958) 1998, 242). Solidarity and friendship, on the other hand, with their deeply political nature, refer precisely to this in-between. According to Arendt, it is "*the worldly space between men* where political matters, the whole realm of human

affairs, are located" (Arendt [1963] 1990, 86; emphasis added) and where common interest lies. In fact, Arendt uses the word "interest" itself to highlight this point when she explains that something "is of interest to both because it 'inter-est', it is between them" (ibid.). In a very practical sense, solidarity then means recognizing this in-between and establishing communities of interest that are dedicated to human affairs. This can happen everywhere and at any time. With regard to the right to have rights, where access to human rights depends on belonging to a polity, this thought is revolutionary. It means that even though individuals might, under certain circumstances and at times, not belong to a polity officially, they can always *make* each other belong. According to Alastair Hunt, the central point here is the contingency that Bonnie Honig (1993) has singled out for the Arendtian public/private distinction (Hunt 2018, 78-79). In this context, that means that the separation between individuals who have rights and others who do not is "not [something that is] given – but rather the result of human action and hence constitutively open to contestation and transformation" (ibid., 79).

What this can look like in practice has been explored by various scholars in different contexts and settings. Since *Styx*, especially with its cinematic focus on Rike and her perspective, primarily suggests the involvement of individuals and ordinary citizens, what is most applicable here is Ayten Gündoğdu's conception of the "*political*

practices of founding human rights" (Gündoğdu 2015, 22). Broadly speaking, this Arendt-based approach focuses on the different ways in which human beings partake in the realization of human rights, from their conceptualization all the way to how they are being exercised. What is special about the act of founding is that it comes in the form of "*declarations* that do not have prior authorization for the new propositions of equality and freedom that they introduce" (ibid., 166), and yet, by proposing these alternatives they take human rights into new directions. As an example, Gündoğdu brings up the *sans-papiers* movement that emerged in France in the 1990s. During this time, predominantly undocumented citizens mobilized across France and demanded the same rights as citizens of France, claiming "rights that they were not yet authorized to claim" (ibid., 189). As Gündoğdu points out, this took on many forms; an important aspect, though, was that *sans-papiers*, in an Arendtian sense, "translated their plight of rightlessness into an *inter-est* that relates and binds a community of actors" (ibid., 87), for example through references to the French revolution and the discourse on the Rights of Man. Through appropriative acts like this, *sans-papiers* shed light on the limits and exclusions of current human rights frameworks and the struggles they cause for real lives and people who form a community of interest together with the French, which is indeed the most important claim here. Acts like these, thus, single out the need to change the ruling but very limited ideas of citizenship, sovereignty,

and rights; but this is not the only effect they have: Since human rights emerge from such acts, they can also be understood as "inaugural acts that involve the invention and disclosure of a new political and normative world" (Gündoğdu 2015, 166). *Sans-papiers* is thus an example for how human rights can be enacted and also (re)written through the acts of individuals.

A strong emphasis on solidarity and the role of individuals in the practical realization of human rights is deeply embedded in the narrative of *Styx*. Rike serves as a prime example for an Arendtian understanding of solidarity and friendship. Her actions are clearly not motivated by either empathy or sentimentality but solely by her professional ethics as a physician and the firm conviction that medical treatment should be provided to anyone in need. In terms of character, Rike can be described as vigorous, pragmatic and sincere. Even when her calls are ignored by the authorities, she continues to vehemently claim that right and insists that it must be granted by the State. The fact that Rike is a trained physician only adds more weight to her argument. On the one hand, we know especially from the early scene in which the viewers witness a car accident that Rike would doubtlessly be capable of helping if only she received the necessary support. Similar to the refugees on the high seas, the one being injured and suffering in this scene is entirely innocent; he was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. In contrast to the refugees,

though, this person receives exemplary medical treatment by Rike and, as the bird's eye view demonstrates impressively, by an entire healthcare system. In the end, his life can therefore be saved whereas a lack of care is the only thing offered to the boat full of people in need. On the other hand, Rike's profession puts a particular emphasis on the question of ethics as it reminds the viewers of the ancient Oath of Hippocrates which, inter alia, states: "I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgment; I will keep them from harm and injustice. … In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art" (Edelstein 1967, 6). While the Hippocratic Oath is usually not officially sworn anymore, it still plays an important role in medical ethics and in the professional identity of many medical practitioners. This is also due to the World Medical Association's Declaration of Geneva, a modern version of the Hippocratic Oath that, in light of the medical crimes in Nazi Germany, was developed and adopted in 1948, only a few months before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Wiesing 2020, 83). Not only does this declaration cover "the service of humanity" and "the utmost respect" for human life; it also states explicitly that one will *not* permit "considerations of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, *nationality*, political affiliation, race, sexual orientation, social standing or any other factor to intervene between my duty and my patient" (World Medical Association 2017; emphasis added). Similar to the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the Declaration of Geneva is not a legally binding framework which means that medical practitioners are not forced to act upon these principles. Yet we see in Rike how this is a matter of course for her and that anything but doing so is unimaginable. Accordingly, she ends the distress call with a steadfast "Confirmed. But I won't leave. Over." (0:59:43-0:59:46) that leaves the coast guard and the audience in no doubt about her determination to help.

The true dimension of Rike's solidarity as well as her political agency, however, does not appear until the end of the film when she decides to pretend that her own boat is sinking in order to finally force the State to act and make human rights accessible. The fact that Rike lies about the situation, and that her help comes too late, only emphasizes how serious this responsibility is and that one should deploy any means necessary to claim access to human rights – for oneself and for others. In an Arendtian sense, Rike's actions are thus calls for the right to have rights to be taken seriously. Beyond that, and in line with Gündoğdu, we can also think of them as declarations of human rights through which Rike partakes in the process of establishing communities of interest, and, ultimately, in the founding of human rights. Inspired by Darwin's voyage and the successful experiment of (biological) migration that took place on Ascension Island[8], she practices an understanding of humanity

8 On his voyage with the *Beagle* in 1836, Charles Darwin did not

that is based on solidarity and the idea of common interest. Accordingly, she does not separate between "us" and "them" but understands that what she is witnessing is a matter of "inter-est" and, therefore, ultimately, of importance to everyone in the human community. Rike's understanding of humanity and human rights thereby strongly recalls a statement made by John F. Kennedy in the Report to the American People on Civil Rights in 1963, namely: "The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened" (Duncan 2014, 356). While this suggests that as human beings, we have to think of communities in much broader terms than nation states or multi-state unions such as the European Union, we see in Rike how a practical realization, or at least the attempt, of forming such a community can look like.

Similar to Arendt, the film is thus not only critical of current conceptions of human rights; it also proposes an alternative form of political action that is based on the acts of individuals and their influence and share on hu-

only discover Ascension Island, he also laid the foundation for a unique experiment conducted by his friend the botanist Joseph Hooker seven years later. In response to how barren the island was, Hooker had plants and trees imported from England and South Africa planted there which developed into a functioning ecosystem within a few decades (Wilkinson 2004, 2). This can be read as a success story of biological migration that, in connection with *Styx*, raises the question of why migration should not work equally well in human contexts.

man rights. In many ways, it thereby resembles Gündoğ-du's "*political practices of founding human rights*" (Gündoğdu 2015, 22). What makes an important difference, though, is that in *Styx*, compared to, for example, the *sans-papiers* movement Gündoğdu describes, the claim for the right to have rights does not come from people who are experiencing human rights violations themselves; instead, the protagonist is in a privileged position, witnessing the lack of the right to have rights in others while at the same time her rights are consistently guaranteed. While this brings up the problem of voicelessness and subalternity on the one hand, and white saviorism[9] on the other, I argue that in the context of *Styx* the cinematic choice to center a white European woman emphasizes the obligation of those who have the right to have rights to speak up and demand that everyone in the human community is entitled to the same rights. In a broader sense, this also speaks to the presumably equally privileged audience the film addresses. By doing so, the film highlights that the responsibility to observe human rights is not in some abstract way connected to the State or the ones in need; but to anyone, including those of us who are privileged

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9 The figure of the white savior is a common cinematic trope, not only in films depicting migration. Matthew Hughey describes *The White Savior Film* as a "genre in which a white messianic character saves a lower- or working-class, usually urban or isolated, nonwhite character from a sad fate" (Hughey 2014, 1). At this time, there is only limited research on white saviorism in German or European film. For insights into the US-American context see Hughey (2014) and Vera and Gordon (2003).

enough to be members of a functioning polity. In that sense, the film calls for active citizenship in a way that is very similar to Hannah Arendt's understanding of civic engagement. It requires all of us to think of (forced) migration as a topic that affects not only individuals, but entire political communities and that we must therefore deliberate upon collectively. As we see in the case of Rike, an Arendtian understanding of friendship can, and at times must, thereby not only generate acts of solidarity, but also serve as a site of resistance against states that are not in compliance with human rights.

Conclusion: The Limits and Future of Human Rights Declarations

My analysis of *Styx* has shown that the film engages with human rights critically. It points to problems in regard to the foundation and conceptualization of human rights and state interventions. As the film and even more so real-life migration scenarios, especially in the Mediterranean, demonstrate, these grievances all-too-often cause situations of rightlessness. At the same time, *Styx* also suggests entry points for potential interventions, emphasizing the inevitability of acts of solidarity and a reconceptualization of human rights through "*political practices of founding human rights*" (Gündoğdu 2015, 22). In line with Hannah Arendt, the film thus proposes an approach to human rights enforcement that consists of ongoing political actions coming from states, orga-

nizations and, essentially, individuals. While in practice, these actions might differ greatly across contexts, they are identical in their call for the right to have rights to be taken seriously and for an understanding of community that extends beyond the nation state so that, ultimately, human rights are granted to all human beings and not just to those favored with the "right" citizenship. With this in mind, perhaps the most powerful message the film and an Arendtian perspective on human rights convey, is the need for all of us to be ready to have our previous ideas of political communities challenged through unexpected, yet growing membership claims. As the film seeks to show and as Arendt suggests, these claims cannot and should not come from migrants only but also from citizens who understand that human rights violations affect not just individuals but entire communities, and who therefore raise their voices in solidarity.

Meanwhile, the film also suggests that there are limitations to individual actions and thus to the Arendtian conception of politics as civic engagement. Despite their importance, individual actions cannot replace state intervention which, in contrast, is absolutely indispensable in granting human rights. In this sense, *Styx* emphasizes how important it is to remind individual states and multi-state unions such as the European Union of their obligations, and even more urgently, their ethical responsibility, namely not to prevent but to govern migration[10]. These constant reminders of the State's obliga-

10 A positive example, in this regard, was set by Portugal recent-

tions are important and powerful, yet *Styx* does not dare to present them as *the solution* to what makes extremely complex, nuanced and at times contradictory scenarios. Accordingly, while the lives of some can be saved, the audience also witnesses the extent to which Rike is traumatized in the end, and, as if that were not enough, that she is part of an inquiry[11]. The film thus concludes on a more realistic rather than optimistic note. It subverts the trope of the white savior and leaves it up to the viewers to consider what is right and wrong in the current governing of (forced) migration, their own positionality, as well as their responsibilities as citizens with guaranteed access to human rights.

Going back to Arendt's important reminder that "The right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself" (Arendt [1951] 1973, 298) and her skepticism re-

ly, when amid the Covid-19 crisis it decided to give access to healthcare, welfare benefits, bank accounts, and work and rental contracts to all foreigners in the country, including migrants and asylum seekers (Schmitt and Massimo 2020).

11 Interestingly, from today's perspective, the end of the film can be understood as yet another reference to reality. It reveals, and even predicts clear parallels between the experiences of Rike and the German ship captain Carola Rackete who has been part of migrant rescue operations with the non-governmental organization *Sea-Watch* since 2016. In 2019, one year after the release of *Styx*, Rackete was arrested by the Italian authorities after forcibly docking the vessel *Sea-Watch 3* in Lampedusa. For more information see Povoledo (2019).

garding whether or not this is possible, I have, ultimately, argued two things: First, if human rights are to be maintained in their current legal formulation, then we need to reconceptualize how we think about them. This means moving away from a good faith belief in states and institutions and towards a pragmatic understanding that stresses the obligations they have. It also means that we, as a community of human beings, persistently demand that states fulfill these obligations and put human rights into practice, a process in which both institutions and individuals are important, and need to act on even if, at times, it is at their personal expense. It is under these premises that a pragmatic faith in human rights and ethical commitment can be justified even if recent conflicts and crises have tested the faith of many. Second, I suggest that film can play an important role in human rights discourses. As my analysis of *Styx* has shown, the medium of film has the capacity to not only denounce human rights violations, but also, and even more importantly, it can imaginatively offer concrete proposals for how to rethink and rewrite human rights, solidarity, and civic engagement. It is for this reason that I recommend that future researchers examine both film classics as well as the many productions dealing with migration that have been released over the course of the last five to ten years alone, to assess what and how they can contribute to human rights, their (re)conceptualization and enforcement. During such examinations, special consideration should be given to familiar tropes such as that of the white sav-

ior and the question of how it is enacted not only in different European films depicting migration but also in conceptions of human rights. Ultimately, and in light of the popularity and the social relevance of film as a medium, it would be interesting to also explore how *Styx*, and other similar productions, were received critically by film critics as well as the public at large.

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

Raphaëlle Efoui-Delplanque

In 2014, Caryl Phillips, reflecting on the journey that had produced his travelogue *The Europoean Tribe* (2017), contended that were he to set out again he would "aside from some factual details, ie the Berlin wall has come down, Yugoslavia has fractured along ethnic lines – essentially be making the same journey" and was "reasonably sure that [he] would simply end up reaching pretty much the same conclusions" (Phillips 2014, 4). Assessing a persistent European refusal to reflect the presence, importance and history of Black people in Europe, Phil-

lips' gaze is, as was the case in *The European Tribe,* turned towards 'White' Europe and the immutability of its exclusionary and 'tribal' practices. Johny Pitts' 2019 travelogue *Afropean*, while explicitly drawing on *The European Tribe,* offers, as I will show, a different gaze. A comparative reading of the two texts informs our understanding of a thirty-year evolution (1987-2019) in the way two young Black British writers have constructed and narrated their position towards Europe – its 'Whiteness', its Black 'communities', its hybrid identities. The insularity of their Europeanness (perceived even more sharply in light of Britain's recent exit from the E.U.) positions them as liminal outsiders, or marginal insiders, both to an excluding White Europe and to a seemingly far-off continental Europe.

In reading both texts jointly, I am interested in understanding the nuances and evolutions of these expressions of position and belonging, and I attempt to locate the observed changes within the context of a wider evolution of Afro-European (and post-colonial) narratives. I examine the role of intergenerational mentoring and the importance of referencing and rewriting, or intertextual practices, to assess how they are geared towards the enacting and representing of *community conversations* [1].

