# Connecting Europe:
# Postcolonial Mediations

## Sandra Ponzanesi

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**Cover:**

Paul Klee (1879-1940): *Twittering Machine* (*Die Zwitscher-Maschine*), 1922.
New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).
Watercolor, and pen and ink on oil transfer drawing on paper, mounted on cardboard;
comp. sheet 16 1/4 x 12' (41.3 x 30.5 cm), mount sheet 25 1/4 x 19' (63.8 x 48.1
cm). Purchase. 564.1939.

*Far more then they fight, cultures coexist and interact fruitfully with each other (Said 2004: xiv)*

# CONNECTING EUROPE: POSTCOLONIAL MEDIATIONS

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*A journalist once asked Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi: "Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western civilization?" to which Gandhi replied: "I think it would be a good idea."[1]*

We live in troubled times. Confronted by a refugee crisis, a crisis magnified by media sensationalism and political opportunism, Europe cowers and vacillates. New fences spring up, old borders are re-established and Fortress Europe implodes into a multitude of mini-fortresses, behind whose walls, in the name of national security, long-cherished European ideals are abandoned and hard-won civil liberties eroded or simply ignored.[2]

So, borrowing the words of political philosopher Étienne Balibar, addressing the Greek crisis in the *The Guardian* in 2010, we can surely ask: "is Europe a dead political project"? Or is it "an unfinished adventure", as the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2004) has proposed in a more utopian vein? "Where does Europe begin and end?" asks Stuart Hall (Hall 2003: 35). In the midst of current global frictions, what is the point of Europe (Ponzanesi 2016: 159)?

# 1. POSTCOLONIAL EUROPE

My claim today is that we cannot answer these questions unless we engage with Europe from a postcolonial perspective.[3] Postcolonialism, like many other 'posts', signifies continuity as much as a break, the failed attempt to move beyond histories to which it remains painfully locked. And it is not just about the peripheries, the outposts of empires and their aftermath: Europe itself is a postcolonial location, deeply entangled in colonial legacies. As Engin Isin (2016) insisted in his recent keynote speech at our conference on Postcolonial Intellectuals, there is not a 'here' and a 'there', but a postcolonial condition in which we are all together.[4] He recalled Hannah Arendt, not normally considered a postcolonial thinker yet certainly ahead of her time when in the preface to the *Origins of Totalitarianism* she writes:

> We can no longer afford to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage, to discard the bad and simply think of it as a dead load which by itself time will bury in oblivion. The subterranean stream of Western history has finally come to the surface and usurped the dignity of our tradition. This is the reality in which we live. And this is why all efforts to escape from the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past are vain (1958: ix).[5]

Therefore we cannot just selectively pick and choose what we think makes Europe exceptional and remove 'inconvenient' truths. Yet as a society we persistently refuse to remember the outrages of a colonialism whose nefarious long-term effects still shape the world around us. This will not change in the immediate future. The current outbursts of racism and xenophobia in Europe make that clear.

So one of the tasks of postcolonialism is to remind us how legacies of the past still linger in contemporary constellations. However, it is more than that. As Graham Huggan writes:

> Postcolonialism … looks forward … to a time when its own interventionist tactics will no longer be needed; to a time when the neo-imperial world order it currently describes, and implicitly resists, will have been definitely transformed (Huggan 2008: 248).

I want therefore to embrace here the definition of postcolonialism as aspirational, a discipline that challenges us to develop new tools to help us account for the increasing complexity of our ever more interconnected

world. But how do we do this? The strategy I propose to you today is that of connecting: connecting people, connecting disciplines and connecting media landscapes in order to forge new cosmopolitan imaginaries that might lead to a more sustainable and viable Europe.

## 2. CONNECTIONS

The word 'connection' also applies to this new chair that I proudly accept today: Gender and Postcolonial Studies, a new chair with an ambition to incorporate gender issues into the realm of postcolonial studies and vice versa, to permit a postcolonial intervention in the field of gender studies.

In my various roles as Professor of Gender and Postcolonial Studies at the Department of Media and Culture Studies, as head of the Humanities department at Utrecht University College (UCU) and as principal investigator of a European project, it is my task to connect institutions. As an academic, I connect gender and postcolonial studies to other disciplinary areas: Europe, migration studies, cinema, (new) media studies, the cultural industry and conflict studies. And, crucial to my thinking, I contend that Europe, if it is to create new imaginaries for its future, must first reconnect with its own imperial past and rewrite its history, accounting for deleted or omitted viewpoints. By creating connections and contact zones between disciplines and fields of study that would otherwise not enter into dialogue with one another, it becomes possible to generate new forms of analysis and different perspectives on issues with very different histories and traditions.

## 3. MEDIATIONS

As with 'connection', the word 'mediation' used in my title has multiple resonances: both technological and political. The concept of mediation has been widely discussed by media scholars (see Chouliaraki 2013; Couldry 2008; Deuze 2012; Lash and Lury 2007; Livingstone 2009; Silverstone 2002; Silverstone 2005). Here I want to highlight the transformative role of the media in the context of postcolonial studies.

Mediation relates to the processes by which a culture manifests itself, both explicitly and through unspoken assumptions, via various media outlets: literature, journalism, cinema, art, and increasingly digital me-

dia. It also means that reality is never immediate or 'out there', but always filtered through the medium that conveys it. As Marshall McLuhan (1964) famously said: "The medium is the message." But mediation also implies the role of a mediator, an impartial body (if such a thing is possible) which, in striving towards a peaceful solution, attempts to negotiate common ground between opposing, contending parties.

The field of postcolonial mediation thus combines two notions: that of the postcolonial view, which has mediated and displaced the stability of discourses on culture, identity and politics; and the notion of mediation as the way in which these processes are conveyed through different media.[6] So let me take you on a tour by connecting Europe through different forms of postcolonial mediation.

## 4. POSTCOLONIAL CINEMA

In my work on Postcolonial cinema I bring two previously separate disciplinary fields into alignment: cinema and postcolonial studies.

The medium of cinema, born in the late nineteenth century at the zenith of Europe's imperial past, and just as photography had done previously, implicated new technologies in the representation of the other. It is therefore unsurprising that early films contributed to specific ways of seeing and in doing so legitimized the domination of the colonies. Colonial images of gender, race and class carried ideological connotations which, in depicting natives—in documentary or fiction films—as primitive, savage and excluded from modernity, confirmed imperial epistemologies and racial taxonomies (see Codell 2012; Shohat 2006a; Shohat 2006b; Shohat and Stam 1994; Wiegman 1998).

