

FROM THE EUROPEAN SOUTH

A TRANSDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF POSTCOLONIAL HUMANITIES

call for papers – issue 14 – spring 2024

Call for Issue 14
Spring 2024

ON THE BEAT Owning/Reclaiming Time against White Chronocentrism

Guest editors: Anna Scacchi and Marco Petrelli

deadline for article submission: September 30th, 2023

While the role of space as a racializing tool has received much attention in a wide body of literature, time as an instrument of surveillance, control and othering is still comparatively understudied. Yet, as Giordano Nanni writes in *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine, and Resistance in the British Empire* (2012), the imposition of Western temporality was a crucial component of the colonial conquest: “European territorial expansion has always been closely linked to, and frequently propelled by, the geographic extension of its clocks and calendars.” Time was both “a tool and a channel for the incorporation of human subjects within the coloniser’s master narrative; for conscripting human subjects within the matrix of the capitalist economy, and ushering ‘savages’ and superstitious ‘heathens’ into an age of modernity” (p. 4). At a more general level, time is “a discursive construct through which knowledge, power, and experience are produced and policed” (Carter Mathes, quoted in Julius B. Fleming, Jr, “Sound, Aesthetics, and Black Time Studies,” *College Literature* 2019).

‘Universal time’, white time, racial time, colonial time, imperial time, linear time, penal time, or the lag time imposed on migrants trying to cross militarized borders: whatever the geopolitical and historical specificities all these terms point to in the usage of scholars such as Nanni, Johannes Fabian, Charles W. Mills, Michael Hanchard, Michelle Wright, Nicole Fleetwood, Anthony Reed and others, we take them to refer, as Michael Hanchard writes in “Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora” (*Public Culture* 1999) to “the inequalities of temporality that result from power relations between racially dominant and subordinate groups [...] produc[ing] unequal temporal access to institutions, goods, services, resources, power, and knowledge” (p. 253). Naturalized as a given, its constructedness and sociopolitical, material and epistemic violence hidden from view, Western chronocentrism has translated into unequal temporalities, denial of coevalness (Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 2002) and above all the theft of time in terms of stolen labor, reduced life span, deferral of rights, incomplete freedom, entrapment in a never ending past (the afterlife of slavery, a postcolonial condition where the ‘post’ means neither change nor progress) and eternal infancy, the exclusion from modernity and the future.

The imposition of unequal temporalities, however, has been met with and contested by People of Color’s will to own their time, reclaim what was stolen and create a future for themselves. This issue of the journal *FES* wants to focus on the material and representational strategies coming forth from the ‘others’ of white time. For example, Black time, an area of inquiry which is expanding so fast that has been labelled by Julius B. Fleming, Jr, “Black Time Studies,” explores “the social, political, and aesthetic significance of time to black people, to black experience, and to the black cultural and political imaginations” (Fleming 2019, p. 282). As Blackness is still constantly faced with moments of crisis due to the unrelenting threats coming from systemic racism and racialized political calculus, the question of how time participates in, or counters, the status quo arises with great urgency—the

FROM THE EUROPEAN SOUTH

A TRANSDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF POSTCOLONIAL HUMANITIES

call for papers – issue 14 – spring 2024

critical conception of time might very well be one of the (if not the) main preoccupations for theoreticians and activists alike. Torn between the need to struggle against the eternal return of an ever-looming past of subjection, what Saidiya Hartman defines as the “afterlife of slavery,” and the urge to make sense of an endangered present in order to open spaces of resistance, redress, and disruption, Black literature and Black Studies are moving towards two opposite directions at the same time. On the one hand, they return to history to salvage the traces of a past institutionally sanctioned with ephemerality and impermanence in an attempt to reclaim time in a corrective, reparative way. On the other hand, the ongoing crisis that invests Blackness in the present calls for imagining futures that appear otherwise foreclosed.

Troubled relationships with the teleology of ‘modern’ Western time and its faux universalist pretenses, however, are not at all limited to the Black experience. As Homi Bhabha argues, the supposed homogeneity of modernity as postulated by post-Enlightenment discourses on human progress not only brings about a hierarchical understanding of non-Western historicities, but “deprives minorities of those marginal, liminal spaces from which they can intervene” in the ongoing debate on cultural identity by fissuring “unifying and totalizing myths” such as those surrounding white time and its epistemologies (Bhabha, “‘Race’, Time and the Revision of Modernity,” *Oxford Literary Review* 1991 p. 210). To differ from the monolith of Western (white, male) historicized identity is, in the words of philosopher Achille Mbembe, “not simply not to be like (in the sense of being non-identical or being other); [but] also not to be at all” (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 2001 p. 4). To reclaim and live a minoritarian identity (understood as a Deleuzian “becoming” challenging power and domination) is then a matter of reclaiming time as lived from the linear constrictions of European clock-time and European historiography. Read in this light, subjectivity itself can be envisaged as proceeding also from a specific conception, and inhabitation, of time. The emergence of the oppressed subject requires the emergence of a liberating temporality.

We invite contributions that, rather than comparing white time and other temporalities as aporetic, disjuncted constructions, investigate the ways in which they clash, interact and become entangled in an attempt to rethink modernity by bringing/forcing non-Western rhythms, chronologies, and histories into the rigid borders of the European timeframe.

We are interested in original contributions dealing with (but not limited to) the following topics:

- Narrative strategies able to question and disrupt ‘white’ time and accommodate non-white identities in all their ontological/epistemological nuances.
- Sound, rhythm, and music as counter-hegemonic time-bending, time-structuring vessels.
- Ethno-futurology: Afrofuturism, Asia-futurism, etc.
- Critical fabulation, rememory, and the reclamation of the past.
- Hybrid temporalities as/in hybrid identities.
- Uchronias, alternative histories, retrofuturism.
- BIPOC’s ontologies/epistemologies of time.
- Queer temporalities.
- Time and its absence in the enslaved.
- Colonial time versus counter- and pre-colonial time.

Send your proposals for articles (500 words), reviews, interviews or creative interventions (previously unpublished) to Anna Scacchi (anna.scacchi@unipd.it) and Marco Petrelli (marco.sal.petrelli@gmail.com) by April 30th, 2023.

Acceptance of proposals will be notified by May, 30th, 2023.

FROM THE EUROPEAN SOUTH

A TRANSDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF POSTCOLONIAL HUMANITIES

call for papers – issue 14 – spring 2024

Deadline for article submission: September 30th, 2023

Deadline for submitting final accepted articles: December 15th, 2023

PLEASE NOTE:

From the European South considers all proposals on condition that

- ✓ the article is your own original work, and does not duplicate any other previously published work, including your own previously published work;
- ✓ the article follows the journal's "Author's Guidelines" closely [<https://www.fesjournal.eu/author-guidelines/>];
- ✓ the article is not a translation (IT or EN) of an already published text;
- ✓ the article has been submitted only to FES; it is not under consideration or peer review or accepted for publication or in press or published elsewhere;
- ✓ the article contains nothing that is abusive, fraudulent, or illegal.