

Editorial: New Topographies

Ato Quayson, Debjani Ganguly and Neil ten Kortenaar

Readers of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* will recall the moment when the narrator first enters Mustafa Sa'eed's library. The passage repays close attention:

Though I sought revenge, yet I could not resist my curiosity. First of all I shall see and hear, then I shall burn it down as though it had never been. The books—I could see in the light of the lamp that they were arranged in categories. Books on economics, history and literature. Zoology. Geology. Mathematics. Astronomy. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Gibbon. Macaulay. Toynbee. The complete works of Bernard Shaw. Keynes. Tawney. Smith. Robinson. *The Economics of Imperfect Competition*. Hobson *Imperialism*. Robinson *An Essay on Marxian Economics*. Sociology. Anthropology. Psychology. Thomas Hardy. Thomas Mann. E. G. Moore. Thomas Moore. Virginia Woolf. Wittgenstein. Einstein. Brierly. Namier. Books I had heard of and others I had not. Volumes of poetry by poets of whom I did not know the existence. *The Journals of Gordon*. *Gulliver's Travels*. Kipling. Housman. *The History of the French Revolution* Thomas Carlyle. *Lectures on the French Revolution* Lord Acton. Books bound in leather. Books in paper covers. Old tattered books. Books that looked as if they'd just come straight from the printers. Huge volumes the size of tombstones. Small books with gilt edges the size of packs of playing cards. Signatures. Words of dedication.... Owen. Ford Madox Ford. Stefan Zweig. E. G. Browne. Laski. Hazlitt. *Alice in Wonderland*. Richards. *The Koran* in English. *The Bible* in English. Gilbert Murray. Plato. *The Economics of Colonialism* Mustafa Sa'eed. *Colonialism and Monopoly* Mustafa Sa'eed. *The Cross and Gunpowder* Mustafa Sa'eed. *The Rape of Africa* Mustafa Sa'eed. *Prospero and Caliban*. *Totem and Taboo*. Doughty. Not a single Arabic book. A graveyard. A mausoleum. An insane idea. A prison. A huge joke. A treasure chamber. "Open Sesame, and let's divide up the jewels among the people." (*Season*, 113–114)

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The essentially telegraphese impressions mime the character of browsing, but in a context shaped by feelings of anger and resentment toward what is being seen. Despite the fact that the browsing appears fleeting and random, it conveys a tellingly rhythmic patterning. Entire subject headers (zoology, economics, mathematics) are listed, alongside author names that stand as paradigmatic signatures in and of themselves (Gibbon, Smith, Macaulay). These are mixed in with nonattributed book titles alongside others with their authors' names duly noted. The roughly rhythmic sequencing of disciplinary subject headers, paradigmatic author names, and bare titles is interrupted briefly with references to the material characteristics of the books on display (leather-bound, paperback, gilt-edged), their relative sizes (large and small), and their specific location in the room (strewn around the floor as opposed to being stacked upon the shelves, in boxes). There are also references to inscriptions and paratextual traces (signatures and dedications) that suggest that the browsing narrator has paused to look inside some of the books. This also hints at a modicum of perambulation, as though the narrator was actually walking through the library as he browsed. Significantly, the four books of Mustafa Sa'eed's that are listed in sequence toward the end of the passage serve to break the patterned randomness that appears to have governed the browsing so far. Rather, their sandwiching between the prior list of book titles and a short list of postcolonial and ethno-cultural classics—*Prospero and Caliban*, *Totem and Taboo*—immediately raises the question of how Mustafa Sa'eed's treatises are to be interpolated into this library. Are they, at least from their titles, critiques of the colonial library, or like the two unattributed titles that follow them, co-opted critiques to the monumental archive? The chink of ambiguity exposed by the precise location of Mustafa Sa'eed's books within the sequence of impressions is further accentuated by the scornful observation of the narrator that there is not a single Arabic text in this library. His disdain is augmented by a series of negative epithets. The library is at once a form of play-acting, an insane idea and a prison, a graveyard, a mausoleum and a joke. This is no ordinary library, but an archaeology of knowledge, one that frames the colonized within the epistemic constraints of a particular and exclusionary colonial patterning despite the implicit claims to universalism.