Postcolonial cinema is a new field of study that proposes a decolonized and de-orientalized engagement with the visual: a mode of representation which breaks down the *grands récits* and opens up a space for that which is often repressed, omitted or deleted—the unofficial histories of nations, communities, gender and subaltern groups. Postcolonial cinema is therefore to be understood not as a new genre or a new rubric, but as an optic through which questions of postcolonial historiography, epistemology, subjectivity and geography can be addressed.[7] Postcolonial mediations have changed through time by shifting the subjects and objects of representation. To illustrate this, I will deal first with a classic example

**Fig. 1 (Bosambo) Paul Robeson.** *Sanders of the River* **(dir. Alexander Korda, UK, 1935. London Film Production).**

of postcolonial cinema and then with a more contemporary example.

*The Battle of Algiers* is one of the most iconic films in the history of cinema. Even though it was made before postcolonialism became an officially accepted discipline in academia, *The Battle of Algiers* is definitely a 'classic' postcolonial film. It was made in 1966 and is based on events that took place between November 1954 and December 1957, during the Algerian struggle for independence from the French (1954-1962), one of the bloodiest decolonial wars of all time. Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, a Marxist Italian filmmaker, the film is based on the memories of one of the leaders of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), Saadi Yacef, who also starred in the film.[8] Its portrayal of the French military and its semi-documentary-style scenes of torture caused it to be banned by the French government upon its release (Caillé 2007).

*The Battle of Algiers* has been hailed by many, not only as a work of art that challenges the notion of the documentary, but also as a model for both insurgency and counterinsurgency tactics (Harrison 2007a; 2007b).

**Fig. 2** *Samia Kerbash (one of the girls). Algerian woman passing 'as French' at the French checkpoint to exist the Kasbah carrying a bomb. **The Battle of Algiers** (dir. Gillo Pontecorso, Italy/Algeria, 1966. Igor Film).*

It was used as a training film for the Black Panthers and other liberation movements, and was screened by the Pentagon in 2003 when resistance to the American occupation in Iraq developed into guerilla insurgency with increased bombings and acts of sabotage—tactics portrayed in *The Battle of Algiers* (O'Riley 2010).

A more recent film, one which also relates to France's colonial involvement in Algeria, is Michael Hanneke's *Caché/Hidden* (released in 2004). Georges and Anne are a sophisticated French couple living in a chic neighbourhood in the centre of Paris. He is a TV talk show host; she works in publishing. Their comfortable existence is disturbed when mysterious video tapes containing footage of their own home arrive in the post accompanied by a disturbing childish drawing showing a head with blood, coloured in red, coming out of the mouth. As more and more tapes arrive, Georges begins to suffer recurring nightmares and flashbacks, which lead him to suspect that the tapes are related to an incident in his childhood that he had forgotten about. In a fit of jealousy, not wanting to share his privileges, he had managed to stop his parents adopting a small boy, Majid, who was then sent to an orphanage instead. The disappearance of Majid's parents is linked to events in Paris in 1961, when a peaceful demonstration organized in support of the Algerian cause, highlighted in *The Battle of Algiers*, turned into a bloodbath: more than 200 bodies

**Fig. 3 Juliette Binoche (Anne) and Daniel Auteuil (Georges).** *Caché/Hidden* **(dir. Michael Haneke, 2005, France. France 3 Cinema, Canal +, Bavaria Film and Vega Film).**

were thrown into the Seine. The incident was subsequently erased from both police archives and the national memory.

The anonymous tapes signify not only the 'repressed' past coming to haunt the present, but also a new visual language that unsettles the field of control and mastery and reverses the gaze.[9] As the tapes increasingly disrupt their lives, Georges, keeping his suspicions from an increasingly frustrated Anne, seeks out Majid, who now lives a marginalized existence in a high-rise block of flats on the outskirts of Paris. After several confrontations, Georges has literally to face Majid's violent suicide in a dramatic and shocking escalation. Georges is now compelled to take responsibility for the past, a responsibility which shatters for ever his comfortable bourgeois existence. By extrapolation, France too must confront its demons and take responsibility for its own 'hidden' past.[10]

*Caché* offers one example of how postcolonial cinema can initiate new ways of questioning reality, history, memory and identity.[11] Films such as this take into account the notion of Europe in deep time, by which I mean a contemplation of the present through an awareness of many, diverse entanglements—historical, disciplinary, mediatic and institutional.[12]

We should therefore take up the challenge to step out of the comfort zone of academia and move "into the deeper, more complex world of real

issues, real problems and, sometimes, real, raw violence" as Andrew Hussey (in Reisz 2016) has urged us to do. Therefore, let us move into the realm of journalism to see how the postcolonial perspective can intervene in the politics of the representation of current affairs (Hall 1997).

## 5. POSTCOLONIALISM IN 'DEEP' TIME

On 7 January 2015, two gunmen forced their way into the Paris headquarters of *Charlie Hebdo* and opened fire on staff, security workers and visitors. Twelve people were killed, several others wounded.

Re-enacting the opposition between East and West, as premised by Edward Said, the attack was instantly framed as Islamic, coming from outside to disrupt Western ideals of freedom of speech and democracy. French migrants were called upon to align themselves against the perpetrators and to endorse the slogan "je suis Charlie". However, it quickly became clear that the two gunmen were not foreign jihadi terrorists but French citizens: two brothers, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, born in France to Algerian immigrant parents. This was not an attack by 'alien' forces but a home-grown French drama.

Following the attacks the British journalist Robert Fisk (2015) wrote: "Charlie Hebdo: Paris attack brothers' campaign of terror can be traced back to Algeria in 1954. Algeria is the post-colonial wound that still bleeds in France." Fisk claims we cannot make sense of the present unless we account for the colonial legacies. He complains that headlines of massacres and devastation too often focus on the 'who' and 'how', but very rarely on the 'why', which would require an engagement with a deeper why.[13] He goes on to call on "all newspaper and television reports [to] carry a 'history corner', a little reminder that nothing—absolutely zilch—happens without a past".

After the Paris massacre of November 2015, Vijay Prashad (2015) argued:

> The temptation is to blame religion or race, to take the eye off more substantial areas of investigation. Amnesia is the order of the day. Each terror attack on the west resets the clock.

It is therefore important to remind ourselves, as Gilroy puts it, that in these confrontations "Europe's undigested colonial history" still manifests itself and resurfaces in the influential interpretative framework pro-

vided by the concept of a clash of civilizations (2016: xi). As Mark LeVine (2015) writes: "The problem is that this system is hundreds of years old, implicates most everyone, and has only become more entrenched in the last several decades as the world has become ever more globalised."[14]

## 6. GENDER AND POSTCOLONIALISM

We should not forget that this unprocessed history is also gendered; and neither should we assume that a postcolonial engagement automatically implies that issues of emancipation will be safeguarded. Let me explain this by going back to the two films previously discussed.