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1 I use the term 'community conversations' to denote conversations which make community by dynamically interrogating its nature and limits. They can be intra- or intertext, oral or written.

Originally tied to European expansionist and imperial projects, travel literature has been appropriated and mobilized by postcolonial authors to create what María López Ropero has termed the "postcolonial travelogue" as a critical space from which to decenter and unsettle the Eurocentric perspective of the genre's origins (2003). A later travelogue of Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound,* constitutes the basis upon which Ropero develops this notion, highlighting the importance of Caryl Phillips in its emergence, and in its analytical articulation by scholars. Fittingly, scholars such as Hank Okazaki (1994) and Joan Miller Powell (2012) have read *The European Tribe* as a subversive text; a reading shared by Pitts, who describes the book as

> quietly subversive, playing with the notion of an approach white people often assume when travelling in Africa: as an outsider observing a strange tribe practising odd rituals. He normalized the black gaze, becoming an invisible eye, and instead otherized Europeans as something strange and exotic with a nudge and a wink. (Pitts 2019, 116)

In both books, different elements pay tribute to the documentary nature of the travelogue, whether through photography and the actual "gaze" in *Afropean*, or stylistic peculiarities such as an uncommented, transcribed interview with the Archbishop Brosnahan in *The European Tribe,* introduced only by the phrase "Our conversation began:" and written in a journalistic style (initials, no

verbs, indications such as pause). Similarly, both books leave non-English words untranslated and provide other important elements of socio-political or linguistic and cultural context [2].

Distancing themselves from academic, and in particular sociological, writing is important to both authors. Phillips presents *The European Tribe* as "based on personal experience. It is not academic, nor does it have any pretensions to being able to survive the rigours of the sociologist's laboratory" (Phillips 2000, ix). Pitts describes his book as a "black document" (Pitts 2019, 9), and writes "[...] it's true that I'm neither an anthropologist nor a historian; I'm a writer and photographer" (10). Neither book makes claims scientific truth, but both adopt a non-fictional, documentary dimension of portraying social realities. They allow for the strategic deployment of multiple "crossed gazes" (Shohat & Stam 2012) by laying out representations of each of the visited places, like mirrors held (also) towards their British and European contexts. The authors claim their affirmative subject-position and provide a personal and political commentary, and recognize this as part of the work's value. Subjectivity appears as a pathway into depicting a reality, in an autoethnographic manner. Beyond the strong authorial voice and the personal and subjec-

2 In particular the recurring use of untranslated, context-specific words such as "Gastarbeiter" (Phillips 2000, 84), "Schwarzer" (83), "Polizei" (Pitts 2019, 172); or explaining the status of the French journal "Libération" (57).

tive emphases, travel writing as a genre offers collagist or kaleidoscopic practices, insertions from different genres and tableaux described as one would clip a picture to a notebook. In appropriating the travel narrative from its colonial association, and retaining the play between fact and fiction, personal and general, truthfulness and exaggeration, Phillips and Pitts construct books that function like scrapbooks and invite comparison, plurality, and webs rather than lines. The result is what Powell might call a "hybrid inventiveness", one that stirs stylistic conventions and political identities or categories (2012, 88).

(Literary) Genealogies: Referencing and Intertextuality

Around both *The European Tribe* and *Afropean* revolve journal articles, blog entries (afropean.com), video art and pre- and postfaces to new editions. In the accumulation and interplay of these materials, the authors display a striking willingness, if not necessity, to keep engaging with the text, to keep conversing with oneself, to reject monolithic identities and fixed stories of self. In her analysis of Phillips' essays, Louise Yelin (2012) highlights what she identifies as "plural selves": a "dispersion" (1) of the autobiographical narrating subject across a web of works which relate, correlate, and form the space of intertextuality within one author's work. A comparative reading offers an insight into these "plural

selves" or layers of self as they are rendered in the multiplicity of texts produced by Phillips' and Pitts around their respective journeys. In Pitts' case, the digital enhancement of the relationship between articles predating the book's publication and *Afropean* reinforces a conversational (and on the website and Twitter, collaborative) dynamic that shows Black European identities as constructs-in-progress.

These dynamics of exchange and reassessment tie in with an intergenerational transmission which is extensively thematized in both books. The authors choose and display their literary filiation (Powell speaks of a "politics of black literary filiation," 2012, 103) through references and allusions, inscribing themselves into a tradition of anglophone Black writers who have written about Europe (Powell 2012, 93), such as James Baldwin, Claude McKay and Richard Wright. Pitts, as the youngest, most recent of them, draws explicitly on this tradition as he writes:

> I was at the beginning of a five-month winter journey through the continent, hoping to write a book about "black Europe," and sought out Caryl in the same way he once reached out to James Baldwin on a similar trip in the 1980s: as a young black writer trying to learn from a literary hero who had trail blazed various landscapes, both imagined and real, that I was now traversing. (2017, 38-39)

Fittingly, both narratives prominently feature a chapter in which this intergenerational dialogue is played out. Legacy is a central topic in *Afropean*; its literary dimension is best enacted as Pitts attends a conversation between Caryl Phillips and the Black British poet and musician Linton Kwesi Johnson. The authors discuss their relationship to Derek Walcott, of the generation of Caribbean writers before them, and quote Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe on intergenerational transmission (125). In *Tribe*, a younger Phillips' visiting James Baldwin in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, asks: "What was his legacy to be?" It remains unclear whether this question is raised by Baldwin himself, or projected by Phillips; but the importance of legacy in the making, and the semantics of the passage of time ("There was a tinge of nostalgia in his voice," "He was sixty and not getting any younger", 42, "[…] that his quiet conversation was so saturated with references to his past […]", 43). When Phillips does not attend dinner with Baldwin and Miles Davis the second night, it is because he "realized that he [Baldwin] needed to be alone with someone who could relate fully to all the nuances of his predicament, past, present and future" (43). Throughout the chapter, the reader is made to feel the tensions between admiration and compassion, glory and loneliness; between the desire for approval and impulses to disrupt or innovate. Phillips uses James Baldwin's nickname to signal a familiarity that the chapter compensates with a form of respectful, though critical awe. Similarly, when Pitts sets out to discuss "issues of literary mentoring" (Pitts 2017, 37), he ends up proudly

calling Phillips "Caz" (Pitts 2019, 126). He states that *Tribe* "is one of the few direct precursors to this book. The difference is that Caryl wandered as a young black man in his twenties through white Europe, before the work of his generation had helped the continent even entertain the idea that there were black people taking an active part in its societies" (116). Some chapters later ("Germaica"), Pitts himself projects a new generation of Afropeans, personified in the figure of a little girl of Kenyan origin and adopted by a German Israeli couple (204).

Both authors thus engage heavily with genealogy, both in narration and around it, in their intertextual practice. I use the seminal concept of "intertextuality" as coined by Kristeva, to point to the importance of dialogism and of spaces between the texts that are a central element of the conversational practice I look at. The significance of this referencing—or auto-genealogy (Yelin 2008, 60)—is explicated by Pitts as part of his endeavor. Pitts suggests that unlike the African American civil-rights movement, "heroes" like Frantz Fanon and Stuart Hall "aren't overtly embedded in the narrative of European identity and history". Consequently, they reach (Black) Europeans "too late or not at all, absent from our formative years and our deeply entrenched ideas about "authentic" national identity" (Pitts, 2019, 268). Narration and conversation appear, throughout *Afropean*, as ways to ensure intergenerational transmission of information and resources for Europeans of African descent.

The authors interweave the narrator's internal monologue with direct and indirect speech and citations, accommodating a book-wide conversation between authors living and dead, met or read. For Pitts, they reach, from Baldwin to Talib Kweli (6), May Ayim (204), to Public Enemy (130), creating a web which in its hybridity in genres, time and space reflects the mutual influences of diverse Afrodiasporic groups. Referencing Mos Def, Pitts positions himself both as a (counter-)narrator and as part of an in-group: "Hip-hop artist Mos Def once wrote of the depiction of black culture in the media that 'we're either niggas or kings, we're either bitches or queens' […]" (6). Remarkably, Pitts leaves an ambiguity regarding his inclusion to the 'we', certainly not rebuking it. Phillips also crosses genres and art forms by referencing another historically Black musical culture in form of West Indian Calypsonians, a citation from which is in exergue of his *European Tribe* (1). As we have seen with James Baldwin, he draws on a Black anglophone literary tradition, invoking also Richard Wright in two chapter titles ("A Pagan Spain" and "In a Falling Snow")[3] . Through citations of Black Panther Party member Bobby Seale and Négritude writer Louis-T. Achille, but also Anne Frank and IRA member Bobby Sands, Phillips seems to expand the web of identifications and solidarities beyond the strictly 'Afrodiasporic' or 'Black'. Pitts also refers

3 Richard Wright, Pagan Spain, 1957; and the Haiku "in the falling snow," whose title is revisited in Phillips 2009 novel In the Falling Snow. For an analysis of the role of generational component in that book, see Ledent, 2014 « Mind the Gaps: Caryl Phillips's In the Falling Snow (2009) and the Generational Approach to the Black Diaspora"

to the francophone Caribbean space, citing six verses of Césaire's Cahier d'un retour au pays natal, in original, then in translation, then going on to quote Frantz Fanon (7). Fanon is a common literary ancestor to both texts: in Tribe, Frantz Fanon is first cited as a reference on the matter of Shakespeare's Othello (Phillips 2000, 50). Drawing on the Martiniquais psychanalyst, Phillips offers a contemporary reading of Shakespeare's Black character as an alien, likening him to "the black man in the middle-class suburb who is suddenly surprised to see racist graffiti daubed on the side of his house." (51) In a similar bend from non-fiction to fiction and back, Pitts draws on the imaginary of Claude McKay's Banjo – also cited in Phillips (83) – an Afrodiasporic classic in which (among others) Black men from the African continent, the West Indies and the United States, of different political beliefs and objectives, live and reflect upon life, migration, oppression and Blackness together in Marseille. In *Afropean*, the chapter "McKay's Marseille" prolongates the mythification of Marseille as the city of Afrodiasporic encounter. Pitts writes, on the same page (2019, 336), of "a physical embodiment of Afropea", "a place I could exist in Europe without any questions of belonging", and finally "an Afropean Mecca that I would one day return to and make my home, in a bid to end up like one of the characters in Claude McKay's Banjo […]." Fanon also haunts at least one other scene, in which at Belfast airport a small child looks intensely and fearfully at Phillips, echoing the famous sentence spoken by a child in Peau noire, masques blancs: "Maman, regarde le nègre, j'ai peur!"

This last use of intertextuality, as a way of legitimizing a marginalized experience, is of particular interest in the context of this study because it allows to move from an understanding based on literary filiation to one in which transtemporal solidarities and identifications are possible *beyond* the intergenerational transmission framework. By opposition, James Baldwin, is clearly positioned in both genealogies within the generational prism, albeit under different modalities: to Phillips, he is cited as a literary reference (2000, 52), but is also, as mentioned above, a character of the story. For Pitts, Baldwin is a similarly cited literary ancestor already in the introduction (2019, 9), but also a canonical and dead author who he seeks out in the Saint-Paul-de-Vence chapter. The familiarity noted above, and furthered by Phillips' use, for instance, of a personal paraphrase for one of Baldwin's most famous quotes ("As James Baldwin once remarked, it makes you wonder if you really do want to be part of a burning house", 2000, 126), indeed connotes a form of belonging. In their different capacities, by bringing an imaginary, theoretical or literary legitimation and inspiration, lineage and alliances, the webs spun by these referencing practices offer a vision of conversations which establish pathways of belonging within the Afro-diasporic rhizome[4] .

4 For analyses of intertextuality in the postcolonial context as a form of subversion and a claim to literary 'belonging', a strategy to inscribe subaltern subjectivities into the dominant discourse, to produce estrangement in the reader's experience, to show the inadaptability, for instance, of certain genres in speaking to and of the subaltern experience, see in particular Döring 2002; Kloos 1998; Sell 2008.

Un-hyphenating, Be-longing: From Outsiders to Insiders

While both authors share an attachment to the travel narrative as a strategically mobilizable genre, the goal towards which it is strategized differs. Both books relay experiments aimed at testing and proving different hypotheses: in Phillips, it is that European cultures are marked by tribal and exclusionary whiteness; by opposition, Pitts introduces his endeavor as "flipp[ing] the journey on its head [...] aimed more robustly towards being black in black Europe" (2019, 117). In other words: Pitts states the existence of "black Europe", whereas Phillips treats encounters with Black people more like isolated incidents that serve to illustrate exclusion. As a result, he sees African students in the USSR patiently awaiting their return to their home country, Black American soldiers waiting to leave the Russian base, and perhaps most strikingly, an unexpected Trinidadian woman, described in rather unflattering terms, whose encounter prompts Phillips to write — in his only use of the word (Caribbean) diaspora in the book — "Like a potter's wheel that has suddenly been jammed to a halt, West Indians have been flung out into history and tried to make good wherever they have landed. She was the saddest case I had come across" (2000, 103-104). Dislocation, displacement from a point of origin, and in it the loss of home, remain central to Phillips' narrative. In *The European Tribe*, he envies those who, like the Ugandan and Nigerian students at Queen's College, "had a home to which they could return" (4), and almost fifteen years

later, in *A New World Order*, he writes of the fundamental difference between his parents' generation and his: "Whereas they could sustain themselves with the dream of one day 'going home', we were already at home. We had nowhere else to go and we needed to tell British society this" (Phillips 2002, 242). Yet another generation further, Pitts' narrative appears less focused on the lack of a place to go or return to.

In light of the genealogical value of intertextuality in these texts, the "return" for Pitts is arguably more tied to the literary traces of Black presence in Europe, such as Phillips' book. The emphasis is thus rather on what Christopher Keirstead calls "foliated footsteps", or a category of travel writing in which authors' journeys appear to follow in the footsteps previous authors and their texts. "These journeys", Keirstead writes, "pay tribute to the already deeply intertextual nature of travel writing, following spaces previously mapped […]" by other authors (2018, 140). The very existence of Phillips' previous mapping out seems to provide a structure of identification for Pitts who, while not following Phillips' journey step-by-step, inscribes his own exploration into the geography of his predecessor. The semantics of "strik[ing] back" (2000, 123), so central to Phillips' assessment of the political situation he witnesses and the one he wishes upon in the future, give way in Pitts to a narrative less overtly concerned with an urgency to change 'white European' perspectives. In fact, it is

not estrangement but precisely his belonging to (Black) Europe which induces a responsibility regarding "the disjuncture between feeling Afropean and then those who were more intelligibly *African in Europe*" (2019, 279, emphasis in original). Hishem, a Black man in the refugee camp of Calais, but also the students at Lumumba university, are examples of being "African in Europe," and are an important part of the story: Pitts claims that his 2016 trip to Calais has made him change the project from a feel-good photo book to something else, showcasing "beauty in black banality" and stories that are "about as far away as you can get from that coffee-table sheen: those of addicts, homeless people, thieves, drug dealers and militants" (6).

