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# The EASA Biennial Conference 2018

Nationalism Old and New



Europe, Australia and their Others

Wed 17 to Fri 19 January 2018

The Observatory: Australian Studies Centre  
for the European Association for Studies of Australia



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Freixenet





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## **EASA Biennial Conference “Nationalism Old and New: Europe, Australia and Their Others”**

Organised by the Observatory: Australian Studies Centre

for the European Association for Studies of Australia

Faculty of Letters, downtown Historical Building

University of Barcelona

Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585

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Founded in 1989, the **European Association for Studies of Australia (EASA)** seeks to promote the teaching of, and research in Australian Studies at European tertiary institutions, as well as to increase an awareness of Australian culture throughout Europe. EASA promotes the study and discussion of a wide variety of aspects of Australian culture: Aboriginality, literature, film, the media, popular culture, history, political discourses, and the arts. EASA's area of interest also includes New Zealand Studies. The EASA meetings have recently shifted from a biennial to an annual format, alternating a major conference in even years with a smaller symposium in odd years, rotating among the European universities where Australian Studies form part of the curriculum.

The **Australian Studies Centre (ASC)** at the University of Barcelona (UB), Spain is currently preparing the 2018 edition of the EASA Annual Conference, entitled *Nationalism Old and New: Europe, Australia and Their Others*. After the Liège 2017 symposium on South-East-Asia and Australia relationships, the 2018 conference will address immigration and refugee policies and the treatment of ethnic difference in the European and Australian contexts. The Australian Studies Centre at the UB has been committed to organising international conferences in the humanities in Spain and Australia together with a range of Australian academic institutions since 2000. With the Centre for Peace and Social Justice at Southern Cross University, NSW, the ASC hosted the 2006 event *Landscapes of Exile: Australia Once Perilous Now Safe*, as well as the international congresses *Food for Thought* (2010), *Pacific Solutions* (2011), *Looking Back to Look Forwards* (2012) and *Watershed* (2014) at the University of Barcelona. The 2016 event, *Go Between, In Between: Borders of Belonging*, was co-hosted by The Centre for Colonialism and its Aftermath at the University of Tasmania and The Centre for Human Rights Education at Curtin University. Also in 2016, in July, a new annual conference cycle was successfully launched between the ASC and the International Academic Forum IAFOR, the Asian-Pacific think tank based in Japan, with a back-to-back international and intercultural congress on *City Studies and Global Studies* at the Hotel Constanza in Barcelona, which contains an Australian strand.

The convenors, ASC members from the UB as well as Curtin U, aim to host the upcoming EASA biennial conference, *Nationalism Old and New: Europe, Australia and Their Others*, in the same international, interdisciplinary spirit as these previous events and look forward to receiving you in Barcelona in January 2018.



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## Call For Papers

Europe is uncomfortably enmeshed in what is commonly perceived as a fight for social, political and cultural survival in the face of the increasing international circulation of capital and labour, the postcolonial aftermath of Empire and the growing, transnational impact of climate change—in short, the multifarious expressions of unstoppable globalisation. What started as a pragmatic need to control and eliminate continental conflict and an idealistic intent to preserve the gains of the welfare state in democratic Europe after the Second World War, has, after half a century of attempted and effectual integration, run up against its real and imagined limits. Nationalism is re-instating discrete binaries and closing borders, not only on the outside or intercontinentally, but also on the inside or intracontinentally, and the European Union is seriously questioned as a political and identitarian superstructure. The *Brexit* campaign's success is on a par with the regressive character of the recent presidential campaign and election result in the United States, jeopardising the UK's continued presence in the EU in favour of a tighter Anglo-American projection and affiliation, and questioning the UK's internal structure. *Grexit* looms on the horizon of Greece's financial predicament and threatens to oust the classical cornerstone of European culture; and a xenophobic domino referendum effect affecting wealthy founding members such as France, Italy and The Netherlands is not unlikely at present. These and other tensions revive the ghost of balkanisation and territorial fragmentation. Xenophobe parties in member states have grown substantially, recreating the fearsome figure of the dangerous Other to close national bo

rders and recalling the contours of a racist past deemed overcome forever. Migratory and refugee flows from the Near-East and Sub-Saharan Africa, generated by postcolonial power vacuums, are the object of harsh and coercive treatment by European and national authorities, with Austria and Hungary having led a barbed-wire approach to the management of cultural difference that recalls the not so distant eugenic past. An acute postcolonial observer and political scientist, the Spain-based Algerian Sami Naïr speaks succinctly of European disillusion and disillusionment (*El desengaño europeo*, Galaxia Gutenberg 2014), while the Denmark-based Indian writer and cultural critic Tabish Khair detects a new European xenophobia in the globalization process, stemming from "international flaws, as shaped by high capitalism, [that] will have to be remedied 'globally' through concerted public action and legislation..." (*The New Xenophobia*, OUP 2016: 188).