Although female combatants played a crucial role in the Algerian war, doing far more than just carrying bombs, in *The Battle of Algiers* women are denied agency and appear on screen for a mere 15 of the film's 121 minutes.[15] In *Caché* the tapes also intrude into Anne's life, but Georges adamantly refuses to let her into the 'secrets of his past', as if his 'colonial guilt' does not implicate her too. In recent events, such as Charlie Hebdo and the Paris attacks of 13 November 2015, there is little room for the role of women, or for any analysis of the masculinization of violence.[16]

Elsewhere, I have dealt at length with the role of female combatants in colonial times and the connections to the role of contemporary female suicide bombers (see Ponzanesi 2014a). So today I will limit myself by returning to the Paris massacre of last November to dwell on something that has largely escaped serious media analysis.

On 18 November 2015, in the aftermath of attacks in Paris, police raided a flat in Saint-Denis in search of the suspected mastermind, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who subsequently died after a long gun battle.[17] Alongside him died a woman, Hasna Aït Boulahcen, the daughter of Moroccan immigrants. She had become radicalized a few months previously and was seen leading Abaaoud into the flat just hours before the police raid. Initial reports suggested that she had blown herself up, causing her to be dubbed in the popular media as "the first female suicide bomber on European soil". This was later retracted when it became clear that she was strapped into the suicide vest by somebody else. Yet, in the space of the two days when Boulahcen was presumed to be the bomber, the media completely deconstructed, attacked and tore apart her identity and character. Echoing the misogynistic discourse that casts women as

VIDEO. Kamikaze de Saint-Denis : ce que l'on sait d'Hasna Aït Boulah…

**Fig. 5 /mages of Hasna Aït Boulahcen circulating in media reports after her death.**

passive victims of male perpetrators, Boulahcen was robbed of agency and characterized as 'fragile', 'vulnerable', 'brainwashed' and 'drugged'.[18]

As in many other cases of female suicide bombers, women's agency is "explained through personal rather than political motivations, often re-confirming patriarchal and orientalising patterns" (Ponzanesi 2014a: 82). In the drama so beloved of the sensationalist Western media, and charac-terized by Spivak as a story of "white men [wanting to save] brown wom-en from brown men" (1988: 297), a 'weak-minded' Boulahcen becomes, in the hypermasculine game of warfare, just another weapon in the male arsenal. I am reminded of the French Marianne and of the Statue of Lib-erty, and of the words of Anne McClintock (1991) who has so cogently argued that women are often the symbol of national formation but rarely their subject.

## 7. POSTCOLONIAL MEDIATIONS

We have looked at two forms of mediation—postcolonial cinema and the 'mediation' of current events as discussed through journalistic accounts. However in a age of social media, forms of reporting and of witnessing have changed drastically. One of the key areas is how digital images of migration, suffering and conflict travel and connect through different de-vices and audiences.

Images do not have one fixed meaning, they have a wide range of potential meanings. In addition, thanks to increasingly sophisticated portable devices with high-quality cameras, images may undergo multiple transformations in their trajectory through diverse media and time zones: they are tweeted and retweeted, posted, reposted and remediated, on Instagram, Facebook or Flickr, reappearing in new contexts, on a variety of screens and technological devices. Images are appropriated, used and abused for a multitude of purposes—political, satirical or to promote solidarity—acquiring *en route* not only new meanings, but also new effects and affects (see Zarkov 2007; Zarzycka 2013a; Zarzycka 2013b; Zarzycka 2013c).

It is therefore vital to engage in dialogue on how certain images can be contested and re-signified through others. No doubt you will all remember the photo of the three-year-old boy Aylan Kurdi washed up on the beach of Bodrum in Turkey, fully clothed, his shoes still on, lying in a kind of foetal position, being washed by the waves, as if still asleep. The image, an image of distant suffering, as Luc Boltanski (1999) would call it, provoked an international outcry and generated a Europe-wide wave of emotion and compassion, and a whole campaign of support and solidarity, invoked in the name of a common humanity and human rights. Lilie Chouliaraki argues that such campaigns are informed by the

> traditional affective regimes of humanitarian communication, namely guilt, shame and indignation, or empathy and gratitude. They do so, however, in ways that evoke these regimes not as immediate emotions that may inspire action but rather as objects of contemplation to be reflected upon (2013: 71).

Yet, as well as unleashing support, the image of Aylan was also rapidly manipulated, in the form of hypertextual citations travelling on social media across uncontrolled and uncontrollable trajectories. On Mediterranean beaches from Rabat to Gaza, outraged beachgoers restaged the image. In another remediation, human rights activist and artist Ai Weiwei had himself photographed on a Greek beach lying in the same pose as Aylan.[20] In satirical takes, many from *Charlie Hebdo* itself, we see the poor child stranded just out of reach of a McDonalds; in another we see a Christian able to walk on water and a Muslim drowning;[21] and after the events of Cologne, another more macabre cartoon depicts Aylan as the grown-up he might have become, a bearded Muslim harassing European women.[22]

**Fig. 6 Aylan Kurdi, 'honte' (shame). In *Le Monde*. 'L'hommage à Aylan Kurdi en dessins' (Homage to Aylan Kurdi through drawings).**[19]

Images can also undergo other sorts of digital transmutation: an image can be simply transferred but it can also be resized, cropped, pixelated, compressed, or reformatted. Particularly in the contexts of suffering and appeals to solidarity, such re-mediations can raise cultural concerns about authenticity, and challenge the mainstream media's narratives of 'truth' in both its reporting and gatekeeping practices. It is important to account for these images because, as they travel across contexts and media, compressing space and time, blurring the boundaries between the local and the global, and changing modes of engagement between victims and spectators (Azoulay 2012; Butler 2012; Chouliaraki 2006; Gillmor 2004; Zarzycka forthcoming) they shape how distant (primarily Western) audiences rethink their position vis-à-vis images of otherness across transnational borders (Appadurai 2006; Bauman 2007; Mitchell 1992; Sontag 2003).

## 8. THE CONNECTED MIGRANT

The European refugee crisis is the first of its kind in a fully digital age. It is the task of this chair, Gender and Postcolonial Studies, to take this on board and, by accounting for how migrants and postcolonial subjects construct their own narratives and produce their own (new) mediations, change the parameters through which they are represented and framed.

While the internet and globalization hold out dreams of a world free of borders, new physical borders reappear in Europe. In this paradoxical constellation a new type of migrant is knocking on the door:[23] the 'connected migrant' clutching that most precious of modern lifelines, the ubiquitous and versatile smartphone (Diminescu 2008).