The difference in perspective and endeavor is also reflected in Phillips' address to "White Europe". Towards the conclusion of the book, the author begins with a third person exhortation ("It is crucial for white Britons to understand…", "Britons should also ask themselves"), then moves to an accusatory address ("you belong to a group which exports a culture to every corner of the world – you are part of the European tribe") (2000, 127). The multiplication of the personal pronoun culminates into a short and generalizing sentence, made more powerful by personification:

> You justify your Empire, your actions, your thought with your 'civilization'[...]. As I write, your cousins

in South Africa, a distant European tribe, prepare to fight for their economic future by killing black women and children in cold blood. Your eyesight is defective. Europe is blinded by her past [...]. (128)

Then, on the very last page, Phillips turns his focus to Black Europeans, and seems to pave the itinerary for Pitts' 30-year-later endeavor: he realizes "that [...] we, black people, are an inextricable part of this small continent. And Europeans must learn to understand this for themselves, for there are among us few who are here as missionaries" (129).

In a way, this ending is where Pitts picks up. In *Afropean*, while there may be a desire to showcase the existence and legitimacy of Black Europe to wider society, it is not this 'mission' which prevails. The passages that most resemble addresses are, from the introduction on, directed towards black Europeans, who "need to understand Europe and to demand participation in its societies" (2019, 8). In an article about his travels, "An Afropean Travel Narrative", Pitts concludes that he "had come to see Europe with new eyes—Africa [was] right here now, and I had the photographic evidence to prove it. I turned around and, heading back into a Europe that now more closely resembled the face I saw in the mirror each morning, went 'back to where I came from'" (51). Referring once again to documentary practice through the semantics of "evidence" and "proof," Pitts establishes his

belonging to a Europe that reflects him, a Black Europe, which exists, in his narrative, beyond doubt.

In a joint video titled (after V. S. Naipaul) "A Bend in the River" by Pitts and Phillips (2012), Phillips is heard reading out: "Britain, like most European nations, is not particularly open to hyphenation. […] Being British remains a largely concrete identity, quite well-gated, and not particularly flexible." Hyphenation returns as an entry point into Pitts' *Afropean*, this time to point out the "unhyphenated" nature of the term and its potential for grasping complex Black European identities. In this sense, it can be considered that Pitts seeks to un-hyphenate the Afropean experience, in other words, to assert: "As a member of Europe's black community, this Europe I speak of is all part of my inheritance, too, and it was time to wander and celebrate the continent like I owned it" (2019, 7). Perhaps these words can also be read as a testimony to the fact that the hopelessness and bitterness of Phillips' words has healed, in Pitts generation into new narratives that allow for unhyphenated complexity, for a sense of *belonging* that doesn't ask for permission. Narration is here understood as a political tool, revindicated by Pitts as "the right to document and disseminate our stories" (8).

Already in the first pages of the book, Pitts hints upon the role of story as a form of representation, illustrated by the necessity he felt to tell Hishem in the Calais

refugee camp that there is a history to his presence in Europe. This intertwining of narration ("story"), history and History is reminiscent of Phillips' fiction. As Okazaki notes, "these works are also about imbrication of personal history with "History" writ large. Phillips brings to light the personal face of history […]" (1994, 88, emphasis in original). This powerful role of narration places the storyteller at the center of the construction of new, collective belongings and of a sense of community: Pitts describes the "Afropean as a teller of transgressive stories, hybrid histories and complicated cultural allegiances" (2019, 268). Sensing, in Marseille, "the virtues of a translocal movement", he continues:

> The people in Le Panier likely had much to talk about with those in Rinkeby and Clichy-Sous-Bois, in Bed-Stuy and Peckham, in Dwarzak in Freetown and Rocinha in Rio. As I'd seen firsthand it would be easier said than done, but thinking of it this way seemed to justify my journey and the shaping of it into the form of a book connecting the disparate people and locales of black Europe in a single narrative, allowing each area and community to 'speak' to one another on digestible terms (332).

The storyteller is tasked with both encountering and articulating difference into a single narrative, whereby the telling of stories is recognized as a performative act bearing consequences. The role incumbent to the storyteller is akin to that of connecting, of translating not only lan-

guage and contexts, but to some extent, of translating Blackness[5] . The linguistic and symbolic dimension of this translation is found in an arguably cryptic, uncommented encounter narrated by Phillips in Paris, after a Black man in the subway station tells him he has been pick-pocketed by a white person: " 'I am a black man,' he said. This was all the English he knew. 'I am a black man.' (2000, 63). Translations of Blackness are also mobilized strategically by Black people themselves: Pitts for instance notes how first-generation migrants, aiming at making their Blackness palatable to "the white gaze", display the signifiers of the commodified and popularized black diaspora ("Bob Marley, 2Pac, Drake, and so on," 2019, 57).

Importantly, both authors display an acute awareness of the wider political and social contexts in which they write or wrote. To Phillips, in the 1970s and 1980s, European tribalism, the necessity for a stronger sense of self, is precipitated, at the British level, by the loss of imperial ambition and self-perception; at the European level, by a decline that prompts "the somewhat unstable European Economic Community," "a loose grouping of western European countries who are learning to cling to each other across old enmities" (Phillips 2000

5 I allude here to the term of translational Blackness, found in particular in the context of African and Afro-Arab diasporic cultures and solidarities. The term is encountered in the research of, among others, Sophia Azeb, Brent Hayes Edwards and Keith P. Feldman.

[1987], 132). In "An Afropean Travel Narrative", some thirty years later, Pitts argues that on the one hand, "with the birth of the single currency and the Eurozone in the late 1990s, continental black Europeans had very real, economic reasons for understanding themselves as […] black Europeans or Afropeans, rather than simply black French, or Afro-German" (2014, 48). On the other, at the moment in which Pitts sets out on his journey,

> Europe, in the grip of its worst recession since World War II, was in a mess when I travelled around its major cities and during the period in which I wrote up my notes. The single currency was trembling, there were major budget cuts, increased student fees and only two of the thirteen cities I visited didn't have some sort of major protest going on whilst I was there. (Pitts 2016, 5)

The author goes on to describe some European events illustrating the persistence of racist police brutality, white supremacist terrorism and the rise of far-right populism from Scandinavia to Eastern Europe. As noted previously, the fact-based approach, mixed with the bendable genre of travel writing, is presented by Pitts — following Phillips — as a more authentic, "from the street up," (2019, 5) approach to Black Europe. But Pitts also concedes having read some of the scholarship on the topic (5), though he does not provide any specifics. Indeed, the (mutual) influence of narratives like his and of the expansion of Black European Studies, as well as some

of the post-colonial scholarship on Afropean literature[6] can be considered a central feature of the evolution from the context of *Tribe*. Remarkably, the interplay between national and transnational categories is a central object of study in the realm of Black European studies. As Stephen Small, a prominent Black British scholar of Black European Studies, has written in the seminal book *Black Europe and the African diaspora:*

> […] I didn't know that I was a European until I stepped off a plane at San Francisco International Airport in 1984. People in Liverpool who looked like me grew up with various names, but "European" was not one of them. We called ourselves "West Indians" or "half-caste" or "Black British" or later, "Liverpool-born Blacks." We might have called ourselves British, but we were never English (that was too white) and, from our point of view, like most people in England at the time, Europe was always over there. (Small 2009, xxv)

This assessment resonates with the evolution felt in the comparative study of both travelogues: while Phillips ambiguously claims European heritage[7] , his British anchorage seems predominant, Pitts identifies as a Brit

6 Among them Hitchcott, Nicki, and Dominic Thomas, eds. 2014. Francophone Afropean Literatures.

7 For instance in the chapter "A black European success", Phillips, 2000, 45

"adrift from mainland Europe" expresses a sense of hope for "stamping out a unifying identity together on this old, stubborn continent" (2014, 48).

Going back to the 2014 quote by Caryl Phillips with which this article began, we begin to recognize that the evolutions between *The European Tribe* and *Afropean* were not only, as Phillips has provocatively stated, the redrawing of boundaries due to European tribalism, the digitalization of communication, not even the European Union and its Schengen zone and common currency which would no doubt have facilitated Phillips' journey. The major change, although it has to do with the legacy of writers of Phillips' generation (and those before them), transcends them and literature. In the time between 1987 and 2019, Western Europe and Europeans have largely — often painstakingly, reluctantly, worriedly — accepted their status of multicultural societies; in part due to the work of writers and scholars, workers, activists, collectives and individuals who were trying to be visible and to survive. From these efforts, Black Europe has emerged as an entity solid enough to assume its traceability in the world. The history of what happened between *The European Tribe* and *Afropean* is also revealing of the history of the construction of an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983).

This structural shift is well illustrated in Phillips' and Pitts' chapters about Germany. In *The European Tribe,*

everything — except for a short catching of breath in Berlin "Kreuzburg" [sic] — points towards the desire to leave, from the chapter's title ("A German interlude") and the citation that opens it (from Claude McKay's *Banjo*, "Yet I never liked Germany…"), to the semantic field of flight and escape. In Munich, "[t]he cold Germanic faces […] gazed as though I had just committed an awful crime, or was about to cannibalize a small child" [8] (Phillips 2000, 83). By contrast, at his arrival in Berlin, Pitts seems to stumble into an antifascist, antiracist demonstration, which he looks at skeptically, noting the disproportionate number of young white people for whom, he writes, "the mean-spirited carnival […] looked to be less about fighting racism and more a chance to release some teen spirit without any repercussions […]" (Pitts 2019, 173). He then relates long conversations with Black men at Nil, "a Sudanese oasis nestled in a land of endless currywurst cabins and doner-kebab takeaways" (181), the aftermath of which eventually leads him to "a grass-roots non-profit organization" called YAAM for Young African Artist Market. There, he meets a multicultural crowd, among which many West Africans who, as part of their Rastafarian faith, had "assumed Jamaican accents and a reverence of East Africa." Together, these encounters point to woven and complex afro-diasporic

8 For a close analysis see Edwards Abdullah, 2013. Counter Strategies for Coping with Othering in Contact Zone Encounters: Caryl Phillips's Travel Texts The Atlantic Sound and the European Tribe

imaginaries. Following Alex Lubin's conceptualization, I read these "imagined geographies" as "geographies of liberation" which, through communal and trans-communal identification and solidarities, can effectively defy the dominant map by creating alternative imaginings of the distances and connections (Lubin 2014).

Reframing the Black diaspora

Both writers' accounts reveal interrogations regarding the social constructs of race and Blackness. On the one hand, both of their approaches are based on a quest for Black people – whether it is their absence or their presence that is the object of the quest – and that in fact phenotypical markers are essential to their perception of diaspora: both long for the solidary nods of other Black people, and the lack thereof is often met with great disappointment and emotional response [9]. Yet at the same time, Phillips and Pitts, both placing themselves in Baldwin's lineage, insist that Blackness is a construct necessary to the White power structure. Pitts quotes James Baldwin on this matter: "I didn't invent him. White people invented him… […] well, he's unnecessary to me, so he must be necessary to you" (Baldwin in Moore 1963, quoted in 2019, 119). Certainly, this ambivalence towards racial constructs is a recurring theme of the Black diasporic experience. In the words of Phillips, "[I]

9 For example, in The European Tribe's East Berlin and Warsaw chapters, pages 88 and 93.

t is neither healthy, nor desirable to spend one's whole European life aware of 'colour,' and I have yet to meet a single black person who enjoys it, but the curiously warped logic of the European continually attempts this force upon us" (Phillips 2000, 125). Placed at the very end of *The European Tribe*, this statement appears almost as a justification for the mobilization of racial constructs in the book, to the purpose of showing what Phillips calls "racialism" (63).

Both texts nonetheless participate in a process of definition, and negotiation, of the meanings and implications of Blackness. Phillips' encounters with Blackness in Europe includes "the waiter in a cheap Pigalle Indian restaurant," who may or may not be of African descent, which does not seem to matter in the context of the interaction, as well as witnessing "the lifestyles of Dutch black people, West Indians from Aruba, Curaçao or Surinam, Asians from Indonesia" identified by him as "Black people" (68). A short stay in Belfast serves again, although less decidedly, as an occasion to build parallels: about the IRA's methods Philipps writes that "[i]t is a classic blueprint used by those who have already succeeded in decolonizing most of Africa and Asia" (74).

Phillips further intertwines references to independence movements of Algerians and "the Kanak people" (64); antisemitism when visiting the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and the concentration camp Auschwitz in

Poland, as well as reflecting on the Venetian ghetto; in turn put in resonance with "racist graffiti [which] continue to smear synagogues, but are now daubed on mosques. […] In West Germany, it is a crime to scrawl 'Judenraus', but not 'Turkenraus'" (70). Later, in conversation with Yuri, a writer attempting to leave the Soviet Union, Phillips records: "'We are not cattle', he [Yuri] said, 'to be bought and bartered with. You, of all people, must know that'" (115). Both for Phillips and for his interlocutors, Blackness in more or less fluid interpretations and allusions serves to build solidarities.

At the same time, the Atlantic space, which has been a staple of Phillips' fiction and non-fiction, remains his prevalent lens. Phillips writes in *The European Tribe*

> But it seems to me that black people who are trapped in a hostile and racist Europe, exiled from a politically and economically unreliable Caribbean, are beginning to gather around themselves the values of survival and resistance that have sustained them on two journeys across the Atlantic, and are now fighting for the right to be a part of the future of this continent. (126)

By contrast, Pitts' narrative includes many Black Europeans, Africans in Europe, and others, who are largely excluded from the Atlantic construct whose emergence is so tied to Britain [10]. Through the types of encounters he relates, as well as the content of conversations

10 See Paul Gilroy, 1993. Black Atlantic.

he relays, Pitts seems to embrace, as Jessica de Abreu from the Black Archives puts it in the chapter of the book devoted to Amsterdam, "resistance, especially to the notion that black people's history is only defined by slavery" (2019, 136).

