

Editors' Note

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For the last twenty years or so, critics within and outside the discipline of postcolonial studies have been contemplating, diagnosing and announcing the supposed deaths of postcolonialism. Yet, 2026 began with the diabolic abduction of Nicolas Maduro and his wife by the United States in complete contravention of international law whose supposed irrelevance was also declared by the POTUS a few days later. This was followed by several repeated threats to conquer Greenland, which, however, have since been withdrawn. Coupled with the ongoing war in Ukraine, the continued massacres in Palestine and various other sporadic local conflicts, these brazen acts of aggression firmly establish our disillusioned location within an imperial present as opposed to the possibility of any post-imperial scenario which might actually necessitate the demise of the postcolonial which includes within itself both resistance against empire and the quest for emancipatory horizons. Slightly modifying Lenin's assertion about imperialism being the highest stage of capitalism, it can be argued, based on our experience of the last eight decades after the end of the World War II, that imperialism is an integral component of capitalism which periodically becomes more belligerent and brazen, in order to address its own contradictions so that veils of international order, rule of law, international communities etc. can be temporarily discarded in favour of urgent and aggressive expropriation of resources which may well be termed martial or bellicose accumulation, that is closely related to the kind of fatal primitive accumulation that Marx had discussed in detail. This is why after every two decades or so, the US has to attack either Iraq or

Afghanistan or Venezuela so that more and more energy can be made easily available for the expansion of American industries which, however, continue to falter in the global market, necessitating more and more tariffs, protectionism and extortive trade negotiations.

Of course, America does not operate in isolation. Not only has it previously incorporated NATO allies in its aggressive interventions, whether in Iraq or Afghanistan, but the nature of global capitalism is such that many of the notorious features of American politics find their replication in different parts of the world, ultimately leading to greater inequality and greater abuse of resources. Just as the Trump regime brazenly favours the billionaires who have boosted its campaign, Putin has his favourite oligarchs, not to mention individuals and companies who have donated millions through election bonds in India also mysteriously secure projects, contracts, compensation waivers and much else. Just as Trump makes health insurance inaccessible to American workers the introduction of the new labour code and scrapping of MGNREGA make life more precarious for rural and urban workers in India. What is happening therefore is a concerted attack on various strata of humanity across the globe leading to widespread structural inequality and various forms of associated discontent.

Postcolonial cultures around the world have also been responding to these fissures in different ways which is evident from not just the texts under scrutiny on this particular volume but also from various emerging representations focusing on diverse forms of deprivation being generated through the flux of now. One may refer to Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) in this context which focuses on the precarious lives of not just migrant labourers but also the youthful populations of those zones which continue to bear the brunt of the climate crisis on the one hand and reckless, predatory capitalism on the other. That same process is evident also in a graphic narrative for children like *Jamlo Walks* (2021) which chronicles the sad demise of a

child labourer called Jamlo in the wake of the Covid pandemic when she attempted to return to her village on foot from the distant fields where she had gone to harvest bags of red chilies. Similar issues are also explored in films like *Homebound* (2025) or OTT shows like *Poachers* (2024) *Kalapaani* (2023) and *Human* (2022) which foreground the catastrophic consequences of unchecked greed and profiteering, across domains of ecology, healthcare, bureaucratic logjam, communal hostility, casteist discrimination and the endangering of indigenous communities. Of course capital also creates a paradigm within which the collective attention on pressing material concerns is repeatedly undermined through the fabrication of lies, misinformation and imaginary conflicts which often culminate in the perverse persecution of ethnic, religious or racial minorities through a politics of poisonous polarization in which Muslims, Rohingyas, Sinhala Tamils, the Palestinians or Bengalis are conveniently slotted into otherised populations of one kind or another, based on the villainous demands of varying contexts.

Postcolonial studies intervenes in these situations through cultural representations of diverse categories that provide warning, understanding and dreaming associated with our past, present and future. This becomes evident from either the poetry of the Rohingyas or those conjured by the interminably traumatized surviving Palestinians. A Rohingya named Thida Shani sums up this world of global precarity through the repeated pleas of her poem “Save me”:

No matter who he or she is,
young, old,
Palestinian, Yemeni,
Syrian, Kashmiri,
or even a Rohingya
Save me
Save me

Save me (*I am a Rohingya: Poetry from the Camps and Beyond*, 45)

In a similar vein, Palestinian poet Husam Maarouf wonders

Who will bring us the smell of grilled meat
Our bellies are empty
Who will fashion us a key to deliver us from more tales of
the dead
Our bellies are full. (“Gazan Poets Write to Survive”, 2024)

Whether one calls it “engaged literature” or “poetry of witnessing” or “literature of resistance,” through such literature postcolonial praxis seeks to sensitise the readers, generate conscious empathy and propel us towards a world beyond the miseries of the present. The essays in this collection too focus on genocidal violence and attendant considerations, xenophobic discourses and the logic of hatred, systemic fissures related to queer selves, and layered understanding of man-nature relationships in this era of the capitalocene.

Solidarity remains one of the key instruments through which this "Time of Strangeness" (Rushdie 2015) may be successfully navigated. Our journal itself is a wonderful embodiment of such solidarity shown by a whole host of fellow scholars and academics who have laboured to be a part of our venture simply on the basis of sincerity and commitment matched by perseverance and fellowship. It is this fusion which constantly inspires us to thwart either the doldrums of our everyday academic existence or the derisive negations and silences that are often flung with uncanny alacrity. It is this alone which has allowed us to sail across ten years of undaunted pursuit without faltering, wavering or resigning. Now in our eleventh year and armed with new branches and rhizomes of support we are committed to continue this pursuit in the face of evolving obstacles. This, in our view, is part of our contribution to the discursive contest where utilitarianism, indifference and incoherence often attempt to drown the armaments of reason, passionate conviction and determined progress. We are in this for the long haul. Together and onward...