Connected migrants determine their routes via Google Maps and GPS, WhatsApp each other about the opportunities and dangers ahead, adapt their paths according to the information received, document their travels on Instagram and send their first selfies to their families back home. With each border crossing, there is a race to find a new satellite signal, local SIM card or public Wi-Fi network. Almost as much as food and shelter, the connected migrant needs electricity, a socket to recharge the smartphone's battery. This has made heroes of some local residents, like Brigitte Lips in Calais who, by allowing new migrants to re-charge their smartphones, enable them to connect with friends and family in the so-called 'digital diasporas'.

The notion of diaspora refers to postnational spaces that unlock the fixed relationship between territory, nationhood and state. Diasporic subjects must negotiate with conflicting politics: of home and abroad, tradition and emancipation, ethnic belonging and metropolitan fusion. The itinerary of migrants is therefore, as Paul Gilroy (1993) wrote, both 'rooted' and 'routed,' and it indicates a myriad process of cultural fissures and fusion that must be constantly situated and embodied.

Whilst traditional concepts of diasporas have been widely studied in relation to 'identity', key questions relating to the notion of digital diasporas remain under explored and under theorized (Brah 1996; Hall 1993; Safran 1991). A digital diaspora (also known as an 'e-diaspora' or 'virtual diaspora') is an electronic migrant community whose interactions are made possible through 'new' technologies of communication (Axel 2004; Diminescu 2012; Everett 2009; Leurs 2015; Leurs and Ponzanesi 2011).

Social-networking sites offer a 'safe space' for participants to negotiate their sense of self and express their hybrid identities or to demarcate what it means to be a member of any given diaspora (Brinkerhoff 2009).

Some research suggests that diasporas often use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype and Tumblr to help to fill the social void in participants' 'offline' life and, in doing so, build online communities that thus support integration into host countries (Diminescu, Jacomy and Renault 2010; Ridings and Geffen 2004). Alternatively, the digital diasporas of other migrant populations, minorities perhaps, or endangered groups, use the internet connections with their homeland and native culture to reinforce and strengthen their ethnic ties (Poster 1998). This sort of online exchange is said to encapsulate ethnic groups into themselves instead of developing cosmopolitan features.

There is thus an urgent need to advance our understanding of the consequences of digital(ized) cultures for participation, citizenship and intercultural communication (Bernal 2014; Christensen, Jansson and Christensen 2011; Gajjala 2012; Georgiou 2006; Leurs and Ponzanesi 2011; Ponzanesi and Leurs 2014).
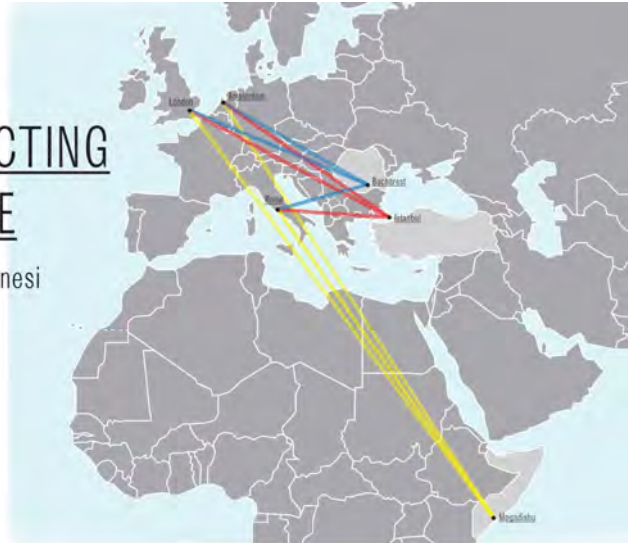
## 9. CONNECTING EUROPE

So one of the tasks of the chair of Gender and Postcolonial studies as I see it is to search for and create a language of scholarship that can address the multi-layered and hyper-mediated complexities of the postcolonial landscape with all its interweaving narratives of race and gender.

In the coming five years, the ERC consolidator project 'Digital Crossings in Europe: Gender, Diaspora and Belonging' (CONNECTINGEUROPE) will allow us to explore the role that digital technologies, especially social media, play in the lives of migrants. We will focus on how, via 'digital diasporas', migrants create 'communities of belonging' to reaffirm connections with their homelands, but also to establish new relations in the host countries. By examining diasporic networks and their use of internet and social-networking sites—Twitter, WhatsApp, Flickr, Facebook—we will explore how digital participation can facilitate cultural encounters, social cohesion, intercultural communication and emancipation in Europe, as well as how, conversely, it can lead to forms of resistance, retreat and alternative discourses of Europeanness and European identity.

**Fig. 7 ERC Consolidator Project "Digital Crossings in Europe. Gender, Diaspora and Belonging". (CONNECTINGEUROPE). Grant Number 647737. Design: Asher Boersma**

To address three different patterns of migration and European integration often played out around urban centres, the project has selected the diasporas of three different groups of female migrants, from Somalia, Turkey and Romania, living in three of Europe's most important metropolitan centres, London, Amsterdam and Rome (Balibar 2004; Georgiou 2013). The Somali experience reflects patterns from Europe's imperial past; the Turkish experience patterns of post-war labour migration; the Romanian experience patterns of post-socialist movement.

This tripartite comparison is of pivotal importance for capturing the geographical and historical multi-layeredness of Europe in its engagement with past colonial expansion, current administrative enlargement into Eastern Europe and the possible future opening-up to non-European countries such as Turkey. The aim is to contribute new theoretical, methodological and empirical understandings of how these new mediated migrations effect new constructions of belonging and European identity.

The project focuses on women for two reasons: firstly because of the increasing feminization of migration, and secondly because women
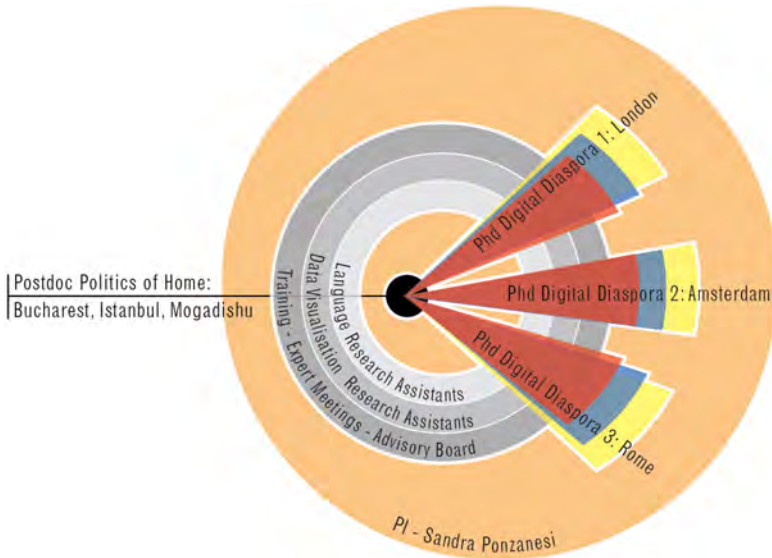
**Fig. 8 CONNECTINGEUROPE. Design: Asher Boersma**

are traditionally less visible in the public sphere. A study of their online practices allows us to tap into their everyday experiences and emotions, something that usually remains under the radar of mainstream media and public debate.

