Call for Abstracts for Issue 10 (Winter 2020)

Metaphors of Migration
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This guest-edited issue of *On_Culture* focuses on migration, one of the most pressing issues that contemporary societies currently face. The lived reality of migration is fundamentally framed by discourse formations, where metaphors can function as creative devices to establish a reality of what migration could or even should mean. Seen from this perspective migration and imagination are closely tied as two subjects of central interest and core concern in both the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

Although at a first gaze both topics seem to be quite unconnected, "migration" playing a central part of current research in the Social Sciences, "imagination" being traditionally discussed in the humanities and arts, obviously both fields are strongly related to each other. Both, the social perception and the political discourse about migration, but also its very practice from refugees to modern nomads, refers to and stems from particular forms and techniques of imagination through which migration is approached and labeled as social reality. The "ways of worldmaking" (N. Goodman) as much as "society as an imaginary institution" (C. Castoriadis) speak to what has become the social reality of migration on a global scale. We will not be able to understand the processes and phenomena of migration accurately without acknowledging that, although it is a real problem, which often yields tragic consequences, migration is nurtured by tropes of imagination. More than other subjects today, migration seems to fill a gap in the production of cultural meaning and socio-political imagination. Thus the phenomenon of migration should accordingly be analyzed as depending on social practices and imaginations, which eventually equip the political discourse with cultural meaning and provoke demands for particular forms of management.

The cultural perception of processes of migration is massively communicated by the use of metaphors by which migration as a distinct phenomenon is embedded into a particular frame of cultural codes and meaning. The cultural poetics of metaphors as social practice help to identify migration as something which is distinct part of an as normative as coherent *Weltbild*. At the same time, the social perception and construction of a social reality of migration massively refer to practices of cultural imagination. Migration as a phenomenon clearly connects to a long standing history of cultural memorization that is, in large parts, laden with imaginative topoi. That way, migration as cultural imago refers to figures in mythology, prose, ideology, etc. The reality of migration within society is only emerging within the frames of performative cultural practices of imagination in various ways.

Migrating plants, animals, and people are subject of massive restrictions and, if successful by migration, often object of campaigns and activism with the aim to reverse this process. Also, we can observe the migration of ideas, images, or art—all of which unfolding massive influence on possible transformations of a seemingly given social and cultural reality. Capital is as much migrating—legally as illegally—as objects ranging from food to weaponry with often enormous consequences for their

destination societies. Eventually, abstract threats to the life of humans and others are constantly migrating—bacteria, virus, disease, radio activity, etc. In the digital realm, migration seems to be an illusion when any website only seems to be one click away.

If migration is pointing to social practices of imagination as genuine social practices, migration cannot separate notions of disturbance and disruption, practices of othering, and exclusion, or assimilation from forms of signification and any crisis of 'making sense'. Adequate understanding of migration therefore warrants interdisciplinary collaboration within the Humanities and the Social Sciences. Competences from philology and literature studies, art history, philosophy, media studies, etc., must be taken into account alongside with the expertise from sociology, political science, anthropology, criminology, and psychology.

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