

EDITORIAL

Employing postcolonialism as a lens for viewing and exploring the globalizing world is one of the most controversial approaches to the subject matter of the humanities and social sciences. The postcolonialist approach has both enthusiastic endorsers and sworn opponents. For more than a half-century now, their disputes have powered the dynamic development of postcolonial discourse. As an approach to interpreting the legacy of colonialism and decolonization, postcolonialism has taken on a new form, which is influenced by poststructuralism. The idea of a definitive, worldwide rejection of the colonial past has been replaced by a multiplicity of colonialisms arising at different times, in varying forms, and in different territories. In the process, postcolonial discourse has become fragmented. Its global applicability has been weakened and it has been transformed into a plethora of local narratives.

With the rise of new social movements and the end of the Cold War, a new postcolonial discourse has appeared that brings together and interconnects these polycentric narratives. Postcolonialism is now being studied with a new kind of multicultural sensitivity. This new approach to research involves a critical reinterpretation of historically and spatially fixed manifestations of inequality, oppression, and exclusion, with the goal of rectifying their consequences in the real world. The study of postcolonialism has broadened its scope to include post-communist nations, relations between East and West, and newly emerging power structures in the contemporary world, among other topics.

The field of area studies is no exception to this trend, which has led us to devote a monothematic issue of our journal to it. This special issue of *Studia Territorialia*, entitled “Postcolonial Perspectives in Area Studies,” is the result of a call for papers that we announced in 2021. Increasingly, articles touching on colonialism and its legacy have featured prominently among those submitted to us over the past several years. We have published contributions illuminating the competing memory discourses of German colonialism and the Holocaust,

anti-apartheid activism within the UN Commission on Human Rights, and the focus in French rap music on colonial crimes in North Africa. The interest in the study of postcolonialism indicates its growing relevance to area studies and possibly, its utility as a lens for viewing real-world social and political problems. There is a need for continuing critical reappraisal.

In this issue, we have gathered together three full-length articles that employ and further develop the postcolonial approach. They probe varying territorial contexts in which struggles for domination and control have occurred. The first contribution is a study of the positionality of the researcher in area studies, centered on the micro-dimensions of the contemporary production of knowledge. Kristina Garalytė and Karina Simonson deconstruct their own engagement with Dalit and South African Jewish cultures and specific subjects within those fields of study. In their self-reflective narratives, they examine the discipline of area studies as it is practiced in Lithuania. The Lithuanian experience is an especially interesting case to study. Lithuania is a part of the West, yet it does not fit the most general European colonial patterns since the country had long been under Soviet occupation and rule.

Anwar Mhajne and Crystal Whetstone, in their collaborative work, take up the theme while also investigating their positionalities and reflecting on their fieldwork experiences in the Middle East & North Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. They turn away from the established approaches to area studies in an effort to advance decolonial feminist scholarship in the field. Their autoethnographic accounts of their research for their dissertation projects point out the complexity of their status as both insider and outsider with respect to the cultures they study. Based on their experiences, they suggest specific methods for decolonizing area studies.

Finally, the third contribution is a critical review of the colonization of animals in North America. This article, by Denisa Krásná, summarizes and maps the state of the art within the fields of ecofeminism and critical animal studies. The author zooms in on the colonial experience of animals and argues that their colonization has been an inherent part of the entire Western expansionist project from the very beginning. She also devotes a good part of her study to the assimilation and oppression of indigenous people, including through the introduction of dairy farming and the consumption of animal milk.

The issue's regular book review column highlights two publications that look into subversion and information warfare waged by Russia's military against Ukraine and the West. Both books were written before Russia's reinvasion of Ukraine in 2022. Notwithstanding, they are highly relevant to the lifecycle of

colonization in Eastern Europe. Putin's wars of aggression may be the final step in the looming collapse of the Russian empire. We hope to cover Russia in more detail in one of our upcoming issues.

Wishing you a thought-stimulating read,

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doi: 10.14712/23363231.2022.6