And this brings me to the second aspect that this project will tackle: emotions and affects. Up to now, the role of emotions has in general been sidestepped and evaded—both in migration studies and digital media studies. Migration studies treat migration largely as a socio-economic process with political repercussions. Even Arjun Appadurai's (1996) stimulating analysis of transnationalism's dialectic traffic between the local and the global via ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes overlooks the power of emotions, feelings and affects to shape the imagined world we inhabit, where images and narratives, which I would like to term 'affectscapes', co-construct an idea of Europe and its reinvention.

Why do people want to migrate? What makes them think of Europe as a better place? What are their expectations before departure? How are those expectations matched after arrival? What does it mean to stay be-

hind? By asking questions such as these, we will explore how online and offline communication is shaped in the dynamics of migration, not only by rational and material drives but also by desires, aspirations and love, and affect (Ahmed 2004; Garde-Hansen and Gorton, 2013; Karatzogianni and Kuntsman 2012; Leurs 2014; Witteborn 2014). This will contribute towards a new vision of Europe: Europe as a multidirectional site that accounts for different histories, different geographies and new forms of belonging.

Our approach, encompassing an analysis of text, video, music and photographs, challenges us to rethink the dynamics of mediation, whilst we have become increasingly interested in how, through online culture, emotion is mobilized and reformatted as transmittable and networked. In this way, by combining perspectives from the social sciences and the humanities and by integrating cutting-edge digital tools with more established approaches such as virtual ethnography, photo elicitations and discourse analysis, the project proposes a new critical take on the development of digital humanities, towards the further development of postcolonial digital humanities.[24]

This can be achieved by combining perspectives from postcolonial studies, with its long track record in theorizing migration and diasporas, with new media discourses on virtual identities and communities (Fernández 1999; Nayar 2010; Odin 1997). A combined approach can yield useful insights into the understanding of migration, diaspora and identity, in order to avoid what Nakamura defines as "cosmetic multiculturalism" (2002: 21). This refers to the utopian myth created by the technology industry of the democratic power of the internet and the opportunities for the levelling and elision of differences, gaps and divides (Amin 2010; Daniels 2012; Franklin 2013; Sharma 2013; Stoler 2013). There is a clear need to decolonize digital products, behaviour and activities. Postcolonial digital humanities disrupt the traditional narrative of technological progress, one which intrinsically upholds a universal model of humanity and participation.[25]

This ERC project therefore adds not just a postcolonial take on the digital humanities but transforms, transposes and translates our way of conceiving the humanities as a field which, concomitantly shaped by spatial, technological and emotional dimensions, informs the individual and the institutional in very specific ways. It aims to show that the intensification of migratory flows and the advent of digital technologies have not only

made Europe's borders more porous and permeable, but also ensured that European identities are no longer either locatable or one-sided, and that we cannot just keep people 'in place'. Accounting for diasporas and the affective turn reveals not only how distance can be bridged through love and digital technologies, but further how Europe can be imagined, desired and feared from outside its boundaries.

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

I would like to conclude with some final remarks to substantiate my idea of Europe as aspirational. Not as a Europe that is becoming an EU-Topia or an EU-Phoria, but rather as a space that can be infused with new energy and a new sense of direction. There are a multitude of inspirational artworks that both hold up the mirror of truth to Europe and point us towards the bright future of Bauman's "unfinished project".[26] By way of conclusion I would like to focus upon two real-life incidents to which Gilroy refers in his preface to our latest book, *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe*, which I co-edited with Gianmaria Colpani. Echoing Hannah Arendt's notion of "the banality of evil", Gilroy refers to these two incidents as examples of what he calls "the banality of good".[27]

Two days after the Hebdo shootings, Amedy Coulibaly took a number of Jewish people hostage in a kosher supermarket in the Porte de Vincennes and murdered several of them. As the assault began, Lassana Bathily, a 24-year-old Malian worker, hid some of the shoppers in the supermarket's walk-in cold-storage unit. Initially held by the police as a terrorist accomplice, he was later declared a national hero and granted French citizenship.

The second example occurred in Greece. In April 2015 on the island of Rhodes, Antonis Deligiorgis, a 34-year-old Greek soldier, was drinking coffee in a seafront café when a ship overloaded with 93 migrants struck the rocks off the beach. Deligiorgis plunged into the water and in an Herculean effort rescued 20 drowning Syrians and Eritreans.

As Gilroy so poignantly writes:

> This banal example can be part of the wider struggle to endow a sense of reciprocal humanity in Europe's proliferating encounters with vulnerable otherness. More is indeed being recovered from the waves than wreckage and corpses. Europe's relationship with its own civilization is at stake in the decision to intervene [...] (2016: xxii).

In these inhospitable times, the effort we are making with a postcolonial Europe is to show that new connections and imaginaries are not only desirable, but are in fact already happening. Besides Gilroy's examples there are many more. We have already referred to Brigitte Lips, the woman in Calais who, day after day, recharges the phones of migrants in the Calais jungle, and there are of course many more examples of everyday 'banal solidarity' that remain below the radar of media coverage.

So, in an age of global mobility, let us not be fooled into thinking that we can keep people 'in place'. If, in this highly interconnected postcolonial world, we want to envision a common cosmopolitan future, we need to face the reality that there is not a 'here' and a 'there', but rather a continuum in which we are all involved and implicated.

## Words of gratitude

I would first like to extend my thanks to the Executive Board, the Rector Magnificus and the dean of Humanities, Keimpe Algra, for the trust they have placed in me with this chair.

I first came to Utrecht University in 1990, with a grant from the University of Bologna, to attend the first ever summer course on 'Dutch Culture and Society'. Very young professors like Wiljan van den Akker and Rosi Braidotti came to enlighten us on various aspects of 'Dutch life'. The rest is history, as you may well know. Depending on how you interpret my 'anagraphic data', I have for many years been a foreigner, a migrant, an expat, a dual citizen or a cosmopolitan in the Dutch system. Thanks to several scholarships and grants I have had an intense and rich international academic life. I feel privileged to have a career in academia, which is for me both a profession and a never-ending passion.