As raised previously, the predominance of African American culture has shaped Pitts up to a point, giving pointers of "Black" identity to him as he struggled to find them in his immediate surroundings. This translation of Blackness (also) as a cultural commodity participates in the expansiveness of the category and might be considered to renew Phillips' understanding of Blackness as, largely, oppression. A striking example is the fact that, in Pitts' Sheffield, it is his Yemeni neighbor Mohammed who introduces him to much of African American culture. Mohammed "culturally took part in that great ideological construct of 'blackness' that had been laid down in the 70s and 80s and bore fruit in the 90s through hip-hop culture" (14). Nonetheless, it seems that, met with the imperatives of community-building in the Black European construct, Blackness as a category is less expansive in *Afropean*. Instead, the focus appears to be on finding, showing and defining the Black diaspora in Europe, in all its complexities and dissonances. Remarkably, the reader enters *Afropean* (after the introduction) with a Parisian chapter that reflects, or announces, the complexities and dissonances of the Black diaspora, while at the same time perhaps reinforcing the idea of a Black Europe, specific and different

from African American narratives about the Black diaspora. Later, recounting his first encounter with Caryl Phillips' Belgium, Pitts presents Phillips' legacy in his own work, insisting on the dimension of growing up among the white working-class (an "atypical black British experience" 2017, 40). Pitts links himself to Phillips through this, i.e., a sense of navigating identities more complex and perhaps less essentialized than the narrative based on a single strand of identity, the ethnic or racial one. Pitts repeatedly posits both himself and Phillips in an outcast position not only to whiteness, but also to Blackness [11]: in Berlin, upon hearing about a Rastafarian's faith of the return of all black men to Africa "to build a great nation," Pitts wonders "what the black king would do with those of us who are mixed race and/or feel mixed-cultured. Would we be selected for his African ark? And what if we did get a golden ticket? Would we choose to board?" (2019, 189). Here, the recurring afro-diasporic narratives of home and returns are interrogated by Pitts in a manner that recalls the textual conversations on home and generational gaps. In other words, the "teller of transgressive stories" lives in a space of tension between the narrative construction of a community and the awareness of the fluid and diverse identities the communal construct must reconcile.

Caryl Phillips' portrayal of tribalist, fragmented and conservative European societies arguably led the way to

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11 "I began to feel culturally adrift from both black and white Britain." (Pitts, 2019, 146)

the transnational fragments of diaspora as a form of counterproposition for the gaze, a new direction to look to. Johny Pitts draws on *The European Tribe*'s reassessment of European realities and the potentialities of a postcolonial Europe, and, by extension, presents *Afropean* also as a product of the literary and political context inherited from authors like Phillips. Pitts follows in a tradition of Black travel writing about Europe in a reversal of the colonial gaze. Yet the different objects of their enquiry hint upon a significant evolution of individual and perhaps even collective self-perceptions, from Black 'others' to unapologetic, and as Pitts writes, "unhyphenated" Afropeans (2019, 1). Nonetheless, the temptingly linear conception of placing both books within a historical progression must be nuanced by the personal and particular character of the two narratives, but also because, as John Nimis has noted, "while the term [Afropean] itself is relatively new, the broader experience it seeks to encompass has been a concern in literature for some time" (2014, 48). It seems that its articulation has opened doors for writers like Pitts, who describes the term's genealogy and appeal extensively. What appears most clearly through this comparative analysis is a shift not so much in historical context as in self-perception and affirmation; a shift sensed and predicted by Phillips from a diasporic sense of displacement and estrangement in Europe to a focus on belonging and representation, which can be deemed post-diasporic. The term post-diaspora, which I expand from Dunn and Scafe (2019, in the Afro-Caribbean context) and Lascelles

(US-American context, 2020), suggests a 'new problem space in the diaspora', in which 'making community' also requires negotiating complex and multilayered identities along lines of gender, class, power and agency. Following this conception, the 'post-diasporic' shift can be read not only in the chronological element induced by the prefix 'post-', but also signify changes in that which has been shaped by diasporic phenomena, processes that interrogate and complexify Afrodiasporic identities and offer to shape new terms and definitions. And so, Pitts' intention of rendering Afropeans visible in their "equivocal and untidy lived experiences" (Pitts 2019, 5) may well be a manifestation of a post-diasporic moment in which Black Europeans claim not only visibility and belonging, but also the right to complex, nuanced identifications.

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Identities Lost and Found? Transcultural Perspectives on Jamal Mahjoub's Road Novel Travelling with Djinns

Michelle Stork

Introduction

Jamal Mahjoub's road novel *Travelling with Djinns* situates automobility in relation to other experiences of mobility such as migration, exile and travel involving cross-border movements as integral to European history and collective identity. As with many road novels, one of the motivations for the trip seems to be the main character's loss of identity as well as his inability to come to terms with the commonly perceived conceptions of identity. Born of British-Sudanese parents and living in the UK,

Yasin struggles with existing, yet problematic categories, such as British and Sudanese as seemingly stable national signifiers. Consequently, Mahjoub's novel portrays the road as a space for overcoming static concepts and for reflecting on new notions of identity as a result of movement through and across space. While the road novel genre was understood as closely linked to the exploration of the (American) nation state for a long time (Primeau 1995, 15; Brigham 2013, 18), *Travelling with Djinns* focuses on movement across European borders and draws upon a broader cultural and political context. In fact, as Jopi Nyman observes, Mahjoub's work "places Europeanness in a transnational framework by showing the presence of global migration in allegedly homogenous nation-states" (2013, 217). My analysis focuses on how Jamal Mahjoub's road novel, set in Europe, imagines identity, both individual and collective, in flux by portraying the narrator-protagonist as someone moving across cultures and continents.

Notably, the genre of road novel[1] is increasingly deviating from an engagement with the nation state and

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1 Evidently, definitions of this genre vary. In her recent essay "Road Novel: Zur gattungstheoretischen Begriffsbestimmung," Špela Virant highlights the road, the vehicle and the idea of being on the go as defining features of both road novels and road movies (2019, 640). Following Virant, I understand the road novel as a fictional text that is largely set on the road, features a motorised vehicle and, thus, centres on characters who move from one place to another.

instead emphasises transnational and transcultural phenomena (cf. Campbell 2001, 281; Virant 2019, 646). This development, obviously not limited to road novels, has left literary scholars "grappling for new terms" (Varvogli 2012, 118). One possible concept that allows to engage with such narratives without primarily relying on national frameworks is Wolfgang Welsch's notion of transculturality (1999; 2010). His concept paves the way for a critical understanding of culture in the age of globalisation: firstly, it helps to overcome rigid concepts of culture that do not suffice to frame and understand the processes represented in contemporary road novels like *Travelling with Djinns*; secondly, it allows for intrinsic differentiations of categories previously thought of as homogenous; and thirdly, rather than functioning as an ontological concept, transculturality can be an enabling heuristic, providing entry points from which new ideas and potential solutions can be conceived. While Welsch's concept has been criticised for being utopian and unpolitical (cf. Schulze-Engler 2009, 90-91 and 95), I argue that instead of imagining a world of utterly peaceful coexistence, the term encompasses an awareness of the contradictory processes that shape globalised modernity (cf. Welsch 1999, 204). Although *Travelling with Djinns* may propose a more fluid, interconnected and thus transcultural understanding of individual and collective European identity, the novel particularly addresses cultural tensions and conflicts arising in the early 21st century as migrants continue to be excluded from certain areas of life.

Engaging with J. A. Kearney's (2007), Yasemin Moham-mad's (2017), Maria Jesus Carbacos Traseira's (2012) and Jopi Nyman's (2013) research on Mahjoub's novel, I pro-pose to read *Travelling with Djinns* through a transcultural lens. I begin by tracing changes in Yasin's understanding of identity towards fluidity and interconnectedness, and then take a closer look at how this identity relates to the construction of Europe as a space of "exchange and in-teraction" (Welsch 1999, 205). My analysis closes with a reading of selected intertextual references to show how Yasin establishes an entangled history of Europe, cre-ating a network of people and artefacts that stem from particular places but have long since travelled across borders.

On the Road to an Awareness of Rhizomatic Iden-tities

During the road trip, Yasin's identity undergoes a thor-ough, consequential re-evaluation. The road trip offers the 37-year-old main protagonist the time and space to contemplate his identity and to come to terms with his disorientation in the UK, travelling from Denmark through Germany and France to Spain. In fact, be-fore hitting the road with his 7-year-old son Leo, Ya-sin laments his feeling of statelessness, which cannot even be amended by the ownership of two passports. His identity crisis is propelled further by his looming divorce, leading Yasin to question his place in Europe. In fact, Yasin declares that he finds himself between

disparate "continental shelves" (Mahjoub 2004, 4). This metaphor of stable shelves suggests an insurmountable divide between his Sudanese/African and his English/European heritage. Simultaneously, this metaphor hints at the great relevance that books and storytelling play in Yasin's process of identity formation. By the end of the novel, Yasin begins to embrace his experience of having "no fixed locus" (5) by coming to understand motion and travel as inherent to the human condition (cf. 343). This indeterminacy is also supported structurally: the novel's open end indicates that Yasin's movement will continue and so will the constant (re-) construction of his identity (cf. Nyman 2013, 234).

The road trip as such creates the backdrop for Yasin's reassessment of his identity. The spontaneous and aimless trip with its potential for detours allows for a continuous engagement with Europe's past. Likewise, the changing landscape and architecture present Yasin with never-ending opportunities for contemplation. When father and son pass the cathedral in Metz, for example, Yasin considers the various construction phases, realising that (Christian) Europe was built on the ruins of the (pagan) Roman Empire: "It strikes me that this cathedral, like so many churches, was probably built on Roman ruins" (78). Not only implying the fluid nature of cultural practices but also the movement of people, Yasin debunks the illusion of racial purity in Europe at this early stage of the road trip. Thinking about the begin-

nings of European civilisation, Yasin encounters an empire that expanded over vast stretches of land in which people moved and intermingled. He discovers that shifting borders and cultural transformation are not new in Europe but a historical reality. Thus, by acknowledging that Europeanness is defined by multiplicity, difference and cultural permeation, Yasin takes a first step towards conceptualising a transcultural identity.

The insight into Europe's (creative) past which Yasin gains on the road trip further contributes to the significant change in his self-conception. Yasin reads and learns about other migrants, travellers and exiles who have not only coped with a mixed racial background and the feeling of displacement but used these factors as a source for transformation. All these people on the move, either in the present or the past, are referred to as "djinns" in the novel, as already indicated in its title. They accompany Yasin on his trip and provide a means for identification. In fact, as Mohammad highlights, the word 'djinn' as such is "of hybrid linguistic origins", so she concludes that this already "suggests the metaphorical and transcultural nature of the trip" (2017, 321). She also notes that "movement opens up a transcultural space in which he [Yasin] negotiates his hybrid identity by interacting with the djinns of displaced prominent intellectuals and contemporary illegal migrants" (323). The variety of transformative influences becomes particularly clear when considering Yasin's reading materi-

al. He reads widely, including the Japanese poet Basho (Mahjoub 2003, 11), the Persian writer Omar Khayyám (42, 119 and 308), the German author Berthold Brecht (30) and the French writer Arthur Rimbaud (303). Indeed, these authors of heterogeneous background are presented beyond the narrow confines of the nation state as simplistic national attributions do not hold in the novel, which underlines the significance of these authors and their works 'on the move', cutting across national and geographical borders. Hence, the books as Yasin's djinns interconnect various times and cultures in a rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 3-25) structure[2] which eventually also characterises Yasin's understanding of his own identity.

After having crossed Germany, France and Spain, Yasin begins to embrace the idea of being an "eternal wanderer" (302). Reading the English translation of Joseph Roth's *The White Towns,* he contemplates the Jewish author's life. Having fled Germany in 1933, Roth "remained on the move for the rest of his life, wandering in solitary exile from café to hotel, from city to city, sustained, one imagines, only by his constant writing" (302). Yasin realises that he also belongs to the road, "always moving" (302), a "constant traveller" (Nyman 2013, 234), just like

2 The notion of cultures as rhizomatic is not used by Wolfgang Welsch, but by Édouard Glissant in his book Poétique de la Rélation (1990). In this article, the notion of the rhizome conveys the idea of multiple interconnecting cultural nodes which lack a clear centre and are not subject to a predetermined hierarchy.

Joseph Roth. On the road, Yasin learns how to feel at home independent of his geographical location. He realises that he can potentially identify with every place in Europe, because he knows something about its entangled history. Drawing on his experiences, encounters and reading knowledge, he manages to continuously create a fluid identity that does not restrict him to the initial idea of being "divided, split, incomplete" (87).

Constructing Europe as a Transcultural Space

Mahjoub's road novel is constructed around Yasin's and Leo's movement through different European towns and cities. By constantly portraying border crossings, the novel undermines the notion of homogenous nation states and instead indicates that "a long chain of human mobility has been essential to the making of Europe" (Nyman 2013, 236). Europe is represented as a transcultural space in which cultural transformations continue to have a distinct presence. Yet, while the novel portrays the impact of different cultural communications on Yasin's identity formation as positive, it simultaneously addresses social and political problems and evokes various tensions which arise from Europe's transcultural condition. Two issues are particularly present in the novel: firstly, the practice of patrolling national borders and of racial profiling as experienced by Yasin; and secondly, the vilification and condemnation of (illegal) immigration that (partially) results from Europe's colonial histo-

ry as well as the ongoing marginalisation of immigrants in Europe. Both practices are explicitly criticised in *Travelling with Djinns* in an attempt "to develop and spread a broader concept of European identity" (Panebianco 2003, cited in Nyman 2013, 237).

*Travelling with Djinn*s evokes Europe as a place of cultural interactions by featuring various meetings with other characters. Yasin encounters numerous mobile characters, such as the young prostitute Haya, whose place in society is equally liminal as that of the other African refugees Yasin observes in front of the Louvre. Yasin meets Haya late one night in a Parisian café. She is "about nineteen" (120) and when she says she is from Paris at first, Yasin probes into her past, asking her where she came from "before that" (121). She tells him her story and Yasin relates it for the reader: "She is from Western Sahara. She grew up in a refugee camp in the desert. She didn't know her father. He was away fighting the Moroccans" (122). The narrative implies that Haya must have come to Europe as a refugee. She has friends in Aix-en-Provence (123), indicating that she may have established a network of acquaintances throughout France. By encountering characters like Haya and taking the time to understand their trajectories, Yasin reveals Europe's diverse society in which cultures are bound to transgress clearly marked borders.

