

Editors' Note

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Editing a journal on postcolonial studies forces one to confront a strange paradox. On the one hand, there is a great joy in reading the incisive contributions made by different scholars around the world and the values of justice, fairness, compassion and solidarity that generally shape their work. On the other hand there is the mournful recognition that much of this work stems from centuries of systemic violence, trauma and oppression which continue to ravage the lives of countless people across the world as we read, write and teach. The aesthetic pleasure of literature and arts are therefore always tinged with the despair associated with a world where empire, genocide and catastrophe are far more common than they ever should be. This is what brings about the despair which often afflicts those who continue to strive for ideals that continue to slip away behind massacres, shamelessness, deceit, greed and various forms of dehumanisation. Consider for example the latest declaration of genocide in Palestine by the Israeli forces from the United Nations. The report and the associated speeches by those responsible for cataloguing and commenting on the inhuman crimes reveal to us a world of horror, revulsion and atrocity that almost eracinate meanings from the words which are used to describe them. As we confront the expanding limits of our own inhumanity we may well feel forced to confront the insubstantiality of our own academic and literary-critical attempts at thwarting those very forces which continue to wreak havoc all around us. The emancipatory potentialities associated with postcolonial studies then appear as chimerical rather than aspirational.

And yet one feels compelled to go on because the only other option is to sink into silence, indifference and inaction which is almost death.

Therefore, however, chimerical it may seem, one continues to cling on to that hope that someday, somehow, all of these words which we keep shoring against our own ruins will contribute to a kind of spiritual, ethical renewal that will propel the forces of good to triumph against those domineering ethos of self-consuming megalomania, avarice and hatred that are hastening our slide towards some gruesome apocalypse. In fact, without such hope, continuing one's academic journey itself becomes almost untenable. Those of us who continue to remain emotionally and intellectually invested in this profession, despite the global assault on humanities and social sciences by techno-capitalist corporations and their political and administrative stooges, hope that somewhere beyond the instrumental value of degrees in the job market, there also exists the possibility of creating a more compassionate, ethical, generous, loving and amicable citizenry who will work towards the utopian possibility of cooperative prosperity through not just a more equitable distribution of resources but a more sustainable rebuilding of our relationship with nature.

This volume contributes to the cultivation of such hope through its articles which not only highlight the global processes of exploitation, discrimination and dispossession which the world has been confronting for centuries but also the different ways in which resistance and rebuilding might be possible by amalgamating insights from civilisations across the world without surrendering to the exclusionary narratives of capital, race, class, gender or such other determinants. The papers in this issue range from examination of colonial realities within Europe to exploration of Indian literary texts of pasts and recent times to postcolonial resistances and negotiations stemming from spaces like either Bangladesh or Madagascar. From canonical texts to those less recognised, the interventions span across multiple genres and deal with history, science, ecology, identity, rebellion as well as issues like caregiving, culinary practices, nomenclature, religious practices and even the algorithms used by immigration authorities. Such variety of topics and approaches testify to the ever expanding and amorphous

domain of postcolonial studies as well as the multidimensional nature of the challenges we confront. Once again, we express our gratitude to the authors, reviewers and well-wishers who are collectively responsible for bringing together an issue as wide-ranging as this one. As the number of submissions grow, we also feel the need to reach out to more and more well-wishers for support and guidance and we hope to count on them in future as well.

Of course the shape of that future remains extremely uncertain. While on the one hand there are authoritarian forces gathering momentum across world, across the world too we also notice the emergence of resistances that are utilising traditional as well as absolutely novel modes of solidarity and organisation for resisting those authoritarian and oppressive forces. The resultant churning not only reveals tendencies towards unforeseen threats but also glimmers of greater constellations of resilient collectives dedicated towards futures marked by an undaunted spirit of generosity and determination. It is from them that we seek inspiration as well so that despite all the risks, threats and dangers that surround us we can keep ourselves moored in all that is good, kind and joyous in human civilisations can continue to outlive the traumas we keep on inflicting on ourselves. As always, I pray that you join us in these endeavours, however fragile and miniscule they may be, so that our cumulative strengths and abilities can surmount the adversities often appear so viciously unrelenting. Despite the seeming inadequacy of our semantic sources, may the last word never rest with evil and may we continue to remember and envision replendent communities of shared love, joy and plenitude.