

Calendar

FORSCHUNGSSEMINAR

Historicizing the Figure of the Migrant as Guest: Palestine and the Movement for Migrant Rights in Postcolonial France

December 04 | 14:00

Dynamiken und Erfahrungen der Globalisierung

This talk takes postcolonial France as a case study in the production of the figure of the migrant as unexpected or unwelcome guest, from nativist discourses on the right to liberal attempts to reframe the so-called migrant crisis in humanitarian terms. Building on the conclusions of her recent book, *Natives against Nativism: Antiracism and Indigenous Critique in Postcolonial France*, Olivia C. Harrison proposes to historicize, and critique, the figure of the migrant as guest by studying the central role of anticolonial solidarity in the migrant rights movements that emerged in France in the wake of decolonization. Usually situated within the history of labor or "identity" movements, these collectives were, in fact, rooted in forms of anticolonial solidarity that made visible what activists have since dubbed the "colonial continuum." This talk analyses the use of Palestine as a rallying cry for migrant rights, from the Committees in Support of the Palestinian Revolution and the Arab Worker's Movement of the 1970s to contemporary responses to the migrant question in France and beyond. Against the erasure of the central role of the Palestinian question in the emergence of grassroots antiracist discourses in postcolonial France, Harrison argues that Palestine has played a central role in articulating what she calls *indigenous critique*: a critique of the purportedly postcolonial present from the perspective of the *indigènes*, colonial subjects newly dubbed *immigrants* after decolonization. In conclusion the talk zooms out from metropolitan France to think about the relationship between the migrant question and the question of Palestine in the context of the ongoing mass displacements from and across the Global South: what does Palestine teach us about the current migrant crisis, and how, in turn, does the migrant question shed light on the question of Palestine?

Olivia C. Harrison is Associate Professor of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Southern California. Her research focuses on postcolonial North African, Middle Eastern, and French literature and film, with a particular emphasis on transcolonial affiliations between writers and intellectuals from the Global South. Her publications include *Natives against Nativism: Antiracism and Indigenous Critique in Postcolonial France* (University of Minnesota Press, 2023), *Transcolonial Maghreb: Imagining Palestine in the Era of Decolonization* (Stanford University Press, 2016), and essays on Maghrebi literature, Beur and banlieue cultural production, and postcolonial theory. With Teresa Villa-Ignacio, she is the editor of *Souffles-Anfas: A Critical Anthology from the Moroccan Journal of Culture and Politics* (Stanford University Press, 2016) and translator of Hocine Tandjaoui's poem, *Clamor/Clameur* (Litmus Press, 2021).

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Location

Georg-Simmel-Saal
Friedrichstraße 191

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open gallery ↗

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