Europe is further constructed as a heterogenous space in *Travelling with Djinn*s by means of invoking the greater

history of travelling. The plurality in Europe is a result of the continent's past of Empires, reaching back to the Romans; its colonial history, particularly on the African continent; and current processes of globalisation, in which new, both legal and illegal, flows of migration significantly contribute to its ever-changing shape. Europe is represented as a continent that is not limited by national boundaries but characterised by an all-embracing transnational movement, in which "[c]ontemporary experiences of postcolonial migrations are but the latest episodes of movements and encounters of people in a history of the world and of Europe in particular" (Carbacos Traseira 2012, 198). Yasin becomes acutely aware of this while spending time with his new acquaintance Haya. In a late-night conversation with her, Yasin realises:

> The face of this continent is scarred by the passage of people. From east to west, north to south. From the earliest neolithic wanderers to the Mongol hordes, from the Huguenots to the Calvinists, pilgrims, refugees, gypsies. It is a history of railway tracks and roads. A history of transgression, of frontiers and border lines being crossed and recrossed. The Romans, the Visigoths, the Jews, Bosnians, Albanians, Kosovans, the blind, the sick, the old, the crippled. These are the people upon whose sacrifice the history of Europe is written, and our collective destiny is written in the course of those migrations. (173)

Hence, Europe's history of mobility not only legitimises Yasin's own condition, but it also forecloses ideals of stability, of homogenous nation states and of a singular origin. As Nyman puts it, "[t]o understand Europe is to understand the intertwined histories between it and its Others and to recognize the various cultural and historical layers of Europe that are often forgotten and to see it as a transcultural construct" (2013, 235). *Travelling with Djinns* therefore excavates Europe's entangled past and re-imagines it as a transcultural space.

Intertextuality is another striking feature in the novel, discussed in more detail below, but integral to the heterogeneous representation of Europe. Intertextual references disclose that Europe's inhabitants were never racially pure and add to Europe's diverse past. They illustrate how national borders have been constantly crossed and re-crossed by cultural artefacts. The circulation of literary texts, often only enabled by travellers, as well as their respective translation and reception hint at the cultural permeations that took place both in and outside the fictional realm. Hence, intertextual references contribute to *Travelling with Djinns*' transcultural re-imagination of Europe.

Travelling with Djinns, however, does not glorify or romanticise the idea of a transcultural European space. While noting a potentially positive effect, it does not present the various events that led to Europe's current cultural

condition as inevitably peaceful or beneficial. Rather, it evokes how marginalised groups endure(d) oppression, experience(d) expulsion as well as prosecution and often live(d) in precarious conditions. The "sacrifice" (163) of their lives, as Yasin calls it, *should* have some effect in the present, but alarming conditions persist. This is exactly why Yasin vehemently criticises the conditions to which immigrants often are subjected in Europe. The following two examples of his criticism that relate to racial profiling and social exclusion serve to illustrate his social criticism.

Yasin himself is subject to racial profiling when crossing the German border. The border force demands him to pull over and the guards "checked [his] name against the list of internationally wanted suspects" and "against any known act of terrorism perpetrated over the last thirty years, any crime or misdemeanour committed in the western hemisphere by anyone with a name similar to [his]" (10). The reason for this overly meticulous investigation is not clear: it is made either on assumptions about Yasin's "Third World car" (9), his appearance or his 'foreign' name. Yasin's criticism is directed against the practice of suspecting him on grounds of his race or ethnicity, not on the grounds of any actual evidence. Furthermore, the guards ignore the Schengen Agreement, according to which national borders "are now open" (10). Nation states within the European Union have technically agreed to suspend border controls;

however, Mahjoub's road novel suggests that Europe's national borders, both internal and external, continue to be safeguarded in order to enforce mechanisms to control who belongs and who does not. Additionally, this scene represents Yasin as being prejudiced against Germany: "Perhaps I am biased about the Germans, but why did I have the feeling that I was more likely to be victimised here than anywhere else?" (10). Yasin, influenced by medialised representations of Germany, reciprocates the guards' demeanour and equally suspects them. Hence, the novel suggests that cultural fusions do not necessarily end in harmony, as oppression and prejudice occur on both sides.

Yasin frequently criticises the state of, mostly African, illegal immigrants that are part of present-day Europe. When in Paris, he refers to political and social issues related to migration while queueing to visit the Louvre. Yasin observes numerous men from "places like Dakar and Conakry, from Lomé, Abidjan and Bamako" selling "a selection of compact discs and sunglasses" (105) in front of the museum and assumes that they have never seen the artworks exhibited inside. Clearly, the author criticises Europe for ignoring and forgetting the immigrants who are pushed to live on the social periphery. They are unemployed, homeless and have few to no opportunities of changing their lives in which they try "to eke out a living from the pavements" (105). While Yasin can contemplate and reinterpret Europe's past due to

his education, these men, as Nyman states, "have no full access to the memorials of the European (colonialist) culture […]" (Nyman 2017, 164). The overpriced Louvre exhibition about 'The Lost Art of Memory', for example, displays prehistoric drawings, found, amongst others, at Tamrit and Yabbaren. Hence, these objects are not just a part of "European (colonialist) culture" (164), as Nyman suggests, but of Africa's past long before colonisation. Under colonialism, they have been appropriated by European museums which present Africa's past in a way that serves the institution's needs (cf. Erll 2008, 5). Ironically, then, while the museum's collection suggests that cultural overlaps have been integral to Europe's and Africa's past to enable the existence of such a collection, the museum's policies of exclusion and of capitalist marketing of culture seem to foreclose further exchange in the present. Artworks which could be opened to reinterpretation by migrants are sealed off from them and have more or less been reduced to a form of entertainment for the wealthy. Hence, European (state) institutions find themselves in a strange conflict where a variety of cultural perspectives is rarely provided despite the evident potential and need for them. Mahjoub's novel identifies and narrates those strategies pursued by numerous cultural institutions in Europe. Thereby, *Travelling with Djinns* takes a first step towards re-imagining Europe and offers new perspectives for understanding and negotiating the continent's complex entanglements. In the future, representations like this

may effect a change in how European institutions handle their entangled collections[3] (cf. Aldrich 2009, 153-154 and Thomas 2010, 1-11).

Intertextuality as Transculturality: The Role of References to Music, Films and Books in *Travelling with Djinns*

During his time on the road, Yasin continuously refers to literature, art and films, so *Travelling with Djinns* is replete with intertextual references. Arguably, the novel achieves transculturality through intertextuality by showing how cultural artefacts and ideas travel across linguistic and geographical borders. The references arguably fulfil four main functions: the travelling objects hint at the complex processes involved in (cultural) translation and transformation; they attest to Europe's diverse heritage; they dismantle the nation state as the only frame of reference; and they serve Yasin in his struggle for an alternative perspective on his identity. Having already addressed Europe's transcultural past and Yasin's individual identity, I will to add to previous observations by drawing on more salient examples from the novel.

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3 These debates have recently gained more traction as heated discussions around the return of the Benin Bronzes (see for example Dan Hicks's The Brutish Museums published in 2020) and various initiatives towards the decolonisation of museums in Europe show.

A striking instance of cultural translation and transformation occurs when Yasin and Leo stop in Metz. During their visit of the cathedral, they wonder about the gargoyles that decorate the architectural structure. Yasin ponders the origins of the word gargoyle, contemplating whether it refers to the gurgling sound these creatures make when they drain rainwater, but then he explains to his son:

> These are more like chimères, which were believed to keep evil spirits at bay. […] "Dernières ressources des malheureux!" Rousseau called them. Chimères were mythological monsters that were hybrids, composed of different kinds of creatures. (77, emphasis in original)

First of all, Yasin is familiar with Rousseau and shows a solid knowledge of the French language. Not offering a literal translation of the term chimères, he instead describes it with all its implicit meanings in English, so that Leo is able to understand the concept. However, it is unlikely that a seven-year-old understands the reference to monsters being unhappy or misfortunate (malheureux). The passage is more likely to animate the reader to look up the quote and to interpret it. This episode also demonstrates how effortlessly the novel slips other languages into the English body of text. Notably, the French term chimère is assembled into the English language in this paragraph, as it is no longer italicised the

second time it is mentioned. The novel therefore renders the English language permeable and transcultural. Leo's reply to Yasin's statement is furthermore relevant. To his father's observation about the chimères being of mixed origin, Leo promptly replies "like us" (77). Here, Leo transfers the description of artistic objects to his own situation, translating and transforming Rousseau's idea to draw conclusions about the present. The idea that originates in French is first rephrased in English and then appropriated by Leo to describe his diverse family background.

To portray Europe's rich cultural heritage, a vast amount of intertextual references is featured in *Travelling with Djinns*. Most of the time, Yasin mentions authors, artists or other creatives because they combine numerous influences from which they create something new. What is most important in *Travelling with Djinns* is that Europe is not depicted as the (postcolonial) centre. Rather, the intertextual references stand in for "innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes 1977, 146). This notion perfectly fits with the metaphor of the rhizome which vehemently opposes the idea of culture as one singular root. With Yasin frequently citing Arab writers like Ibn Arabi, Idries Shah and Omar Khayyám (86, 119), Western writers like Brecht, Rimbaud and Shakespeare as well as Asian writers like Basho (11), he not only insists on their significant impact on and shared presence within Europe's cultural heritage but also questions these national, con-

tinental or spatial categories. The references to the Sufi poet Omar Khayyám are a case in point. His brother Muk writes Yasin a postcard containing the English translation of a poem by this well-known Persian writer. Those "cryptic lines" (119) leave Yasin puzzled. However, when in Paris, Haya, the young prostitute whom Yasin meets, links the poem to "Wallada" (119). Wallada, she explains, is both her mother's name and the name of the most beautiful Andalusian woman described in Ibn Zaydun's synonymous poem (119-123). Haya enlarges the web of intertextual references with the mention of Ibn Zaydun, an African migrant living in Córdoba in the 11th century. This already complex net is further extended when the riddle of the poem is solved at the end of the trip. Yasin finally learns that this quote features in the 1951 film *The Flying Dutchman*, where an open book containing this poem is shown. In Barcelona, where he and Leo make their last stop and reunite with Muk, a statue is devoted to the main female actress Ava Gardner, paired with the inscription of Khayyám's poem on a block of stone. Nyman (cf. 2013, 235) and Carbacos Traseira (cf. 2012, 196) have both pointed out how this poem is linked to popular media rather than to literature and thereby also indicates processes that recent scholarship terms "transmediality" (Rajewsky 2013, 21-22). Combining these two modes of going *through and beyond*, intertextuality therefore comes to epitomise the "entanglement, intermixing and commonness" (Welsch 1999, 205) of cultures in *Travelling with Djinns*.

The use of intertextual references furthermore serves to undermine the nation state as the single point of reference. In fact, the border-crossings during the road trip are echoed in the transnational and transcultural artefacts mentioned along the way. Yasin again and again contemplates connections between authors, artists and himself. Hence, he conceives of being "on the move" as a shared experience (178). Yasin's repeated engagement with Goethe is one central example of how intertextuality is used to question the nation state: As far as Yasin is concerned, the supposedly German national poet "adored the Persian poet Hafiz" (Mahjoub 2004, 175). This admiration manifests itself "regardless of their national identities" (2012, 196), as Carbacos Traseira underlines. After having elaborated on "Sufism and Dervishes in general", Yasin suggests that Goethe was "fascinated by all that" (175). Here, Goethe is depicted as an initiator of cross-cultural exchange. Thus, common ideas about the containment of both the nation and its literature are undermined in favour of a more globally connected network of culture and literature. Goethe, in fact, is mentioned multiple times. In another episode, Yasin reflects on conceptual changes concerning Goethe's term 'World Literature' when relating an episode about his previous job at BBC radio. He states that his interviews with authors from "Lahore, Calcutta, Manitoba, Ivory Coast" present "World Literature as Goethe never imagined it" (258). To Yasin, World Literature encompasses the entire globe, and not just the lim-

ited 'world' known to Goethe. Therefore, by means of intertextual references, *Travelling with Djinns* "reveals the mutual dependence of Europe and its Others, it shows the traces left by cultural contacts and mixing" (Nyman 2013, 236). By referring to numerous novels, films and artworks, homogenous nation states are dismantled as constructed and illusory. Instead, literature serves as an example for constant border-crossing resulting in fruitful transcultural exchange.

Intertextual references, of course, also come into play regarding Yasin's identity. Besides literature, film and fine arts have an impact on Yasin's self-image. In Paris, for example, Yasin is intrigued by a print of Cézanne's *La Montagne Sainte Victoire*. He discerns a "subtle order" in the dots and facets "that somehow make coherent sense" (71). Metaphorically speaking, then, these pointillist brush marks might refer to his own identity which, at this point, is still split and consists of numerous different pieces. Looking at this painting might be one of the key experiences for Yasin to rethink his image of himself and of Europe because "[t]here is something about the way in which all the little pieces add up which holds me there" (72). Just like the fragments that make up the painting's structure, he begins to conjoin the various pieces of his past together to create a new identity. He begins to form a coherent self by transforming the multiple, sometimes even contradicting influences into a novel whole. Thus, together with other works of art,

Cézanne's *La Montagne Sainte Victoire* supports Yasin in his inner struggle for a coherent sense of identity.

I have demonstrated that intertextual references serve four distinct, but related functions as indicators of transcultural processes in the novel; namely, underlining cultural translation, demonstrating diversity, questioning the nation state and shaping identity. The analysis of these four functions has made it clear that Mahjoub's use of intertextuality is one of *Travelling with Djinns'* richest and most productive methods for portraying and propelling cultural permeation.

Conclusion

I have argued that the narrative of the road trip plays an integral role in how *Travelling with Djinns* maps 21st century Europe. The trip makes the reader reimagine the main character's sense of identity on the one hand and of Europe as a continent marked by internal and external mobility on the other. Drawing on Welsch's term, I have shown that transculturality can be a productive lens through which it is possible to approach complex cultural processes as negotiated in *Travelling with Djinns*. Mahjoub's novel employs salient strategies with which it carefully constructs Europe's entangled past and present, *imagining* Europe as neither singular nor homogenous. While *Travelling with Djinns* stresses the positive potential of transculturality, it also criticises mechanisms

of exclusion and cultural exploitation. Most importantly, perhaps, the novel imagines transnational and transcultural entanglements as integral parts of European identity, constantly insisting on the transcultural processes that have occurred and continue to occur in the social, cultural and historic sphere. Since *Travelling with Djinns* deals with a variety of other texts and media, bringing them together into a multi-layered network, it becomes "a transcultural artefact" (Carbacos Traseira 2012, 197). Also, by means of translating the road trip narrative from an American and nation-based context into a previously disregarded and unexplored transnational European framework, the novelist provides a fresh perspective on the road novel in the 21st century. As an example of contemporary road narratives, *Travelling with Djinns* stands in for a larger body of texts in which border crossings and cultural interactions are becoming increasingly key features. It shows that the genre of road novel needs to be addressed from a global perspective rather than a nation-based framework.