Our natural inclination to interpret the narrator's impressionistic accounting as the unraveling of the colonial library must be held in abeyance to permit a more complex interpretation of this eclectic yet erudite collection. Beyond the revelation that Mustafa Sa'eed is an avid intellectual and thinker, his library can also be read as the consummate condensation of a chronotope in the Bakhtinian sense: a chronotope of colonial knowledge as well as of colonial space-making, and one into which Sa'eed as colonized intellectual has been discursively inserted. There is some irony to the narrator's own apparent disdain for what is laid out before him, a point we shall come to later. For now, however, let us see what this recasting of the colonial library/archive as a chronotope has to offer. Bakhtin provides two interconnected elaborations of the chronotope wherein time becomes material and visible, and space is charged with temporality. His remarks on Goethe's perception of space-time in "The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism" adds another dimension to his discussion of the chronotope that resonates closely with the cognitive mapping and visualization implied in the narrator's encounter with

Mustafa Sa'eed's books.¹ Although Bakhtin does not invoke the term *chronotope in "Bildungsroman,"* the overall typology of novelistic forms he provides in "Forms of Time" (adventure, ordeal, biography, etc.) is replicated in a contracted form in the first half of the later piece and, thus must be read alongside it for a fuller understanding of the concept.² From his discussion of Goethe's perspectival modulations in the second part of "*Bildungsroman*" we find that the chronotope is realized as much as a form of cognitive perception as a schematic organizing principle of narrative as such. The chronotope is, as he famously put it, where the "knots of narrative are tied and untied."³ For Bakhtin, then, Goethe is a superb perceiver and translator of visibility precisely in the chronotopical sense of making space-time a sensorially apprehended continuum. As he puts it: "We stress, first and foremost, the exceptional significance of *visibility* for Goethe (this is generally known). All other external feelings, internal experiences, reflections, and abstract concepts are joined together around the *seeing eye* as a center, as the first and last authority. Anything essential can and should be visible; anything invisible is inessential.... Even the most complex and crucial concepts and ideas, according to Goethe, can always be represented in visible form, can be demonstrated with a schematic or symbolic blueprint or model, or with an adequate drawing" ("*Bildungsroman*," 27; italics in original). From a detailed reading of Goethe's journals, Bakhtin suggests that the writer always insisted on seeing historical processes not in terms of mere spatial contiguities, but as myriad temporalities that gain in density, concreteness, and visibility in their encapsulation in space: "Thus Goethe wished and was able to perceive everything with his eyes. The invisible did not exist for him. But at the same time his eyes did not want to (and could not) see that which was *ready-made* and *immobile*. His eyes didn't recognize simple spatial contiguities or the simple coexistence of things and phenomena. Behind each static multiformity he saw multitemporality: for him diversity was distributed in various stages (epochs) of development, that is, it acquired a temporal significance" ("*Bildungsroman*," 28).

If we reread Goethe's perceptions of space-time as a cognitive schema explicitly aligned to a particular form of ocularism, we are able to expand the concept of chronotope beyond the specific geographical schemata that Bakhtin provides us with at the end of the "Forms of Time" essay. There he lays out an expanded annotation of various sites and locations by which to recognize chronotopicity within narrative. In the long history of Western literature, these have included: the road, the slum, the castle, the parlor, the provincial town, and the threshold, among others.⁴ These are also fundamentally chronotopes for the staging of 'encounters' between human actors. The precise nature and salience of the encounter that each chronotope encapsulates depends largely on the generic conventions governing the narratives. If we expand the notion of encounters to encompass not just those between an individual protagonist and various others, but also between the individual and multiple discursive registers

1 Mikhail Bakhtin, "The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)," *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

2 Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Carly Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

3 "Forms of Time," 250.

4 "Forms of Time," 243–258.

of sociality, we acquire a wider lens for interpreting the encounter with Mustafa Sa'eed's library.

