

# Call for Papers

*Transimperial Encounters:  
Networks of Cultural and Literary Exchange Between India and Europe, 1870-1947*

Quaderni di LEA (Florence University Press)  
<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-lea/about>

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This special issue of the journal *LEA* seeks to explore the transimperial intellectual, cultural, and political exchanges between India and Europe in the colonial period, until Partition (1870-1947). While much scholarship on empire has focused on the binary relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, recent work in colonial and global studies has drawn attention to the complex, multidirectional flows of ideas, people, and cultural forms across imperial boundaries. For example, Antoinette Burton was among the first to call attention on the need to destabilise “the certainty of the nation as an analytical category, as a cherished ideal, as a guarantor of the sovereign Western self as well” (2011: 3). More recently, Sukanya Banerjee has argued for the adoption of “a transimperial analytical framework that places Britain in constant tension and connection with its imperial constituencies (...) by continually questioning the discrete solidities of the (British) nation and placing it in an inexhaustible relation of contiguity and interconstitutiveness with the empire ‘out there’” (2018: 925). While the notion of ‘transimperial encounters’ immediately evokes postcolonial theory and frameworks, it also responds to the recent ‘global turn’ of Victorian studies, with scholars advocating for the need to “widen” (Banerjee, Fong and Michie 2021) or “undiscipline” the field (Chatterjee, Christoff and Wong 2020) and showing how a transimperial lens enables a more productive and “contrapuntal” engagement with critically contested topics like, for example, religion (Lecourt and Werner 2024). The special issue *Transimperial Encounters* builds on such approaches by investigating how exchanges between the East and West – whether through travel, political activism, literary production, philosophical or religious discourse – reshaped anti-colonial thought, cultural movements, and intellectual traditions on both sides of the colonial divide. The issue is especially interested to explore transimperial cultural movements like feminism, radicalism, vegetarianism etc. (Gandhi 2006; Selbin 2024), as well as transimperial literary genres like science fiction, spiritual autobiographies, realism etc. (Joshi 2002; Boehmer 2015; Gibson 2019).

The special issue *Transimperial Encounters* welcomes contributions from a range of disciplines, including literary studies, history, intellectual history, cultural studies, and transnational studies. In addition, we aim to bring together scholars working on different national and linguistic contexts to explore how anti-colonial and cultural networks functioned beyond the Anglo-Indian binary. We thus encourage also contributions that examine less-explored East/West connections (e.g., between India and Italy, France, Germany, etc.), as well as the role of multilingual and cross-cultural literary production.

### Possible Themes and Topics:

We invite proposals that engage with, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- **Transimperial intellectual networks:** Thinkers and activists who moved between India and Europe (e.g.: Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita, Annie Besant, Pandita Ramabai, Sri Aurobindo, Mirra Alfassa, Muhammad Iqbal, etc.).
- **Religious and philosophical exchanges:** The influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Indian religious traditions on European intellectual movements (e.g., theosophy, spiritualism, fin de siècle mysticism); the influence of Western thought and science on Indian thinkers.
- **Feminism and the ‘New Woman’ in transimperial perspective:** Cross-border influences on women’s movements, feminist thought, and literary representations of gender; the encounters between Western women travellers and indigenous women.
- **Transimperial literary genres:** The impact of colonial encounters on literary genres, styles, and transnational literary networks.
- **Anti-colonialism and radical thought:** Circulation of anti-colonial ideologies across Europe and India; connections between Indian nationalists and European radical movements.
- **Education and pedagogy across empires:** Figures like Maria Montessori, Sister Nivedita and Rabindranath Tagore, and the exchange of pedagogical models between India and Europe.
- **Print culture and the press:** The role of newspapers, journals, and publishing in facilitating transimperial dialogue.
- **Theoretical perspectives on transimperialism:** Critical reflections on transimperial methodologies, historiographies, or conceptual frameworks, even in the absence of a specific case study.

We especially encourage contributions that engage with multilingual sources, non-English literatures, or understudied European-Indian connections.

## Works cited

- Banerjee, Sukanya. 2018. "Transimperial." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46.3–4: 925–928.
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- Bohmer, Elleke. 2015. *Indian Arrivals, 1870-1915: Networks of British Empire*. Oxford University Press.
- Burton, Antoinette. 2011. *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism*. Duke University Press.
- Chatterjee, Ronjaune, Alicia Mireles Christoff, and Amy Wong. 2020. "Introduction: Undisciplining Victorian Studies." *Victorian Studies* 62. 3: 369-391.
- Gandhi, Leela. 2006. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Duke University Press.
- Gibson, Mary Ellis. 2019. *Science Fiction in Colonial India, 1835-1905*. Anthem.
- Joshi, Priya. 2002. *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India*. Columbia University Press.
- Lecourt, Sebastian and Winter Jade Werner. 2024. "Introduction: Transimperial Religion." *Victorian Studies* 66. 2: 193-200.
- Selbin JC. 2024. "The Global New Woman and the Invention of Modern Feminism." *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*. 139(1): 32-49.

## Submission Details:

Articles ready for publication (no longer than 6,000-7,000 words in length), along with an abstract and metadata (see the stylesheet), should be sent to the editors, Prof. Ujjwal Jana ([ujana@english.du.ac.in](mailto:ujana@english.du.ac.in)) and Dr. Greta Perletti ([greta.perletti@unitn.it](mailto:greta.perletti@unitn.it)) by **8 June 2026**.

Accepted articles (following double blind peer reviewing) will be published in **February 2027**.

We welcome inquiries and contributions from scholars at all career stages. Essays will be in English.

For any questions, please contact the editors.