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'I ain't no homosexual, I am a . . . Barrysexual!': Queering the Bildungsroman in Bernardine Evaristo's Mr Loverman

Miriam Hinz

Introduction: "A Horizon Imbued with Potentiality"

Ever since the *Bildungsroman* came to prominence in the 18th and 19th centuries, the genre has influenced writers and literary scholars alike. Given its long-standing history, it is not surprising that the genre has undergone several changes, so it has been challenged and subverted time and again. As an originally western genre, the classical European *Bildungsroman* commonly features a young, white, male, heterosexual, middle-class pro-

tagonist who "goes through some kind of initiation, intellectually, morally and psychologically" (Sommerville-Thompson 2014, 30). The protagonist's successful initiation and integration into society is the ultimate achievement that is completed at the end of the story. In 19th century European society, this type of representation not only functioned as literary entertainment but also fulfilled an ideological and formative function in educating the mainly bourgeois readership and helped to maintain strong feelings of superiority over 'the Other.' The *Bildungsroman* was thus established as a powerful and successful tool in colonial education and 'civilising' missions. As such, the "[g]enre is itself ideologically charged, extending beyond the text to include writers and readers alike in perpetuating specific values and worldviews" (Hoagland 2006, 3). The ideological charge of the genre, which is firmly grounded in Eurocentric ideals of linear progression and a strict goal-orientedness, has provoked critique and the genre has been adapted to changing cultural conditions.

Beginning with feminist interventions and the creation of the female *Bildungsroman[1]*, in which the empowerment of the female protagonist in a patriarchal society is crucial, postcolonial authors have constantly re-negotiated and re-evaluated the *Bildungsroman*, moving beyond Eurocentric and western epistemologies to create new

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1 For further information on the female Bildungsroman, see, e.g. Felski (1989), Fergusson (1983), or Gymnich (2007).

kinds of knowledge that are produced outside the 'centre' and are attuned to local particularities and situated knowledge (ibid., 6). Postcolonial novels such as Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), Brian Chikwava's Harare *North* (2009), or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) are but some prominent examples of the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* that infuse the 'western' genre with locally situated knowledge, frequently representing the difficulties for the postcolonial subject to integrate into a society that is still implicated in Eurocentric ideals and perpetuates 'western' values.

The negotiation of epistemic power structures becomes especially relevant in a diasporic context, such as Black British culture. As Maria Lima pointedly states:

> Successful Bildung in Western terms requires the existence of a social context that facilitates development, that leads the young person from ignorance and innocence to wisdom and maturity. Growing up in a society of extreme diversity and fragmentation of both European and African cultures does not allow for any coherent sense of self (1993, 112).

It is necessary to imagine alternative forms of *Bildung* that are not grounded in white, male European values

and worldviews, expressed through smooth formation, but which pay particular attention to the opportunities and prospects of friction and fragmentation. In this process, literature inhabits a singular role. Birgit Neumann rightly claims: "Literature itself construes imaginative worlds and configures new worldly spaces, alternative geographies, contact zones and transitory spaces that, thriving on both transcultural entanglements and local difference, may offer readers new visions of the world" (2017, 9; see also Neumann 2018, 243). As an "act of imagining" (Martin 2017, 5), literatures "respond creatively to contemporary changes and an unfinished present" (Baumbach and Neumann 2020, 2). They thus model alternative world-imaginings which move beyond Eurocentricity and homogeneity – idea(l)s that have been perpetuated in the classical *Bildungsroman*.

Among postcolonial subversions engaging with the form of the *Bildungsroman*, Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* (2013) holds an exceptional position as it brings to the fore hitherto marginalised topics and queers the genre on diverse, intersectional levels. Her seventh novel follows the life of seventy-four-year-old Barrington (Barry) Walker, an Antiguan-Londoner, who leads a double life as husband and father of two daughters, as grandfather, and as long-time lover of his childhood friend Morris. Mr Loverman portrays a distinctively different form of the *Bildungsroman*, hence contrasting and subverting the normative implications of the genre. Barry's process of

Bildung does not rely on him adapting to societal values and his ultimate integration into society but rather lies in his coming out as an "individual, specific, not generic" (Evaristo 2013b, 138) homosexual man. Bearing in mind that "[p]erhaps no genre is as ideologically implicated as the *Bildungsroman*, rooted in the Western bourgeois tradition, and further implicated in imperialist and patriarchal practice" (Hoagland 2006, 3), I analyse how Evaristo subverts the genre on the levels of content and form in numerous, experimental ways, challenging and disrupting both imperial and patriarchal practices. Evaristo queers the European *Bildungsroman* and its normative implications along diverse and intersectional axes such as race, age, and sexuality. Additionally, she employs several formal strategies such as multi-perspectivity, polyphony, non-linear temporalities, and intertextuality to destabilise dominant normative implications of the Bildungsroman, further queering the typically employed form of the genre, opening it up for cultural particularities and transcultural exchange.

'Queering' in the present use refers to a creative process which introduces fissures and frictions into a standardised context. As such, 'queerness' moves beyond its sexual connotation and embraces difference on diverse levels. In his famous study *Cruising Utopias*, José Muñoz proclaims that

> [q]ueerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never

> touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. […] Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing. (2019, 1)

Queerness becomes a desirable ideal imbued with the creative potential to explore difference in the future and to produce a utopian outlook that is attuned to an optimistic perspective on the world. In a similar vein, E.L. McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen emphasise how queerness' hope lies in its deviation from norms and normativity (2011, 8). Defining queerness as this subversive potential, I follow scholars, such as Fatima El-Tayeb, who loosen the concept of queerness from sexual identities and assert "'queer' as a term that is not merely synonymous with 'homosexual' but references processes of constructing normative and nonnormative behaviors and populations" (El-Tayeb 2011, xxxv). In a similar vein, Muñoz refers to "forms of belonging-in-difference" (2019, 20), which allude to the subversive nature of queerness. As such, in this context, queerness is understood both literally in the sense of queer sexual orientation and metaphorically in the sense of potentiality. Introducing the idea of 'queerness' to assess the Bildungsroman as a genre in postcolonial literatures is not entirely new. In his study *Queer Narratives of the Caribbean Diaspora* (2013), Zoran Pecic pays particular attention to

the genre of the *Bildungsroman* and establishes how H. Nigel Thomas and Jamaica Kincaid "test[…] the conventions of the Western coming out story" (2013, 144). In Pecic's understanding, Thomas and Kincaid queer the form of the *Bildungsroman* by presenting queer protagonists whose desire is positioned as an alternative to standardised heterosexuality (ibid., 150), thus attesting to the first, more literal meaning of 'queerness'. Similarly, Evaristo represents queer desire opposed to homogenous heterosexuality. However, as the following analysis will show, I aim to move beyond that literal understanding of 'queerness' and examine how Evaristo's narrative adds multiple layers to Barry's coming-out story, both on the level of content and form.

"I feel myself coming out": Intersecting Age, Race, and Sexuality in Mr Loverman

Evaristo's protagonist, seventy-four-year old, black, homosexual Barrington (Barry) Walker, is not what readers expect when it comes to the protagonist of a *Bildungsroman*. Tying together concepts such as old age, race, and queer sexuality, Evaristo is a pioneer on the British literary landscape as "[t]he theme of queer love at old age, i.e. treating queerness and ageing intersectionally, remains exceptionally rare" (Koegler 2020, 889) in mainstream literature. The very opening of the novel, portraying the main protagonist Barry and his lover Morris in a dance-club, first establishes their age right at the beginning of the story:

> So there we was on the dancehall amid all of those
> sweaty, horny youngsters (relatively speaking) swivel-
> ling their hips effortlessly. And there was I trying to
> move my hips in a similar hula-hoop fashion, except
> that these days it feels more like opening a rusty tin
> of soup with an old-fashioned tin opener. I'm trying
> to bend my knees without showing any pain on my
> face and without accidentally goin' too far down, be-
> cause I know I won't be able to get up again, while
> also tryin' to concentrate on what Morris is shouting
> in my ear. (Evaristo 2013a, 2)

Ironically referring to themselves as "two old geezers" (ibid.), Evaristo's characters challenge old age as a "problem-ridden and negatively connoted stage of life" (Karshay and Rostek 2016, 132). Instead, they are eager-ly participating in night-life, countering any implicated norms of appropriateness. Whereas representations of old age in literature remain an exception and are usually referred to in a stereotypical manner (Gymnich 2021, 202), Evaristo moves beyond such established literary conventions. In Evaristo's novel, the protagonists' age is put centre stage time and again, functioning "as a re-minder that agency, mobility, and independence should not be regarded as the privilege of younger generations" (ibid., 204). Additionally, age in *Mr Loverman* is always de-picted with humour, leading critics to describe Evaristo's novel as "funny" (Thomson 2013), "comical" (Canning 2013), and "sometimes hilarious" (Colquhoun 2013). Yet, the humorous depiction does not override sincere

topics such as the difficulties of hiding one's sexuality, topics of depression,[2] marital crisis and the associated trauma that are intersectionally tied to the protagonists' process of ageing. As Maggie Gee writes in a review for *The Guardian*, Evaristo "has given her characters room to change, and her readers time to move from laughter to sympathy" (2013; see also Karshay and Rostek 2016, 126). Barry's and Morris' old age is thus taken seriously; Evaristo emphasises how age does not hinder a process of transformation as the characters finally find the courage to come out as gay.

The second axis on which Evaristo queers the *Bildungsroman* is the representation of race. Barry predominantly defines himself in terms of race: he is a black British man who came to England in the 1950s as part of the so-called Windrush Generation. Whereas several Windrush stories such as Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), Caryl Phillips' *The Final Passage* (1985), or A*ndrea Levy's Small Island* (2004) focus on the struggles and the racist environment that Windrush immigrants have had to face in the mother-country, Barry's story does not focus on his arrival in England but is set in 2010. He is portrayed as a middle-class, self-educated landlord who is firmly rooted in British culture and who regards Hackney as his home. Again, Evaristo explicitly works against

2 In the second chapter devoted to Carmel, the reader learns about a postnatal depression she goes through after the birth of her second daughter Maxine (Evaristo 2013a, 67).

hegemonic expectations and points out that Barry "is not impoverished. He is not a victim. And that's what some people expect" (Evaristo qtd. in Gustar 2015, 444). Although Barry has been subject to racism in a predominantly white society in the 1950s, the novel deliberately focuses on his life in 2010, portraying him as a "[m]an of property. Man of style" (Evaristo 2013a, 134). Thus, Evaristo seeks to assess and write the lives of black Caribbean immigrants in London contrapuntally,[3] meaning from the perspective of an insider who is seen as an outsider by the predominantly white society.

Third, Barry's own perception of his role as a black man in a predominantly white society is shaped by a strong sense of masculinity and patriarchal beliefs. As Barry remarks about Morris (but could easily refer to himself), "he couldn't be a West Indian and not start a family – *man haf fe do wha man haf fe do*. Truth is, both of us was desperate to be anything other than we was" (ibid., 32, emphasis in the original). Both Barry and Morris lead a married life with children in London. In order to uphold his image as a strong, masculine head of the family,

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3 Edward Said coined the term "contrapuntal reading" in his 1993 work *Culture and Imperialism*. Examining how English literatures are grounded in imperial practices (1993, 51), Said introduces a way of resistance as a counterpoint to the dominant western discourse. "The point is that contrapuntal reading must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded" (ibid., 66-67).

Barry has to pay a high price: Being influenced by his imagination of what constitutes a Caribbean man, that is, a particular sense of masculinity, Barry does not dare to openly reveal his homosexuality and ongoing relationship to Morris (Karshay and Rostek 2016, 125). Barry is stuck in an unhappy marriage with Carmel, having neglected his "Morris-loving, sweet-loving, full-blooded, hot-blooded, pumping-rumping, throbbing organ of an uncontainable, unrestrainable, undetainable man-loving *heart*" (Evaristo 2013a, 17, emphasis in the original) for several decades. Yet, he still practises misogyny and homophobia, which function as markers of his performed heteronormativity (Karshay and Rostek 2016, 130). Barry's references to fellow gays as "pooftahs" (Evaristo 2013a, 45, 137) and to his wife as "the wife" (ibid., 6, 37, 129), "wifey" (ibid., 11, 41), or "Lady-Wife" (ibid., 15, 39) attest to the fact that "Barrington clearly practices queer sex, but glosses it in the language of heterosexuality to allow him to uphold the status quo" (Danaher 2018, 143). Barry's identity and his view on homosexuality are significantly shaped by his beliefs about society's norms and expectations about a Caribbean immigrant in London.

In light of his reliance on perceived social norms, it is extremely important to look at the society in which Barry finds himself. As Mark Stein remarks in his important study on *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (2004), "[t]he Black British novel of transformation [...]

is about the formation of its protagonist — but, importantly, it is also about the transformation of British society and cultural institutions" (2004, xiii, emphasis in the original). Barry's development is closely tied to a change in society and as such becomes possible only at a later stage of his life. Being openly homosexual has for a long time been quite dangerous: Barry reports about other homosexual men who had been abused (Evaristo 2013a, 114, 138), and even recounts his own experience of homophobic violence, having at one point been beaten up in a cemetery (ibid., 122). Yet, in the novel's 21st-century setting, London has changed and being gay is no longer a taboo.

Barry's development towards a more self-reflexive, openly homosexual man is initiated when he involuntarily comes out to his grandson Daniel and one of his friends, a Buju Banton fan,[4] because Barry is drunk: 'Yes, I am a cock-sucker,' I reply, just as quietly, just as sinisterly, not quite knowing how these words exited my mouth" (ibid., 196). Shocked about his statement, his words initiate a transformation. When Barry decides to come out to his daughter Maxine because the internal pressure of hiding his sexuality is too strong, she tells him how she already suspected a secret relationship with

4 The fact that Daniel's friend is a Buju Banton fan is relevant in this context as it is only because the boys play his music in Barry's house and he hears "something about killing a nasty batty boy" (Evaristo 2013a, 194) in Banton's lyrics. Barry becomes so angry he reveals his homosexuality to his grandson.

Morris. It is Maxine who introduces Barry and Morris to the gay scene in London and to the queer community. The gay scene in London is a safer space in which Barry might openly show his feelings for Morris with which Barry, however, is still uncomfortable as he has to learn to process his feelings first.