The library becomes a chronotope of a discursive encounter that makes *visible* the epistemic ravages of colonialism. It sutures several dimensions of colonial space-time and stages the myriad dynamics of encounter inhering them. The narrator's report on the library also marks a deeply ambivalent relationship to the colonial archive. He appears to want to disavow the assumed incorporation of his nemesis into the archive, yet is propelled by the force of his curiosity to browse the library before setting it on fire. That he ends up not burning it down is a sign of his own ambivalence. Even as he disavows it, he is no less interpellated by the colonial episteme. We must also remember that in agreeing to act as the Marlow to Mustafa Sa'eed's Kurtz at the start of the novel, the narrator has already identified with his interlocutor and, in fact, has had his consciousness inexorably transformed by him. When he codifies his browsing around two apparently contradictory spatio-temporal metaphors—the tombstone/mausoleum and the mythographic *Arabian Nights* (“Open Sesame, and let's divide up the jewels among the people”)—he also invokes another dimension of the chronotope that inheres at once in death and in its elusive narrative deferrals. The question also arises: whose mausoleum is this? Is it that of the Western tradition or of Mustafa Sa'eed's Faustian ambition in attempting to consume then be a part of the colonial library? And who is it that attempts to divide the spoils among the people? Has Sa'eed's season of migration to the north *and* his Westernization *and* his contribution to the Western episteme *after* immersing himself thoroughly within its canon compromised his critique and made him nothing but a cipher of the archive, a tic in the machine, and a “thing with one face/ a thing” a la Louis MacNeice's “Prayer Before Birth”? And in terms of space, does Mustafa Sa'eed's library not instantiate a colonial spatial logic by demonstrating the irrevocable globalization of imperial knowledge production machinery by which it incorporates items from the colonies and elsewhere? Thus we find Laski *and* Gibbon *and* Mann *and* Wittgenstein *and* Einstein *and* Zweig *and* Mustafa Sa'eed himself. *Lectures on the French Revolution* and *Prospero and Caliban* and *The Rape of Africa* all alongside one another as objects of incorporation and contemplation. That the entire novel also outlines a fundamental split in consciousness that renders the narrator no longer at ease in the old dispensation of the provincial village in which he grew up and returned to after his studies in England is not to be discounted as the labile backdrop to the agitated survey that he enacts in the encounter with the library of his nemesis.

Although concepts such as the colonial library and archive, chronotope, cognitive mapping, discursive encounter, and colonial space-making can be grafted on to the problematic of postcolonial reading, they are not to be appropriated as singular or indeed homogeneous terms. Rather, each term can be seen to negotiate a dialectical relationship between particularity and threshold. Read in one way, a postcolonial particularity may be the marker of a specific cultural detail, or the trace of colonial trauma, or some other fact of identity. Read from the perspective of discourse, however, each particularity must be grasped as the threshold of relations across the entire textual apparatus (metaphor, point-of-view, dramaturgic intervention, poetic interlude), and also between the textual domain and the social relations that it speaks

to, strategically distorts, and critiques.⁵ As Paulo Horta points out in his essay for this issue, Salman Rushdie's relationship to the intrepid Richard Burton may be perceived as a form of cosmopolitanism, one reflected in the peculiar placing of the epiphanic encounters with libraries in the work of the two writers. And yet the encounters we glean from Horta's essay are quite different from the one in Mustafa Sa'eed's library, for in Rushdie and Burton the vexed history of Islam comes to animate the libraries they represent, such that the encounter with the library also becomes an encounter with a particular historiography of cosmopolitanism that has been rendered peripheral in conceptions of Western modernity. There are also several other encounters with the library-as-archive that might be highlighted in a comparative spirit to stand alongside Mustafa Sa'eed's and that range well beyond postcolonial writing: the medieval library in Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose*, the Sinology library in Elias Canetti's *Auto da Fé*, the bookshelf that falls on and kills Leonard Bast, the working-class autodidact in E.M. Forster's *Howard's End*, Jay Gatsby's bought library of unread books, Jorge Luis Borges's labyrinthine library, Sherlock Holmes's library of books and eclectic esoteric paraphernalia, Amitav Ghosh's grandfather's library and the archive of trading accounts he discusses in *In an Antique Land*, Isaac Okonkwo's collection of books in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, and the books thrown to kill a cat in Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger*.⁶ The library is more than one thing, but in each instance it represents a chronotope of epistemic ordering and exclusion. Going beyond print, we may also take account of the various dimensions of orality and the ways in which it is taken to shape the postcolonial library. When Mohsin Hamid's Changez spends the entire course of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* talking to the quiet American, he invokes a trope of the dialogical monologue that we have already been made familiar with in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* before that. As Karin Barber, Abiola Irele, and Uzo Ensowan have shown us, orality does not just animate the so-called oral cultures once favored by anthropologists, but the entire range of transactions that take place between orality and literacy, tradition and modernity, localism and globalism.⁷

As we hope will be clear by now, our opening gambit to stage a close textual reading of a passage from Salih's celebrated novel is hardly incidental. In announcing our new journal venture in these opening pages, we gesture toward a mode of reading that stays with the text, lingers with it, and expresses a reluctance to depart from it without extracting multiple levels of meanings, some even contradictory. In other words, at the risk of echoing a well-known maverick philosopher, we *tarry* with the text.

