

The thematic issue on intercultural relations explores Africa through a wide range of narratives, showing how the continent has long been shaped by – and has helped shape – ongoing connections and movements of people, ideas, laws, and cultural forms across borders. A central concern is the tendency to frame Africa as a marginal “appendix” to global forces, rather than recognizing it as an active participant that co-produces transnational realities. The contributions also highlight three intertwined, enduring challenges – displacement, exile, and the afterlives of colonialism – which continue to reshape identity and both individual and collective memory, often through the practices of storytelling and translation. At the same time, the issue draws attention to immediate, lived pressures: local values can clash with humanitarian aid systems, stigma and discrimination persist where legal protections and healthcare support are uneven, and skilled professionals continue to leave despite government efforts to retain them. These tensions unfold against the backdrop of wider global crises, especially climate change and forced migration, which intensify inequalities while also forcing new questions about shared responsibility and change.