> For the first time in my life I got no doubt that everybody in the vicinity knows that me and Morris are 'gentlemen of doubtful virtue'. Ain't no fakery here. Lord, they *know* us. Oh my, I don't even know where to put myself because some of these fellas make such *prolonged* eye contact with me they should apply for a resident's parking permit. […] [Morris] grabs my hand and squeezes it for a few seconds. It is our first public display of physical affection in sixty years. (ibid., 246-247, emphasis in the original)

It is this initiation that prepares Barry for a new phase in his life in which he does not have to hide his sexuality and feelings for Morris any longer. Within the safer space of London's queer community, he is able to come out, "no *so-called* about it" (ibid., 274), and he realises that he becomes part of a group. As such, Barry goes through an initiation and is integrated into the LGBTQ* community of London which might be regarded as the ultimate achievement of his process of *Bildung*. However, he is still uncomfortable with his role in the community and only at the very end of the novel is confident enough to leave with Morris, "enjoy[ing] the vibes" (ibid., 307) without a strictly planned future in mind.

Queering Forms in Mr Loverman

Evaristo not only queers the *Bildungsroman* on the level of content but additionally reworks the classical formal characteristics of the genre. A striking formal feature that Evaristo uses to queer the classical form of the *Bildungsroman* is the split narrative between two characters. Whereas the classical form of the *Bildungsroman* centres around one homodiegetic narrator to follow his process of *Bildung*, the narrative of Mr Loverman oscillates between Barry and his wife Carmel, offering insights into the thoughts and feelings of both characters, portraying them both as victims of their marriage. As such, tied to Barry's development into a more self-reflexive man is also his realisation how his behaviour has hurt Carmel. After she returns from a trip to Antigua, where she buried her father and spoke to Morris' former wife, who tells her about their husbands' relationship, Barry apologises to her: "I felt the consequences of my actions. […] And I sorry. Carmel, I sorry" (Evaristo 2013a, 305). As to the inclusion of Carmel's voice, Evaristo reflects about her writing process:

> In presenting gendered power relations, and at times an arguably tongue-in-cheek misogynistic viewpoint, I needed to counter it with an oppositional, female (feminist) perspective. […] Her position remains subaltern and disadvantageous within the marriage, but we see how she has garnered strength and support in spite of it. (Evaristo 2013b, 354-355)

Whereas the chapters about Barry show the timespan of approximately one year, the chapters devoted to Carmel cover decades that reveal retrospections, which are told in a poetically and rhythmically constructed stream-of-consciousness technique with a speaker addressing Carmel, asking about her unhappiness in her marriage with Barry. Indeed, Evaristo has consciously devoted that narrative space to Carmel in order to highlight her emotional and social predicament. "The use of poetic compression, textual fragmentation and rhythmic patterning," Evaristo explains, "created a visual-emotional symbiosis that enabled me to plunge into the heart of Carmel's inner life, capturing huge swathes of time, intense feelings and transformational experiences" (ibid., 355). Although Carmel's chapters are much shorter in length and fewer in number than those narrated by Barry, her chapters are particularly powerful. The fragmented style, which Evaristo addresses, for instance, formally mirrors Carmel's inner state of disruption and her feelings of being lost. To give but one example, the third chapter devoted to Carmel, "Song of Prayer", begins *in medias res*, introducing the reader to Carmel's loneliness: "… on your own again, isn't it, Carmel? Let this night, praying up against your bed, waiting for him to come home, knowing he might not come home at all, but you can't help yourself, can you, acting like a right mug [i], as the English people say" (Evaristo 2013a, 142). The European form of the *Bildungsroman* has had significant implications for conveying concrete social norms

and communicating different ideas within the narrative frame: The linear, homodiegetic narration with which readers could identify has been the perfectly fitting form to make the readers learn from the protagonist's integration into society. With respect to *Mr Loverman*, the split narrative that gives voice to several, at times conflicting perspectives illustrates that there is not only one side of the coin. Additionally, this formal choice indicates and emphasises relationality in the sense that Barry's actions have an impact on his surroundings and that he cannot integrate into society without affecting his surroundings. Multi-perspectivity and polyphony are, however, not the only formal choices that Evaristo employs to challenge the ideologically charged genre of the *Bildungsroman*. As Evaristo herself asserts:

> The final novel is an adventure into form. It mixes things up – temporally, spatially, stylistically – zipping between narrative modes, chronologies and geographies. It eschews the linearity of more traditional Western fiction and resists other novelistic conventions such as a story told in three acts or a single narrative mode. (2013b, 356)

With such an experimental formal composition, Evaristo openly queers the classical Bildungsroman and evokes frictions to include cultural markers and invite transcultural exchange.

Besides stylistic adventures into forms of multi-perspectivity and polyphony, Evaristo queers the *Bildungsroman* with her composition of non-linear temporalities. She introduces queer temporalities that challenge the linear development of the protagonist which is especially characteristic of the western *Bildungsroman. Mr Loverman* constructs Barry's development as a non-linear process with ups and downs and illustrates the difficulty of a sequential, progressive development. Evaristo not only intertwines the past and the present but also illustrates how the past is always constitutive of the present. In this regard, as McCallum and Tuhkanen suggest, "the contingencies of the queer might be closer to the time of *kairos*, the moment of opportunity [rather than *chronos*, i.e. linear time]" (2011, 8-9). Evaristo's non-linear narrative structure produces frictions and enables the possibility of queer intervention and change.

One of the most prominent techniques Evaristo employs to queer the *Bildungsroman*, however, is her use of intertextual and intermedial references. Although there are many,[5] I focus on the novel's eponymous reference:

5 The intertextual references include, e.g., Shakespeare, James Baldwin, Derek Walcott, William Butler Yeats, Enoch Powell, Greek mythology, and Shabba Ranks. The diversity well-illustrates the heterogenous, transcultural connections that Evaristo establishes in her narrative. Additionally, Evaristo evokes queer relations within her intertextual references. Quoting James Baldwin in the epigraph of her novel, she introduces a queer space in which there is the possibility for change.

Shabba Ranks' song "Mr Loverman." Shabba Ranks, a Jamaican dancehall artist, is known for his strong sense of heteronormative masculinity, which he also boasts in his song "Mr Loverman[6]." A short extract from his lyrics read:

> A woman take a trip, she's coming from England
> To satisfy her soul you know that she wants a man.
> But...
> It's Shabba Ranks, she's buck upon
> A going make you explode just like a bomb
> Every hour, every minute man, every second
> Them call me Mr Loverman, they call me Mr lover
> I'm not gonna take it easy, you won't get away tonight
> […]
> (Shabba Ranks 1993)

Ranks' song is a typical representative of the genre of Jamaican Dancehall, which is deeply rooted in assertions of strong masculinity that are not seldom based on misogynist, violent, and homophobic language and attitudes (e.g., Cooper 1994; Farquharson 2005; Helber 2015). Partaking in this performance of racialised heteronormative masculinity, Shabba Ranks downgrades women in his lyrics and expresses homophobic attitudes in a TV interview, supporting his friend and fellow-artist

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6 Shabba Ranks' song was quite popular in Great Britain reaching the third place in the British single charts in 1993 (Official Charts Company). As such, Ranks could spread his homophobic ideas among a large audience.

Buju Banton, who had been attacked for the explicitly homophobic lyrics of his song "Boom Bye Bye"[7]. As Ranks states in the interview:

> Well right definitely right now […] from you forfeit the law of God Almighty, you deserve, cru-ci-fiction, most definitely […] the bible, I live by the concept of the bible, which is the righteousness of every human being and the bible stated that man should mul..ti..ply […] the multiplication is done by a male and a female" (qtd. in Hajimichael 2015, 118).

Justifying his homophobic attitudes with religious beliefs, Ranks perpetuates an explicitly hostile environment for non-heteronormative subjects in the Caribbean. In view of this, it is especially interesting to look at the intermedial reference established in Evaristo's novel. When Barry and Morris make love, Barry plays Ranks' song:

> While he [i.e., Morris] lies in a state of deliciously explicit and excited expectation of the delights I got in store, I close the curtains and put Shabba Ranks's 'Mr Loverman' into the tape-player on the bedside

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7 Joseph Farquharson remarks that "[a]lthough homophobia has been a feature of Jamaican culture for a long time now, the phenomenon really gained international attention in 1992 with the release of reggae/dancehall Faiya-bon artist, Buju Banton's 'Boom Bye Bye'. The song caused a major stir in the United States of America and Britain where homosexual lobby groups called for the song to be banned owing to its violent anti-homosexual content" (2005, 102-103).

> cabinet. Oh yes, Ranks might spout homophobic doggerel along with that batty-baiter Banton, but this one song is our perfect wine an grine theme tune. (Evaristo 2013a, 243, emphasis in the original)

In *Mr Loverman*, the inclusion of Shabba Ranks' song introduces a creative space for the representation of queer love (and sex) and thus explicitly subverts the ideology presented by Ranks himself. Jodie Taylor, in her study titled *Playing it Queer: Popular Music, Identity and Queer World-Making* (2012), asserts how "[t]hrough music, queers have made and remade worlds" (2012, 49). In the words of Taylor, "musicalized articulations of queer approaches to gender and sexuality reflect both the global mobility of cultural forms and local structures of feeling" (ibid., 54). In light of these observations, the European *Bildungsroman* is not only queered on the content-level by referencing and subverting heteronormative, homophobic lyrics but additionally by evoking extra-textual layers that produce new, fluid contexts in which queerness is entertained.

Queering the typical European *Bildungsroman* is lastly achieved by means of language politics and language subversion. Evaristo queers and creolises the dominant English language, infusing it with vernacular wording and grammar. At one point in the novel, Barry explains to his grandson Daniel how he has to learn to separate his Caribbean language from his English, as Daniel's

mother "got really pissed off when [Daniel] used to come back from here [i.e. Barry's place] sounding like [Barry]" (Evaristo 2013a, 172). Barry teaches his grandson that

'[s]peaking one tongue don't preclude excellence in another. But you got to treat patois as a separate language that you slip into when it's socially acceptable to do so. I can speak the Queen's when I feel like it. But most of the time I just do me own thing. Fear thee not, though, I know my syntax from my semiotics, my homographs from my homophones, and don't even get me started on my dangling participles.' (ibid., 173)

With her witty take on language, and standardised English in particular, Evaristo partakes in a tradition of postcolonial writing that is especially attuned to acknowledge English as a colonial language and to manipulate its implied hierarchies. As Birgit Neumann pointedly puts it,

[a] focus on the vernacular as an engine for Anglophone world literature takes us to the 1950s, when a number of Anglo-Caribbean, -African and -Indian writers, many of them temporarily or permanently located in London, started experimenting with language as a means of intervening in established regimes of representation. (2018, 246)

As Neumann states, vernacular languages in literary texts attest to processes of cultural decolonisation and question the role of English as an imperial language which had been enforced upon local populations (ibid., 246). Evaristo inscribes her narrative in this practice, challenging the normativity and hegemonic status of the English language, which is deeply rooted in imperial dominance. *Mr Loverman* is positioned within a literary tradition that questions "language prestige" (Mühleisen 2002, 8) and stirs up alternative, local forms of knowledge circulation. Exposing that the notion of 'one language' is closely tied to the idea of the nation state of the 18th and 19th century, Susanne Mühleisen asserts how "the contemporary nation is characterised by a polyphony of voices and their echos" (2001, 257). As such *Mr Loverman* is clearly positioned against 18th- and 19th-century ideologies with which also the European *Bildungsroman* has been imbued. By "revitaliz[ing] suppressed local knowledges" (Neumann 2018, 246), Evaristo challenges and queers the traditional form, opening it up for transcultural exchange without the imposition of artificial hierarchies.

Conclusion

Bernardine Evaristo's seventh novel *Mr Loverman*, as this study has shown, is a unique example of the potential of postcolonial subversion of a Eurocentric genre such as the classical *Bildungsroman*. To better understand the

queer potential of Evaristo's novel, it is vital to acknowledge the traditional form of the *Bildungsroman* as an inherently Eurocentric and imperial practice. *Mr Loverman* queers and perforates the genre on several levels, introducing fissures and frictions, opening the genre up for transcultural exchange and "tacitly decompos[ing] the authority of the metropolitan form" (Young 1996, 5). Evaristo's fundamental goal "to write back to the 'postcolonial' margins by taking a blatantly gay man from the periphery of the periphery and placing him downstage centre" and writing him as "*the othered other*, a minority within a minority" (Evaristo 2013b, 359, emphasis in the original) is most definitely achieved. Given the multiple and experimental axes on which Evaristo queers the genre, she questions the imposition of western values and worldviews onto a marginalised postcolonial subject.

Evaristo re-writes, experiments with, and successfully queers the genre of the *Bildungsroman* on both the levels of content and form. Barry Walker, seventy-four, black, and gay, is not the emblematic protagonist of the classical *Bildungsroman*. Queering expectations on the intersecting axes of age, race, and sexuality, Evaristo gives voice to a formerly marginalised subject, representative of those who have been excluded from representation, and inscribes those hitherto often lost stories into contemporary literary configurations of Great Britain. Challenging Britain's homogenous imagined communi-

ties (*sensu* Anderson 2006), "Evaristo forges a vision of polycultural interrelation which breaks beyond dichotomous distinctions between the local and the global, or between black history and white oppression, and so forth" (McLeod 2011, 171). *Mr Loverman* produces new forms of belonging, attesting to a pluralised and heterogenous society that has been shaped by entangled histories between Europe, the Caribbean, and beyond.

Queering the normatively implicated form of the classical *Bildungsroman*, Evaristo further uses multi-perspectivity, non-linear temporalities, and spatial disruptions to establish a wider network of forms that move beyond imperialist and Eurocentric constraints. Whereas the European *Bildungsroman* used to manifest a national genre, which in its formal composition maintained strict cultural boundaries, educating its readership about what it meant to be a subject of a certain community, Evaristo, in *Mr Loverman* "pursues the pathways of Afroeuropean history as a way of involving all her readers in a rethinking of Britain's polycultural relationship with Africa, the Americas and Europe" (ibid., 170). As such *Mr Loverman* entangles worldly histories whose centre is not always and not only Europe.

Such a "spatial synchronicity," as McLeod (ibid., 172), calls it is, according to him, characteristic of all of Evaristo's fiction. Imbued with the potential to create worlds, literary texts creatively respond to ongoing changes,

help its readers to navigate their environments and at the same time foster change by opening up new worlds and temporalities (Baumbach and Neumann 2020, 1-2; Neumann 2018, 242). *Mr Loverman* in particular renegotiates and disrupts the (imagined) world of homogenous London and introduces old, black, and queer individuals as an integral and formative part of society. Regarding Evaristo's clear positioning on a larger scale, she portrays postcolonial London as a cosmopolitan city that is inherently translocal and connected to multiple interwoven histories set outside the imperial centre.