5 For a broader discussion of the relationship between particularities and thresholds, see Ato Quayson, *Calibrations: Reading for the Social*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2003), xi–xl.

6 Ankhi Mukherjee provides a fascinating reading from fictional and biographical accounts of the epiphanic impact of the encounter with books and libraries in the postcolonial world. She notes the impressions of Rushdie, Bhabha, Naipaul, Ghosh, Coetzee, and various other writers and scholars on this question. See Chapter 1 of her *What Is a Classic?: Postcolonial Rewriting and Invention of the Canon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

7 Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Abiola Irele, *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Uzoma Esonwanne, "Orality and the Genres of African Postcolonial Writing," in *The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature* Vol. 1, ed. Ato Quayson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 137–170.

In bringing back the term *literary* to the idea of postcolonial inquiry, we signal the centrality of a paradigm of reading that we feel has been somewhat eclipsed in recent decades by the field's voracious extratextual and interdisciplinary perambulations. Here one might well ask what a new journal enterprise in postcolonial studies that aims to reanimate the text as much as circumnavigate the hermeneutic horizon of the literary has to offer the field in the twenty-first century.

Few will doubt that postcolonial studies is now an impressively well-established field of interdisciplinary scholarship. Barring economics, few disciplines in the humanities and the interpretive social sciences have been immune to its theoretical influence. The stream of articles, books, and indeed positions in the field that have emerged over the last four decades provide ample evidence, as do the now standard controversies about the definition of key terms, the relationship between postcolonial criticism and politics, and the question of the differences between revolution and revisionism that erupt in the field from time to time.⁸ As a preliminary justification for a new journal in the field, however, we note that, notwithstanding the impeccable literary credentials of the most celebrated theoretical founders of postcolonialism—Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha—literature and the aesthetic at large have suffered a regrettable abeyance as prime sites for generating theoretical perspectives on the conditions of the postcolonial. This is something we hope to redress.

Early work in the field from the period of commonwealth literary studies in the 1960s turned to grasping a largely inert background of cultural, social, and political particulars in order to interpret newly emerging literatures from Africa, India, and the Caribbean. This allowed Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, or Hulme's *The Bone People*, or Wilson Harris's *Palace of the Peacock* to be explained in anthropological, social, political, and other such discrete contextualizing terms. A shift in the perception of what constituted context for such writings had first been suggested in the works of Albert Memmi, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and other postcolonial liberationist thinkers from the 1950s. Thus, in 1955 Aimé Césaire outlined the earliest form of colonial discourse analysis in his monumental *Discours sur le colonialisme*.⁹ This was followed in rapid succession by the works of Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon. Each of these thinkers deployed modes of analysis that were rhetorically sophisticated and shot through with revolutionary political and cultural ideals. C. L. R. James, George Lamming, and V. S. Naipaul also raised key questions about nation and narration, the struggle between universalism and localism in the literature of the newly independent nations, and the fraught intersections of the aesthetic, the ethical, and the political in these new forms of writing.¹⁰ Much of this

8 The question of the difference between revolution and revisionism has been comprehensively restated in Graham Huggan's fine introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

9 Albert Memmi, *Portrait du Colonisé précédé du Portrait du Colonisateur*, Correa, Buchet/Chastel, 1957, published in English as *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (New York, Orion, 1965); Franz Fanon "Sur la culture nationale," in *Les damnés de la terre*, Paris, Francois Mapperso, 1961, published in English as "On national culture," in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

10 James, C.L.R. "The Artist in the Caribbean," first delivered as a lecture at the University of West Indies, Mona/Jamaica, 1959, and published in *The Future in the Present* (London: Allison and Busby, 1977); George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960); V. S. Naipaul, *The*

was to remain muted in the literary history and criticism of the 1960s and 1970s until the blockbuster arrival of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978.

