



# Postcolonial Studies Association Newsletter #25



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## Special Issue: Decolonising Academia?

#25 – June 2020

## Table of Contents

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>4</b>
------------------	----------

### **ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

<b>IS DECOLONIAL THOUGHT SOLUBLE IN THE NEO-LIBERAL ACADEMIA? BY CLAIRE GALLIEN</b>	<b>7</b>
---	----------

<b>TRAINING ASSOCIATE TUTORS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TOWARDS DECOLONISATION BY SURYA SIMON</b>	<b>11</b>
---	-----------

<b>DECOLONISATION: THE ISSUE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ACADEMIA BY HAJAR MAHFOODH</b>	<b>15</b>
--	-----------

<b>DECOLONISING THE ACADEMY: A PROBLEM THAT CONCERNS EVERYONE BY DALIA GEBRIAL</b>	<b>19</b>
--	-----------

### **EVENT REPORTS**

<b>DECOLONISING FEMINISM: A REPORT ON AN ONGOING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND RESEARCH PROJECT BY RACHEL CARROLL AND FIONA TOLAN</b>	<b>25</b>
---	-----------

<b>WORLD LITERATURES AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH CONFERENCE BY SUTIDA WIMUTTIKOSOL</b>	<b>29</b>
---	-----------

### **BOOK REVIEWS**

<b>NEW POSTCOLONIAL DIALECTICS: AN INTERCULTURAL COMPARISON OF INDIAN AND NIGERIAN ENGLISH PLAYS BY SARBANI SEN VENGADASALAM REVIEWED BY MALA PANDURANG</b>	<b>34</b>
---	-----------

<b>GOVERNING GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN COLONIAL INDIA: THE HIJRA, C. 1850-1900. BY JESSICA HINCHY REVIEWED BY RUKHSAR HUSSAIN</b>	<b>36</b>
---	-----------

<b>CALL FOR BOOK PROPOSALS: POSTCOLONIALISM ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES SERIES</b>	<b>39</b>
---	-----------

PSA NEWS

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND BOOK REVIEWERS FOR PSA NEWSLETTER #26: GENERAL ISSUE 42

PSA MEMBERSHIP 43

NOTES 45

## Editorial

Welcome to PSA Newsletter #25, a special issue on the theme of 'Decolonising Academia?' At the time of writing this editorial in mid-June 2020, we are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and across the world there are Black Lives matters protests in the aftermath of George Floyd's death at the hands of US police. Decolonising the system is as important as ever at a time when the legacies of colonialism continue to be entrenched in the system. This special issue focuses on the challenges of decolonising academia, including our research and teaching practices but also universities as institutions and systems.

Attempts to decolonise academic and educational practices are not new, one only has to think of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o influential book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986), where Ngũgĩ emphasised the importance of writing in indigenous languages and drawing on local tradition to decolonise Kenyan culture. Calls to decolonise academia have gained momentum in the last decade, not only in the area of teaching (for example the 2015 'Why is my Curriculum White?' campaign) but also in terms of research where we see the publication of an increasing number of books and articles engaging with the topic of decolonisation in academic contexts. The toppling of statues that commemorate colonial and racializing practices across the world this week has also once again brought into sharp focus how discrimination and inequality are often present in our daily lives without being questioned.

Our contributors similarly engage with many of our (daily) academic practices from a range of geographical and linguistic perspectives and ask how we might start decolonising these practices. **Claire Gallien** interrogates to what extent decolonial thought can take place in a neo-liberal academia, while **Surya Simon's** contribution emphasises the importance of associate tutor training for decolonising the university. **Hajar Mahfoodh** examines how the English language has colonised academia, with specific reference to Arabic-speaking contexts and **Dalia Gebrial** considers how we can decolonise academia beyond postcolonial studies.

Decolonisation also lies at the heart of the event report section with **Rachel Carroll and Fiona Tolan** reporting on an international partnership and research project on 'Decolonising Western Feminism,'

while **Sutida Wimuttikosol** tells us about her experience of attending the World Literatures and the Global South conference at the University of Sydney in August 2019.

In our book reviews section, we feature Mala Pandurang's review of Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam's *New Postcolonial Dialectics: An Intercultural Comparison of Indian and Nigerian English Plays* and Rukhsar Hussain's review of Jessica Hinchy's *Governing Gender and Sexuality in Colonial India: The Hijra, c.1850-1900*.

I would like to finish this editorial by not only thanking all of our **contributors** for sharing their fantastic work with us but also my fellow newsletter editor **Edward Powell**, who unfortunately had to step down after the last issue. Edward edited the newsletter with great enthusiasm in the last three years and played a significant role in shaping the thematic foci of special issues and inviting outstanding scholars to contribute to the PSA newsletter.

I hope you stay safe during these challenging times and I wish you happy reading!

Isabelle

**DR ISABELLE HESSE** is Lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Sydney, Australia. Her research is situated at the nexus of postcolonial, Jewish, and Middle Eastern studies and her first book, *The Politics of Jewishness in Contemporary World Literature: The Holocaust, Zionism, and Colonialism* was published by Bloomsbury in 2016. Her current book project examines how Israel and Palestine have been represented in British and German culture in the last three decades and she is also working on a new project about speculative fiction and settler-colonialism in Australia, Israel/Palestine, and South Africa.



# News

# Call for Contributions and Book Reviewers for PSA Newsletter #26: General Issue

The next issue of the PSA newsletter is a general issue that is open to contributions on any theme. Original contributions should be between 700 and 1,200 words and should be fully referenced using the Harvard Referencing Style. Reports on recent events or conferences are also welcome.

Contributors should feel free to contact the outgoing newsletter editor Isabelle Hesse ([isabelle.hesse@sydney.edu.au](mailto:isabelle.hesse@sydney.edu.au)) as soon as possible with any inquiries or proposals. The deadline for submissions is **15<sup>th</sup> October 2020**. Please submit your contribution via email to the newsletter editor.

We are also looking for a reviewer for the following book:

- Ben Holgate, *Climate and Crises: Magical Realism as Environmental Discourse*. Routledge, 2019. <https://www.routledge.com/Climate-and-Crises-Magical-Realism-as-Environmental-Discourse-1st-Edition/Holgate/p/book/9781138553484>

as well as any other recent books in the field of postcolonial studies.

Reviews should be between 500 and 1,000 words, should be fully referenced using the Harvard Referencing Style, and should be submitted via email to the newsletter editor Isabelle Hesse ([isabelle.hesse@sydney.edu.au](mailto:isabelle.hesse@sydney.edu.au)) by **15<sup>th</sup> October 2020**.



## Membership

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