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May the force be with you!


Ik heb gezegd…

# NOTES

1 One of the sources that contains this celebrated acerbic quote is attributed to the CBS News Special, 'The Italians,' a media documentary broadcast on 17 January 1967. It is also included in Fred R. Shapiro (2006: 299).

2 In his book *We, the People of Europe*, Balibar uses the term 'European apartheid' (2004: 121) to point to the types of exclusions that are not only applied at the level of legislation but also function as a way in which Europe is constructed as a concept. He argues that borders have not vanished; rather they have been replaced by multiple invisible 'internal borders' that mark new forms of inclusion and exclusion based on linguistic, racial, ethnic and religious divisions (2004: 108-113). In this sense he noticed that borders are moving from the physical (the gate to European territories and citizenship) and the symbolic (the myth of Europe and its idea of superiority) to material borders (the marked bodies of foreigners, immigrants and asylums seekers), which become 'border' figurations (constructions of otherness, foreignness, alienness) (Ponzanesi 2011: 3). Making a different point, Wendy Brown (2010) has argued that the proliferation of borders or the creation of new walls is not a resurgent expression of nation-state sovereignty in late modernity but rather an icon of its failure.

3 The 'formal' inception of postcolonialism came in 1978 with the publication of Edward Said's seminal book *Orientalism*, in which he premised the "ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (1978: 2), or 'the west' and 'the rest', giving rise to "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (1978: 7). Said's insightful analysis has been unwittingly reconfirmed: consider the Clash of Civilizations proclaimed by Huntington (1993); the reaction to the 9/11 attacks, which once again polarized the West and the rest; and of course the current refugee crisis which re-proposes the binary opposition between 'us' and 'them' in new terms, in which 'them' is considered to be outside the project of modernity.

4 Engin Isin, "*Activist Intellectuals: Postcolonial Truth-telling Subjects*." Keynote address, International Conference "The Role of (Post)colonial Public Intellectuals in Europe: Figures, Ideas, Connections." Utrecht University, 28-29 January 2016. Convenors Sandra Ponzanesi, Umr Ryad, Remco Raben and Bert van den Brink. For more information, see http://www.postcolonialstudies.nl/p/conferences_28.html.

5 In her preface, Arendt points out that we cannot just think that Europe's two world wars were 'an incident'. Rather, we should understand antisemitism, imperialism and totalitarianism as inextricably linked (1958: ix)

6 In his influential work on media theory, Silverstone describes mediation as a "fundamentally, but unevenly, dialectic process in which institutional communication (the press, the broadcast radio and television, and increasingly the world wide web), are involved in the general circulation of symbols in

social life" (2002: 762). Building on this view of mediation, Couldry (2008) argues that it might be more productive to think of mediation as capturing a variety of dynamics within media flows. In addition, he notes "we need not assume any 'dialectics' between particular types of flow, still less need we assume any stable circuit of causality; we must allow not only for non-linearity but also for discontinuity and asymmetry" (2008: 381). In their work on the global cultural industry, Lash and Lury (2007) contend that meaning-making is at the centre of both production and consumption, and that the circulation of economic value has become a conversation between symbolic things.

7   While postcolonial cinema foregrounds the work of filmmakers in theorizing and comparing postcolonial conditions across geopolitical boundaries and historical periods, it may be considered on a continuum with other transnational genres proposed by film scholars in recent years—world cinema, global cinema, migrant cinema and transnational feminist cinema—all of which operate beyond national boundaries, in which postcolonial filmmaking constitutes a distinct focus (Ponzanesi and Waller 2012: 3, 9).

*8*   *The Battle of Algiers* was inspired by Saadi Yacef's *Souvenirs de la Bataille d'Alger* (1962).

9   As James Penney writes: "Both included and banished from the film's diegesis, this camera torments Georges with memories of his childhood, memories that we see in the form of harrowing flashbacks [….] The video footage is also the film's principal means of creating suspense; it incites our desire as viewers to solve the perplexing enigma of its impossible hidden camera. Haneke's film presents a felicitous occasion to revisit the conceptualization of the apparatus in cinema theory" (2010: 79).

10   In his response to the film, Paul Gilroy has noted: "In view of Caché's obvious strengths, I was particularly troubled by what could be interpreted as Haneke's collusion with the comforting idea that the colonial native can be made to disappear in an instant through the auto-combustive agency of their own violence" (2004: 234). In reply to Gilroy's analysis, Paulo de Medeiros has argued that the film is about the coercion of Georges into the role of witness, forcing the spectator to identity with Georges' position. Haneke's portrayal of the European malaise is derived from the repressed ghost of imperialism. Therefore the film's message and conventions are confrontational and oblige the spectator to align him/herself with the crimes that Georges (directly or indirectly), and with him France, Europe, the advanced world in general, continue to perpetrate in the name of civilization (2011: 95).

11   In *Caché* the colonial/postcolonial impasse, rather than being resolved is instead left open. The final shot shows the children of the two main characters having a conversation, which is inaudible to viewers, outside a French school while the end credits roll. Haneke does not offer any closure or easy solutions, either about the author of the videotapes or about the function of this final shot, which has generated wildly diverging interpretations.

12  To connect a Europe in deep time means to explore larger time scales that we can no longer ignore. This exploration is internal to the field of postcolonial studies, with Said (1978) looking structurally back in time at the injuries inflicted by Europe in its discursive construction of the other through centuries. Engaging with a deep time entails a recalibration of the postcolonial paradigm to allow for new realities and urgencies (Robbins 2016: 173).

13  As Christine Quinan writes: "As *Caché* makes clear, in the face of postcolonial 'diversity', there is a growing tendency to retreat behind walls (both literal and figurative) in hopes of protecting physical safety, domestic privacy and national identity. But […] when colonial pasts are repressed, physical and symbolic violence will continue to fester. In this sense, both Haneke's film and the Charlie Hebdo attacks (and their aftermath) reveal that perpetrators and victims can quickly turn, and most importantly, that the boundaries between them are often blurry and ambiguous" (2016: 115).

14  As Mark LeVine (2015) puts it "If Charlie Hebdo reminds us of anything it is that the arc of blowback can stretch for decades, growing more uncontrollable as the political, economic, social and technological chaos of the contemporary world increases."

