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Hope and Utopia in the Global South Literature

guest editors: **Prof. Om Prakash Dwivedi (Bennet University, Delhi)**

Prof. Roderick McGillis (University of Calgary, Alberta)

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contact: metacriticjournal@gmail.com, om_dwivedi2003@yahoo.com, rmcgilli@ucalgary.ca

website: <http://metacriticjournal.com/>

Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory is an open-access, peer-review, online publication for academic research, published twice a year by the Faculty of Letters, Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj, Romania. It promotes free-access for academic work and it welcomes authors who want to share their research and resources with their peers. It encourages, recognizes and rewards intellectual excellence in interdisciplinary and intermedial approaches of literary culture, visual culture and theory. The journal welcomes papers in English (or, for regionally oriented topics, Romanian) from the following domains: comparative studies, including digital and posthuman studies; literary studies, cultural studies, including social and gender studies; media and film studies, literary criticism and theory, cultural poetics.

The old colonial binaries continue to drive and structure the globe, dividing it into global north and global south. This divisive approach is exploitative, and aims to retain, even heighten the cultural supremacy, economic superstructure, and political power of the Global north. The post-World War II period saw the emergence of the postcolonial Third World. Likewise, the Commonwealth, as it was known, was subdued and dominated in various ways. The 1960s witnessed the arrival of a new geographical category of the Global South, pointing to the abiding interest of the Global North to perpetuate, even legitimize the old colonial structures in these regions. The popularity of the Global south within academic circles could be

identified with the launch of the journal, *The Global South* (2007), followed by an MLA panel on “Global South”, thus giving a new direction to comparative literary studies.

The formulation of the global south is inevitably tied to the rise of the USA as a superpower. The exigencies of North American power needed new tools to study, analyse, and control cultural productions from elsewhere, resulting in favourable conditions for America’s rise in the world, which is easily discernible in the capitalism-induced neoliberal ideology.

Deprived of normative structures, neoliberal forces persistently formulate mechanisms to lock the circulation of resources within certain groups, that is mostly within the Global North. The conversion of and control over almost everything as resources for this selective group of valued lives has led to the emergence of a superstructure, which thrives on unregulated power to dispose and eliminate weak bodies. Under such extreme life conditions, morality and social justice are no longer viable. Efficiency of unprivileged lives and their maximised risk have become the procedural codes of neoliberal regime, ensuring the supply of vital resources for selective valued lives - coercively, systematically, even legally.

To counter these oppressive structures, the performativity of literature can be of immediate vitality, creating stories of resilience from different cultural contexts of the Global South, to break up and recontextualize experiences of freedom, restoring focus on heterogenous forms of life and sufferings, thereby lending credence to Arif Dirlik’s idea of Global South as “one form of alternative global alliance” (2007). This alliance could be the counterstructure, offering mediative frameworks and actions to one more attempt to regain the lost ground of humanity and affection. ‘Global south’ may be a protean category, but its heterogenous nature, studied through comparative lenses and literatures, can help us to create collective voices of hope and utopia.

As terminologies, hope and utopia may sound weak, but when these terms are tested against the backdrop of the resilience evident in the region, one might derive the energy and determination to discover cognitive tools to help decolonize the Global South. There is always a hope for one more try to overcome the oppressive structures. No wonder, then, that Russell West Pavlov (2018) considers the “Global South” as a paradigm that “would open up spaces in which hitherto vibrant but elided traditions and ongoing routes of cultural transactions become visible in new ways” (18-19).

This **special issue** is conceptualized to identify such spaces of resilience and solidarity. Drawing from different literary traditions of the Global South, this special issue of the *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* seeks to redeem the critical efficacy of hope and utopia as emancipatory frameworks, thus aiming to give a new direction to future studies on the Global south. Contributions should address literary representations, whether fictional or otherwise, of the following issues, but not limited to:

1. neoliberalism and precarity
2. hermeneutics of decolonization
3. environmental justice
4. gender studies
5. urban life
6. digital cultures
7. biopolitics
8. marginality and precarious lives
9. South Asian partition
10. Afrofuturism
11. future of the Global south

Please submit a 150-word original proposal that clearly explains **how your study will contribute to, revise, or depart from existing debates around the above-mentioned topics**. Both proposals and final texts should be in English and should observe our guidelines as they appear on our website: <http://metacriticjournal.com/for-authors>. The final submission should consist of: a 5000-7000-word article, including a 150-word abstract, 5-7 keywords, a list of references (only cited works), a 150-word author's bio and the author's photo-portrait (jpg, separate file). Proposals and final submissions should be formatted as Word documents and sent to metacriticjournal@gmail.com, or to the guest editors, at: rmcgilli@ucalgary.ca, om_dwivedi2003@yahoo.com

Further Reading

- Arowosegbe, Jeremiah O. *Decolonising the Social Sciences in the Global South: Claude Ake and the Praxis of Knowledge Production in Africa*, Afrika-Studiecentrum, 2008.
- Bush, Ray. *Poverty and Neoliberalism: Persistence and Reproduction in the Global South*, Pluto. 2007.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, Verso, 2004.
- Chant, Sylvia and Cathy Mcilwaine (ed.). *Cities, Slums and Gender in the Global South: Towards a Feminised Urban Future*, Routledge, 2016.
- de Sousa Santos, Boaventura. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide*, Paradigm, 2014.
- Dimock, Wai Chee. *Weak Planet: Literature and Assisted Survival*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

- Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Pavlov, Russell-West (ed.). *The Global South and Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa and Maria Paula Meneses (ed.). *Knowledges Born in the Struggle: Constructing the Epistemologies of the Global South*, Routledge, 2020.
- Wegner, Phillip E. *Invoking Hope: Theory and Utopia in Dark Times*, University of Minnesota Press, 2020.
- Woertz, Eckart (ed.). *Reconfiguration of the Global South: Africa, Latin America and the 'Asian Century'*, 2017.