As a European settler nation in a globalising world, Australia may function as Europe's antipodean mirror image, given its long track record of imposing an exclusionary identity, discrete essentialist binaries and forbidding borders, which have kept the make-up of its population largely European. The Australian example of asylum policy is not alien to the current European initiative to employ Turkey as a buffer zone against the Middle-Eastern influx, which recalls the Australian refugee policy of mandatory detention in New Guinea and the Pacific island-state of Nauru. Human right groups have called Australia's asylum seeker policies "an appeal for fear and racism" (*ABC News*, 28 May 2010), and this is nothing new as the "yellow peril" has been the object of political action ever since Chinese immigrants participated in the mid-nineteenth century gold rushes. The White Australia Policy was paralleled by the nation-state's mistreatment of the Indigenous population, who were equally excluded from Australian society, politics and history, so that the (mis)management of Australian identity operates both internally and externally,



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as it does in the European Union nowadays. It is therefore not surprising to see leaders of xenophobic European parties such as the Dutch politician Geert Wilders give their active, full support to like-minded political formations in Australia, which is suggestive of some structural synergies between Europe and Australia in identity matters. In the face of the violence generated by resurfacing racism, national redefinition and the lack of universal citizenship, Etienne Balibar's call, echoed in Tabish Khair's words above, to "civilize the state" in support of a politics of emancipation and transformation is as valid for Australia as it is for Europe (*Politics and the Other Scene*, Verso 2002 [Fr.1997]).

Bearing in mind the above context, this conference aims to explore the following questions:

- How do Europe and Australia respond to the growing internationalisation of issues once deemed manageable on the national level, be they of an economic, demographic, social, political or climatic kind?
- To what extent is the re/turn to nationalism a credible and viable response to the problems that assail both continents? Are these the product of a common sense or fear?
- What are the structural links between European and Australian policies towards migration, refugees and asylum seekers?
- To what extent do the above issues affect the inequalities of ethnicity, class and gender already existent in both continents? To what extent is religion a factor of division?
- To what extent is European identity a "question mark", an identity in de/re/construction (Julia Kristeva in Ignacio Vidal-Folch's interview, *El País*, 3 June 2008), and how does the recent context of fear, racism and intolerance impact on this process?
- Likewise, to what extent is Australianness a postcolonial question mark rather than a neutral marker of identity? What is the place of 'New Settlers' and Indigenous peoples in the nation-state?
- What are the connections/disconnections between European and Australian approaches to developing a human rights culture? What is the place of migrant peoples and Indigeneity in future expressions of Europeanness and Australianness? To what extent may/do European and Australian (policies of) identity inform and solicit each other?
- How may discourses of Indigeneity influence notions of Europeanness? To what extent is Europe afraid of being 'Aboriginalised', that is, of suffering the same fate that Indigenous Australians experienced under European colonisation?
- What can the role of Australian Studies be from the perspective of Europe in terms of furthering an understanding of politics of in/tolerance and in/exclusion?
- Due to the cross-disciplinary character of this Conference we shall consider papers on topics relating to any branch of Australian and European Studies inasmuch they inform each other and overlap, including History, Literature, Culture, Film Studies, Cultural Anthropology, Media Studies, Architecture, Geography, Spatial Studies, Environment, Political Science, Indigenous Studies, Gender Studies, Gerontology, Linguistics, Translation Studies, Education, Sociology,



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Art History, Religion, Philosophy. We welcome proposals for papers and panels that address but are not restricted to the following topics:

- Connections and disconnections between European and Australian approaches to developing a human rights culture;
- Problematizing mainstream immigration, refugee and integration policies;
- Diasporic 'takes' on Australian and European identity in politics, literature and the visual arts;
- Ghosts of the past: the ideological and material inheritance of Empire and the World Wars.
- The exclusiveness of nationalist communities and arguments;
- Territorial fragmentation and globalisation;
- The analysis of discourses of Indigeneity and new settlement in the European and Australian context and their cross-overs;
- Inherited responsibilities and the moral requirements of belonging;
- Transnational perspectives on Australian and European culture, society and/or history;
- Islam, the 'war' on terror and the revival of nationalisms in Europe and Australia.

Please send your 250-word abstracts for 20-minute papers and 100-word bio notes to [easa2018bcn@gmail.com](mailto:easa2018bcn@gmail.com) by 1 July 2017 (extended deadline). We also encourage panel proposals, which should be accompanied by a 100-word overall abstract and title in addition to the 250-word abstracts for a panel's individual papers. Notification of acceptance/rejection of abstracts will be sent by 1 August 2017.

All accepted participants will be expected to become members of the EASA as a precondition to presenting their papers. Details of EASA membership are available on the association's website at this address: <http://www.easa-australianstudies.net/easa/office>.

A call for full-academic-length papers derived from conference presentations will be issued after the conference for publication in the Association's online journal JEASA (<http://www.easa-australianstudies.net/ejournal/call>).

Our conference website is accessible at <https://easa2018barcelona.wordpress.com/>; full details on registration etc. are to be made public shortly.

The convenors,

Martin Renes (UB)

Susan Ballyn (UB)

Baden Offord (Curtin U)



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Barcelona, 01 June 2017.