15  Amrane Minne, born Danièle Minne, was one of the few European girls convicted for assisting the FLN during the Algerian War. She joined the struggle aged 17, and went underground under the nom de guerre of *Djamila*. Freed after independence in 1962, she wrote a PhD dissertation on the participation of Algerian women in the war, based on interviews with 88 women between 1978 and 1986. The dissertation, which later became a book, shows how women played a significant role in the resistance, sometimes even partially replacing men. A number of high-profile Algerian women leaders such as Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Boupacha, both militants in the FLN, risked their lives for the cause, were caught, imprisoned and sentenced to death on the basis of confessions extracted by torture (Amrane Minne 2007).

16  Aaronette White wrote that participation in revolutionary movements has not had the same effects for women as it had for men. The testimony of many African women combatants, for example, suggests that military life "often undermined their sense of agency as a result of increased vulnerability to gender-specific human rights abuses perpetrated by the enemy troops, as well as by their own comrades. These abuses included rape, torture, brutal abduction, forced pregnancy, forced sex work, and other forms of sexual harassment, molestation and discrimination" (White 2007: 868-869). Other feminist theorists have also been critical of Franz Fanon's easy equation of participation in the liberation struggle with emancipation in the specific case of Algeria (see Fanon 1965; Woodhull 2003; Yegenoglu 1998).

17  Paris attacks: Who Were the Attackers? *BBC News*, 18 March 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512.

18  Paris Raid Woman Hasna Ait Boulahcen 'Was Vulnerable'. *BBC News*, 19

November 2015. See: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34874793';
Paris Attacks: Who Was Hasna Ait Boulahcen? *BBC News*, 20 November
2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34877373.

19   Le Monde.fr Edition Globale, L' hommage à Aylan Krudi en dessins (Hom-
age to Aylan Kurdi through Drawings. http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/portfo-
lio/2015/09/04/l-hommage-a-aylan-kurdi-en-dessins_4745938_3214.html.

20   Monica Tan, Ai Weiwei Poses as Drowned Syrian Infant Refugee in 'Haunting'
Photo. *The Guardian*, 1 February 2016. http://www.theguardian.com/artand-
design/2016/feb/01/ai-weiwei-poses-as-drowned-syrian-infant-refugee-in-
haunting-photo. A more critical take comes from Hamid Dabashi who finds
the figure of an overweight man pretending to be a lifeless child bordering on
obscenity: A Portrait of the Artist as a Dead Boy. *Aljazeera*, 4 February 2016.
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/02/portrait-artist-dead-
boy-ai-weiwei-aylan-kurdi-refugees-160204095701479.html. See also Niru
Ratnam, Ai Weiwei's Aylan Kurdi Image is Crude, Thoughtless and Egotisti-
cal. *The Spectator*, 1 February, 2016. http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/02/
ai-weiweis-aylan-kurdi-image-is-crude-thoughtless-and-egotistical/.

21   Sara C. Nelson, Charlie Hebdo Reopens Freedom Of Speech Debate With
Cartoons Depicting Death Of Aylan Kurdi. *The Huffington Post*, 14 Sep-
tember 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/14/charlie-heb-
do-reopens-freedom-speech-debate-cartoons-depicting-death-aylan-kur-
di-_n_8133118.html.

22   Tim Hume, Outrage over Charlie Hebdo Cartoon of Dead Toddler Alan Kurdi
as Sex Attacker. *CNN*, 14 January 2016. http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/14/
europe/france-charlie-hebdo-aylan-kurdi/.

23   Despite the new treaty of the EU with Turkey, effective as of 20 March 2016,
that establishes that all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the
Greek islands will be returned to Turkey, new migrant routes are expected to
emerge that will involve other dangerous crossings such as across the Med-
iterranean via Libya or through the Baltic region. Patrick Kingsley, Refugee
crisis: What does the EU's deal with Turkey mean? *The Guardian*, 18 March
2016. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/18/eu-deal-turkey-mi-
grants-refugees-q-and-a.

24   This project takes inspiration and draws from the field of digital humanities,
which has received considerable attention in the past decade. Considered
to be a new paradigm according to which humanities scholars embrace
computational approaches to address fundamental questions in traditional
disciplines such as history, philosophy, linguistics, arts, media, gender, post-
colonial and literary studies, digital humanities constitute an important inter-
vention in the utopian debate on big data research (Berry 2012; Burdick et al.
2012; Kirschenbaum 2010; Koh 2014).

25  Roopika Risam and Adeline Koh show that the internet is not genderless and postracial: neither interfaces nor algorithms are neutral, and new hierarchies are created online that reproduce colonial and racial dynamics. See http://dhpoco.org/.

26  Reference can be made here to Banksy's graffiti on the wall of 'the Jungle' camp in Calais, which depicts in the background Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, as the son of a Syrian migrant, making an intervention in the refugee crisis. Or Banksy's representation of the 'migrant pond' with refugees' dinghies in his 'bemusement park': Dismaland. Or to artworks made by refugees themselves that re-signify existing representations, such as the Palestinian artist Anas Salameh, who escaped across the Mediterranean in 2013 and found refuge at Yarmouk camp in Damascus. He now lives in Oslo where in 2014 he created a huge mural dedicated to the suffering of children in war zones. See Hannah Ellis-Petersen, Banksy Uses Steve Jobs Artwork to Highlight Refugee Crisis. *The Guardian*, 11 December, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/dec/11/banksy-uses-steve-jobs-artwork-to-highlight-refugee-crisis; Christ Green, Dismaland: Banksy's 'Bemusement Park' is Deeply unsettling... but bizarrely entertaining. *Independent*, 21 August 2015. http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/dismaland-banksys-bemusement-park-is-deeply-unsettling-but-bizarrely-entertaining-10465485.html; How Artists Respond to the Refugee Crisis. *Flux Magazine*, 11 February 2016. http://www.fluxmagazine.com/artists-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/; Dale Berning Sawa, Unfamiliar Territory: Artists Navigate the Complexities of the Refugee Crisis. *The Guardian,* 28 September, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/sep/28/unfamiliar-territory-artists-refugee-crisis-shahpour-pouyan-bissane-al-charif-barthelemy-toguo.