Orientalism refined the problematic of context through a Foucauldian reading of a vast discursive matrix that stretched from the Middle East to China. In turn, Ashcroft *et al*'s less theoretically inflected *The Empire Strikes Back* (1989) conceptualized the postcolonial literary field as fundamentally constituted by critiques of metropolitan literary cultures and the latter's assumed superiority; thus the various modalities of "writing back" that they celebrated. Since then, the concern with discursive context has been vastly enriched by the work of Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Abdul JanMohamed, and Neil Lazarus among others, often from starkly distinct and oftentimes mutually contradictory theoretical positions. Thus, to Lazarus's avowed Marxist literary dialectic was pitched Homi Bhabha's Lacanian readings of ambivalence, splitting, and suture. By the mid-1990s these scholars were in their turn joined by interlocutors from nonliterary fields such as Arjun Appadurai (anthropology), Dipesh Chakrabarty (history), and Achille Mbembe (political science). These interventions provided a robust cross-disciplinary contextual dimension to literary studies. The net effect of these interdisciplinary accretions, however, has been a gradual shift away from the examination of the literary object and toward the exploration of its discursive, material, and sociohistorical contexts. The study of rhetorical and tropological devices made way for that of discursive ensembles, but discursive ensembles were not necessarily couched in historical and cultural terms. At the same time, the modalities of literary analysis proper were directed to the study of cultural productions, whether of the highbrow or popular variety. In postcolonial cultural studies the device of the expressive fragment that distilled the social realities around it became commonplace, and the intercourse between discourse analysis and the study of culture was firmly established. The distance of this vein of cultural studies from the Marxist-inspired version practiced by scholars at the University of Birmingham's Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, founded in 1964 by Richard Hoggart and consolidated by Stuart Hall, has been lamented by various observers.¹¹ Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, at its extreme, postcolonial studies has been plagued by both a hyperpoliticization and a hypertheorization that has all but eclipsed the valence of literary scholarship, both as history and as criticism. We note, however, that the trends that were manifested in the study of postcolonial literatures in the 1980s and 1990s were of a piece with cognate changes in literary studies more generally. From the early 1980s literary studies were deeply influenced by the poststructuralist and neoformalist approaches of Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Pierre Bourdieu, and Mikhail Bakhtin, among others.

Thus the primary rationale for launching the *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Inquiry* (PLI) at this juncture is to restore literature, aesthetics, and close textual

Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies—British, French, and Dutch—in the West Indies and South America (London, André Deutsch, 1962).

11 For a handy account of the distinctive character of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, see Nicholas Thomas, "Becoming Undisciplined: Anthropology and Cultural Studies," *Anthropological Theory Today*, ed. Henrietta L. Moore, (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), 262–279. And for a detailed critique of the overlapping tendencies between cultural and postcolonial studies, see especially E. San Juan Jr., *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

engagement—rhetorical, narratological and tropological—to the center of postcolonial critical inquiry, not as ancillary concerns. This is no mere exercise in inversion (i.e., from text to context and now back to text), but a serious calibration of the erstwhile hermeneutic strengths of the field and a conscious attempt to bring them to the fore. To read literature as nonancillary is not, however, to read it autonomously of other things: quite the opposite. It is rather to attend to the granularity of texts *as well as* their historicity in the manner that the best postcolonial literary critics have shown us. What constitutes a thorough postcolonial hermeneutics of reading will be central to the concerns of this journal and contributions will be actively encouraged to engage such questions.

One hopes to one day see a full narratological account of say Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Satanic Verses* or Toni Morrison's *Beloved* to both qualify and expand what Gerard Genette did superbly for Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* in *Narrative Discourse*.¹² Or perhaps a doubled Hegelian and Althusserian reading not of Sophocles's *Antigone* that Judith Butler superbly presents us with in *Antigone's Claim* but of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* or *The Road*, to take just a few examples of postcolonial writings that might provide productive grounds for theorizing literary tragedy.¹³ That Deleuze and Guattari turn to Kafka and not to Gabriel Garcia Marquez (whose work, alas, they clearly were not aware of) for outlining what they understood by minority literature must serve as a source of inspiration to postcolonial scholars rather than as the terminus for the elaboration of minority discourse.¹⁴ On the other hand, given the sheer rhetorical intensity that suffused the writings of decolonization thinkers such as Fanon, Césaire, James, Cabral, and others, their works are ripe for nuanced literary critical interpretation. *PLI* will thus actively encourage all essays that are oriented toward modes of reading understood as the combination of rhetorical and historical vectors, with both dimensions of rhetoric and historicity carefully situated and defined.