Note:

i. It is interesting to observe that the chapters told by Barry are titled 'The Art of …' while Carmel's chapters all begin with 'Song of …'. As Danaher states, "[t]o master an art requires an approach that is well-informed, calculated and measured. By comparison, the melody and rhythm of song reflects a more instinctive expression of emotion" (2018, 133). Surely such associations need to be negotiated critically, as they threaten to enforce existing stereotypes about gender, i.e., the rational male versus the emotional female. Additionally, especially Carmel's chapters reveal a development in her person. The chapters are titled 'The Song of Sweetness,' 'Song of Despair,' 'Song of Prayer,' 'Song of Desire,' 'Song of Power,' and 'Song of Freeness,' and they represent her

development from a young woman in love, to a woman desperately lonely and longing for her husband's love, to a woman who has an affair with a colleague, to a woman who regains her strength and finally is able to live her life, freed from the shackles of marriage that both Barry and Carmel feel. In contrast to that, Barry's chapters are situated in the moment of the story, apparently regarding more trivial events, such as 'The Art of Being Normal' or 'The Art of Sunday Lunch.' Yet, also Barry's narrative and his development are mirrored in the chapter titles: 'The Art of Metamorphosis' or 'The Art of Being So Called' illustrate a change of his focus.

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Review of Reframing Postcolonial Studies: Concepts, Methodologies, Scholarly Activism, *edited by David D. Kim. Springer Nature Switzerland AG/Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, pp. 296. ISBN-13: 9783030527259; ISBN-10: 303052728X. Paperback. £99.99.*

Nele Grosch and Anne Stellberger

Reframing Postcolonial Studies: Concepts, Methodologies, Scholarly Activism, edited by David D. Kim (2021) showcases innovative contributions to postcolonial studies. This review critically evaluates and contextualizes each chapter against the claim of reframing postcolonial thought that the anthology makes. David D. Kim sets the tone for his introductory chapter ("Action! On Reframing Postcolonial Patrimony") as well as the anthology altogether by asking: "Which understanding of our postcolonial

patrimony is calling us to action now?" (1). Kim distinguishes a first generation of postcolonial theorists and critics during the 1980s and 90s, primarily in anglophone contexts, and a second, more global and interdisciplinary wave since the mid-90s. He defines postcolonial patrimony as a "critical consciousness of inheritance and legacy" (2) in order to "conceptualiz[e] how the lessons of past colonial, decolonial, and postcolonial activities [...] revitalize resilient, forward-looking initiatives in reparative justice" (5) both in academic and activist environments.

Kim applies these insights to a reading of *We Live in Silence* (n.d.) by Kudzanai Chiurai, a cinematic installation first exhibited in the Fowler Museum at UCLA in 2020. Kim demonstrates how considering (inter)generational contexts, and adopting new creative approaches to confront the colonial past and its present consequences, open up possibilities that reframe post- and decolonial discourses to envision more just and inclusive futures. While interweaving established theories by other scholars, such as Neil Lazarus, Kim proposes alternative readings of linkages between past, present, and future, that illuminate previously neglected interconnectedness of different geographies and histories. He argues that postcolonial studies should be reframed by new temporalities focusing on a hopeful future, intergenerationality, interdisciplinarity, and intersectionality. Imagining the future according to Kim is therefore "here and now" (24).

Combining the old and the new (e.g., concepts, methodologies, activism) is a recurring concern of subsequent chapters. The contributions address archives, memories, cultural inheritances, historical legacies, political responsibilities, and reparative actions, to reveal what has been hidden translocally and intergenerationally.

The promising aspiration to unite established theories with current socio-political shifts connects the contributions of this volume. However, as Graham Huggan states in the afterword, post- and decolonial studies "have always moved – sometimes all too quickly – with the times" (261) and have been frequently 'reframed'. While Kim's introduction envisions a hopeful future to highlight postcolonial studies' relevance to and need for social, political, and cultural change, Huggan's afterword underscores the importance of a meta-critical mindset and of scholarly debate turning into productive activism. Postcolonial studies must keep evolving, particularly within constantly changing global power structures. What, then, makes *Reframing Postcolonial Studies* so vital to the field? The structure – Part I: "Conceptual Vigilance," Part II: "Hybrid Methodologies," and Part III: "Action-Based Scholarships" – provides an answer, displaying a commitment to rigorous conceptual engagement, interdisciplinarity, and action, while enabling the chapters to speak with each other. By guiding rather than restricting, the structure creates a sense of continuity. The succession of chapters and nexus of topics reflects the thoughtful and sensitive editorial effort.

Time, Space, and Power

Hope and the future are two primary themes throughout the book. Bill Ashcroft's chapter ("Unlocking the Future: Utopia and Postcolonial Literatures") ties in with Kim's call for new temporalities. Arguing that working towards a hopeful future is urgent, particularly for forms of resistance, Ashcroft proposes various conceptualization of utopia as a vital contribution to liberation through imagination and transformation. Utopia here refers to "a vision of possibility that effects the transformation of social life, an imagined future that can be at once oppositional and visionary" (44), which must be detached from its nation-state-oriented origins and applied to post- and decolonial work.

Power structures are constantly questioned by proposed reframings of temporal and spatial hegemonies. The reimagining of past, present, and future towards a hopeful anticipation is not always made explicit: Yet, even if implicit, it is a crucial aspect for all chapters. In "On the Wings of the Gallic Cockerel," Susan Slyomovics, for example, describes the importance of provenance research based on the example of Algerian artist Ahmed Benyahia's statue of Algerian freedom fighter Youcef Zighoud (1921–1956). Slyomovics identifies postcolonial provenance as an examination of "artist and object biographies, artwork creativity, entangled shared heritages, and a global circulation of esthetic symbols"

(71) in imperial (French-Algerian) contexts and as a historical tool for investigating dis- and relocations of artworks. The practice of decolonial provenance research and resistance is demonstrated by the artist's inclusion of material of a former French war memorial – more precisely the wings of a Gallic cockerel – into the statue he created. Benyahia simultaneously "undermine[s] colonial practices and legacies while keeping them alive" (75), thereby integrating the inheritance of the past into the hope of the future, and embodying a postcolonial understanding of time as circular. Moreover, he underscores a postcolonial notion of utopia, as posed by Ashcroft and Kim.

In "Kinships of the Sea: Comparative History, Minor Solidarity, and Transoceanic Empathy," Emmanuel Bruno Jean-François writes on migrant movements in transoceanic spaces. He locates the power of transoceanic empathy and solidarity unfolding in literature and migrant stories by subaltern groups, when viewing them from a comparative historical perspective. Employing the concept of *longue durée*, he shows that changing history is both a geographical and a temporal act. Additionally, he applies the term 'mo(ve)ment', by which the inherent interdependence of time and space is verbalized. Jean-François argues that migration and "trespassing of boundaries […] express a shared desire of subaltern peoples to destabilize the fixity of assigned territories" (123), thereby disrupting the hegemonic relations in the

binary of Global North and South. This aim similarly rings true for Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee ("Re-charge: Postcolonial Studies and Energy Humanities") who proposes an alternative periodization based on the availability and development of energy resources. Mukherjee advocates an altered periodization considered not in an exclusively Westernized historical context, but rather in relation to the uneven distribution of capital, power, and energy resources between the Global North and South.

Renegotiations of power, time, and space in these chapters tie in with Ashcroft's understanding of non-national utopia as a space that anticipates liberation in Ernst Bloch's notion of *Heimat* (Bloch 1986; Zipes 1989), which "becomes the utopian form in postcolonial writing that replaces the promise of nation. It may lie in the future, but the promise of Heimat transforms the present" (Ashcroft 2021, 45). Similarly, Dominic Thomas employs the concept of denationalization ("Bibliodiversity: Denationalizing and Defrancophonizing Francophonie") to explain how French-speaking and -writing Africans decenter Francophonie from France, enabling them to use the language detached from colonization. Thomas hence adds the influence of language culture to the analysis of disrupting power structures between various spaces on a global scale.

Finally, Katrin Sieg ("Postcolonial Activists and European Museums") underlines recent developments in

museology as well as surrounding activism to include native and migrant specialists and activists in curating and provenance research processes to arrive at more intersectional and decolonial presentations of history. Working against hegemonic and linear understandings of time, museums can and should concurrently provide space for remembrance and the unlearning of white-washed, Westernized, and (we would like to add) male, hetero- and cis-normative histories. Exhibiting art and culture based on knowledge acquired by inclusion and collaboration essentially engenders "speaking with" and not "speaking for" postcolonial subjects, Huggan espouses in his afterword (266). All of the contributors in this section question the nation as a main reference for space interlinked with hierarchical temporal structures, presenting compelling (re)negotiations of temporal and spatial power relations in contemporary socio-political discourses.

Interdisciplinarity, Intergenerationality, Intersectionality

The importance and (over)representation of literary studies within postcolonial theory is repeatedly debated throughout the volume. While Huggan questions the celebrated interdisciplinarity in postcolonial studies, Ashcroft underlines the vitality of literature as "the seedbed of postcolonial studies" (46). Art and especially literature, according to Ashcroft, foster various imagina-

tion(s) of a better future and partake in transformation through utopian thinking or "social dreaming" (ibid.). As customary in postcolonial studies, in the essays at hand, the scholars deliberately discuss Creole, Indian, African, or other postcolonial literature from empowering and transformative perspectives, thereby highlighting the importance of considering knowledge and art from non-Western contexts. Alternatively, the collection proves the necessity of literary studies, while responding to calls for a growing interdisciplinarity.

The value of interdisciplinarity is exemplified by Afonso Dias Ramos' chapter ("From Cecil Rhodes to Emmett Till: Postcolonial Dilemmas in Visual Representation"), which analyzes visual representations of statues of Cecil Rhodes in Southern Africa as well as the story and picture of Emmett Till in the US. Dias Ramos argues for a necessary open-ended discussion on visual representations and their meaning in public spaces by raising questions of visibility and the dangers of exposure and appropriation. He traces the development of visual representation that first entailed mainly 'heroic' white colonizers, like Rhodes, but shifted towards showing the colonizers' victim, as in Till's case. In Frieda Ekotto's chapter ("Frantz Fanon in the Era of Black Lives Matter") another progression is outlined: In the Black Lives Matter movement, instead of exclusively portraying (Black) victims, the visual depiction of the (white) perpetrators has been centered in the name of account-

ability and justice. This employment of various and correlating analytical tools in the essays corresponds with the essentiality of cross-disciplinary scholarship.

In the introduction, Kim states his aim for the integration of already established theories into a new scaffold of postcolonial approaches, one example being feminist thought; Ekotto mentions the simultaneous fight for "LGBTQ rights" (256) as intersectional solidarity within the Black Lives Matter movement. Yet, chapters dedicated explicitly to gender and queer studies remain noticeably absent despite the abundance of research related to gender and queerness from postcolonial perspectives. There seems to be an opportunity missed here to engage with contemporary research (e.g. José Esteban Muñoz' theory of queer utopia in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* [2009]) that explores how a positive futurity intersects with both queer and postcolonial theory.

Furthermore, it is crucial to (re)think gender and sexuality within postcolonial contexts and vice versa. As Vrushali Patil and Jyoti Puri argue, "postcolonial sexualities include the sexual politics, knowledges, and identities that were forged or embattled during the colonial encounter and its postcolonial aftermath" based on European images and norms (2020, 62). Rigid gender roles, their binary interpretation and implementation, and the erasure of other (indigenous) genders are further examples of

harmful consequences of European colonial rule. The ongoing discourse and educational efforts on these subjects are realized not only by academic scholars but also on social media platforms. One of the most prominent figures, the writer and activist ALOK, continuously raises awareness on their Instagram account (e.g. by creating the movement #degenderfashion). With their recent book *Beyond the Gender Binary* (2020), they address intersections of power structures and discrimination, gender and sexuality, and their histories. It becomes apparent that postcolonial studies in attempting to reframe the field need to adapt to current socio-political and cultural climates and invite (queer) activists of online and offline spaces to the dialogue and the process of knowledge production.

Conclusion: Towards an Action-Based Postcolonial Scholarship

Similar to the present issue ("Rethinking Postcolonial Europe"), *Reframing Postcolonial Studies,* too, showcases analyses of European (and) postcolonial hegemonies, particularly in the chapters by Slyomovics, Thomas, Kössler, and Sieg. Essays on France and Germany as well as on numerous European museums in different metropoles, address specific European (post)colonial matters and consequences. However, cross-references can be made beyond explicit content. The need for critical awareness within European countries and the ac-

knowledgement of lasting colonial impacts on current socio-political, cultural, and economic inequalities and asymmetric hierarchies is underscored. Moreover, the edited volume attempts a powerful intervention in the postcolonial field by aiming to bridge the gap between scholarship and activism. In the context of "Rethinking Postcolonial Europe: Moving Identities, Changing Subjectivities," the reviewed volume illuminates paths towards scholarly activism and decolonial action.

To close, we want to underline the critical value of the action-based focus of research in *Reframing Postcolonial Studies* by highlighting two essays. In "Research in Solidarity? Investigating Namibian-German Memory Politics in the Aftermath of Colonial Genocide," Reinhart Kössler pursues this by active personal immersion into his research in Namibia. He investigates the Namibian and German present and (post)colonial relations focusing on cultural memory regarding the genocide against the Ovaherero and Nama between 1904 and 1908 in German Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia) by the German colonizers, and Germany's decade-long refusal to recognize these crimes. While he acknowledges the particularly delicate relation of his person (as a white German) to his Namibian friends and acquaintances, he also includes himself, his relationships, and emotions in his research and findings, thus breaking archaic structures established in the field of social studies, and combining his roles as scholar and activist.

An action-based focus is also reflected in Katrin Sieg's employment of current and urgent political examples. In her chapter, she discusses the controversy around the opening of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin and its ongoing colonial implications. The protests in Berlin against the so-called "Ethnological Museum and Museum of Asian Art" are persistent and increasing. The official opening ceremony at the end of September 2021 was accompanied by the author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's critical speech, which questioned both the name of the museum as well as the validity of Germany (still) curating stolen art from Africa (Adichie 2021, 1:11:29-1:11:36). She acknowledges Germany's decision to give back one of the Benin Bronzes as only the start of the action that must follow conversations and apologies (1:09:11-1:09:55). In this context, Adichie points out the correlation between hope and courage (1:12:15-1:12:46). This idea circles back to the introduction and the afterword of the anthology. Hope, characterised by anticipating a brighter future, and courage for working towards it, are both arguably important components of action.

Foregrounding the power of empathy and solidarity, *Reframing Postcolonial Studies* is a collection of convincing and thoughtfully edited arguments and ideas in hopeful pursuit of a future that is rooted in the belief in the importance of postcolonial studies, its constant development and reframing as well as being based in real world political issues that require action. This volume provides

multiple frameworks for scholarship-based activism and activist scholarship in post- and decolonial interdisciplinarity.

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