27  Covering the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Arendt coined the phrase 'the banality of evil', a phrase that, as Judith Butler (2011) suggests, has since become something of an intellectual cliché. Yet Arendt did not mean by it that evil had become ordinary, or that the crimes committed were not exceptional. What she meant was that a new approach to legal judgment was needed that involved both legal justice, in order to redefine the notion of intention, and moral philosophy. At this historical juncture, for Arendt, it became necessary to conceptualize and prepare for crimes against humanity, and this implied an obligation to devise new structures of international law. Judith Butler, Hannah Arendt's Challenge to Adolf Eichmann. *The Guardian,* 29 August 2011. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/aug/29/hannah-arendt-adolf-eichmann-banality-of-evil.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

I was born in Italy (Fermo, 1967) and studied English Literature and Commonwealth Studies at the University of Bologna, where I graduated in 1992. I also studied at the University of Hull (1987) and the University of Sussex (1988-1989) and taught for a year after my graduation at the University of Greenwich (UK) before moving to the Netherlands. I completed my PhD at Utrecht University in 1999 under the supervision of Prof. Rosi Braidotti and Prof. Maaike Meijer. The dissertation entitled *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture* was later published by Suny Press (2004). After my PhD I moved to the University of Amsterdam with a Grotius postdoctoral fellowship (1999-2001). Between 2001 and 2002 I was assistant professor in literary studies at the University of Groningen. I returned to Utrecht University in 2003 with a NWO-VENI grant and took a position as assistant professor in the Department of Media and Culture Studies/Gender Program, where I became associate professor in 1999. Since 2013 I have combined my research at UU with a position as Head of Department (Humanities) at Utrecht University College (UCU). I was appointed professor in Gender and Postcolonial Studies on 1 February 2015.

My expertise lies at the intersection of postcolonial critique with gender, migration, cinema and (new) media, with a special focus on Europe. I am currently Principal Investigator of the ERC consolidator project

CONNECTINGEUROPE 'Digital Crossings in Europe. Gender, Diaspora and Belonging' (2016-2021). The project investigates the relationship between gender, migration and digital technologies, in particular the way in which the digitally 'connected migrant' contributes to new forms of European integration and cosmopolitan citizenship.

Among my publications are: *Paradoxes of Post-colonial Culture* (Suny, 2004); *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry* (Palgrave, 2014); *Gender, Globalisation and Violence* (Routledge, 2014); *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016) with Gianmaria Colpani; *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (Routledge, 2012) with Marguerite Waller; *Deconstructing Europe* (Routledge, 2012), with Bolette Blaagaard and *Migrant Cartographies* (Lexington Books, 2005) with Daniela Merolla. I have also guest edited several special issues: 'Postcolonial Europe' for *Social Identities* (17:1, 2011), with Bolette Blaagaard; 'Digital Crossings in Europe' for *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture* (4:2, 2014) with Koen Leurs and 'The Point of Europe' for *Interventions, International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (18:2, 2016).

I have conducted several international research projects: I was principal investigator of the High Potential Project, *Wired Up*, on digital practices by migrant youth in the Netherlands (2007-2012) with Prof. Mariette de Haan (SW) and Kevin Leander (Vanderbilt University, USA); I was the project leader of the 7th European Framework Program project: *Mig@net*, Transnational Digital Networks. Migration and Gender (2010-2013) and principal investigator of *PEN* (Postcolonial Europe Network) funded by NWO (2011-2014).

I was Visiting Professor at the University of California Los Angeles, Women's Studies Program (2006), visiting scholar at the University of California, Riverside (2004) and Gemma scholar at Rutgers University (2014).

I am the founder of the Postcolonial Studies Initiative (PCI) and have been the director since 2010. www.postcolonialstudies.nl

## SAMENVATTING

### Europa Verbinden: Postkoloniale Mediaties

De huidige vluchtelingencrisis, uitvergroot door media sensationalisme en politiek opportunisme, geeft de interne spanningen weer die het concept 'Europa' bedreigen.

In een vlaag van nostalgie voor de schijnveiligheid van de oude soevereine staten worden oude grenzen hersteld. Het 'fort Europa' implodeert in een veelheid van 'mini-forten', achter wiens muren in de naam van nationale veiligheid lang gekoesterde Europese idealen en burgerlijke vrijheden in gevaar worden gebracht.

### Postkoloniaal Europa

Is er nog een toekomst voor Europa? Waar begint Europa en waar eindigt het? Wat is het doel van Europa? Als Europa levensvatbaar wil blijven, dan is het nodig om Europa vanuit een postkoloniaal perspectief te benaderen.

Dit betekent dat het concept Europa bekeken moet worden vanuit verschillende relaties, zowel historisch, disciplinair als institutioneel. Cruciaal is dat Europa haar eigen verleden erkent en de confrontatie aangaat met haar eigen koloniale erfenis die onze huidige maatschappij nog steeds schade berokkent.

### Digitaal verbonden migranten

Het postkoloniale project is ook een doel- en toekomstgericht ideaal. Het daagt ons uit na te denken over onze moderne hypergemediatiseerde wereld. Een wereld waarin de digitale sporen van 'verbonden migranten' zich voordoen als hybride en heterogene vormen van participatie. Deze ontwikkeling verandert de wijze waarop wij sociale in- en uitsluiting, emancipatie en interculturele identiteiten begrijpen. En door het idee van een multidirectioneel en gelinkt Europa op de voorgrond te plaatsen, verandert het idee van Europa zelf.

Ponzanesi beargumenteert dat een multimediale, postkoloniale benadering nieuwe mogelijkheden biedt om te komen tot alternatieve kosmopolitische visies.

**COLOPHON**

**Connecting Europe: Postcolonial Mediations**

The current refugee crisis, magnified by media sensationalism and political opportunism, brings into sharp focus internal tensions that threaten the very notion of Europe.

In a wave of nostalgia for the false security of the old sovereign states, old borders are being re-established and Fortress Europe is imploding into a multitude of mini-fortresses, behind whose walls long-cherished European ideals are imperilled and civil liberties threatened in the name of national security.

**Postcolonial Europe**

So does Europe have a future? Where does Europe begin and where does it end? What is the point of Europe?

If Europe is to remain a viable entity, we must engage with Europe from a postcolonial perspective.

This means taking into account the notion of a Europe perceived through an awareness of many diverse entanglements — historical, disciplinary and institutional; a Europe seen in 'deep time'.

Crucially Europe must acknowledge and confront its own past, accounting for colonial legacies which, long after the old empires have disappeared, continue to menace our present.

**Digitally connected migrants**

The postcolonial project is also aspirational and future-oriented. It challenges us to account for our modern hyper-mediated world; a world in which the digital footprints of 'connected migrants' emerge as hybridised and heterogeneous forms of participation, changing the way we understand and account for social inclusion, gender emancipation and intercultural identities, and, by foregrounding the notion of a multidirectional and networked Europe in flux, changing the idea of Europe itself.

Ponzanesi argues that a multimedial postcolonial approach helps to envision new, alternative, cosmopolitan perspectives.

*Sandra Ponzanesi* is Professor of Gender and Postcolonial Studies at Utrecht University, Department of Media and Culture Studies, The Netherlands.