It is noteworthy that at least since the late 1990s, highly innovative postcolonial readings of Shakespeare, James Joyce, and even medieval literatures have expanded the ambit of postcolonial criticism and enriched this canonical literary corpus in turn. Significantly, all the insightful postcolonial readings of such extramural literary works were originally published not in peer-reviewed journals but in edited collections or monographs. Given the protectionist nature of subfield ratification in literature departments, this was somewhat inescapable. Thus another objective of *PLI* is to provide a forum for essays that deploy the full spectrum of postcolonial literary critical approaches to works in the fields of modernism, medievalism, Renaissance, and Shakespeare, and Victorian studies, all of which have in recent years lent themselves to rich postcolonial interpretations.

It remains for us now to attend briefly to the contemporary conjunctures of postcolonial criticism on which this inaugural issue is based. In signaling these through the idea of

12 Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin with a foreword by Jonathan Culler, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

13 Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2002).

14 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan and Réda Besmaïa (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

topography, we once again, Bakhtin-like, conjoin literary space-making with the materiality of the temporal. At a time when disciplines are scrambling to keep up with both the accelerations and upheavals of a global informational economy and radical geopolitical shifts away from Euro-American dominance, how, we ask, might literary post-colonialism be reconfigured? Since the turn of the century we have witnessed genuine shifts in world literary flows brought on by proliferating information technology and translation networks; by transformed territorial and economic alignments in a post-Soviet era; and by the emergence of multiple war zones and new ethnic and religious conflagrations. Large-scale humanitarian crises wrought by wars and catastrophic climate change have brought new subalterns into our moral economy—asylum seekers, climate refugees, illegal migrants, and even large swathes of the Muslim populace demonized as a consequence of the ghoulish global visibility of fundamentalist versions of political Islam.

Critical responses to these developments on the part of our contributors are the beginnings of a long conversation that will play out in the pages of this journal in the years to come. For now, they showcase emergent literary topographies that can no longer be circumscribed by the classic postcolonial geographies of Europe and its others. An essay on contemporary Korean literature by Jini Watson thus sits side by side with another by Matthew Omelsky on African science-fiction, and yet another by Debjani Ganguly on the subgenre of the world novel in our war-torn, hypermediated information age. Other essays traverse areas of criticism hitherto overlooked or deliberately cast aside. For a field that has been so preoccupied for so long with colonial pasts and their traction in building postcolonial polities, its critical neglect of a prime literary genre—the historical novel—is startling to say the least. We have a contribution by Hamish Dalley that not only addresses the reasons for this occlusion, but also makes a strong case for why postcolonial scholars need to attend to the work of this genre in rendering legible the conjoining of the factual and the fictional through a mode of allegorical realism. And John Noyes's essay on Herder's anti-imperialism and the antinomies of reason suggests ways in which postcolonial criticism might reengage with the troubled legacy of the Enlightenment.

Topographically speaking, few sites have generated as much urgent thought in recent years as our planet, or more specifically, the threat of anthropogenic climate change on the geophysical makeup of our primary abode in the universe. What shape might postcolonial thought take in the face of this unprecedented challenge to our fundamental coordinates of belonging and flourishing as a species? What might literary history look like in the era of the anthropocene? We begin our inaugural section on "paradigms" with these very sobering questions. Ian Baucom's "search for a method" as a critical theorist and literary historian of the postcolonial takes him back to Levi-Strauss's seminal work on the "historian's code" and its fraught relationship with what he called the "human order." Without rehearsing the intricacies of Baucom's engagement with Lévi-Strauss and subsequent thinkers right down to Dipesh Chakrabarty and his seminal essay on "the climate of history," we signal the emergence of a paradigm shift in humanistic scholarship that we intend to address in ever more depth and complexity in future issues. Ian Baucom's elaborate discussion of the code of history in the face of ecological catastrophe forces us to think very differently about chronotopical scales. The way we account for space and time, and

our responsibility toward the planet, changes radically when we contemplate millennia and geological ages rather than the puny lines of humankind that have governed extant historiography.

The postcolonial must be a way of teaching as much as a way of reading. Philippa Kelly's essay in this issue, on approaching *The Tempest* as a dramaturg from a postcolonial perspective, is the first in what we intend to be a regular series of accounts of and meditations on pedagogy. Postcolonial texts pose particular challenges to scholars embedded in national literature departments, teaching students often culturally removed from the texts under discussion. What does a decolonizing pedagogy look like? A culturally alert pedagogy? We intend for this series on pedagogy to be a valuable and practical resource to all scholars concerned with teaching post-colonial literature, film, and aesthetics. And to the shape of things to come.