



Critical Survey

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Call for Papers

Decolonial Utopia and the War to Be Human

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Many ex-colonies may be sovereign now, nevertheless, as Nelson Maldonado-Torres rightly notices, “As modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday” (2007) because coloniality (which should not be confused with colonialism) persists and prevails. No wonder then that Catherine Walsh and Walter Dignolo view decoloniality as a concept, analytic, and praxis “born in responses to the promises of modernity and the realities of coloniality.” (2018) That is why there is a greater need to decenter or delink from the matrix of power that continues to operate in different forms. The everyday war to be identified as a human has never been so concerning as it is in our present age. (Tadiar 2022). The emergence of a deep state in the 1980s has only accelerated the project of dehumanization to the extent that humans and machines are enmeshed. How else do we define the pervasive presence of violence, destruction, and annihilation in erstwhile colonies and the Global South countries? Isn't this war epistemic and existence-based, inflicted as it is upon select geographical territories? It won't be a far-fetched idea to claim that the history of neocolonialism only advances the age-old colonial tendencies, albeit in different ways.

Oscar Wilde once said that any map that doesn't have a utopian imprint on it is not worth looking at. Likewise, Ernst Bloch imagines a utopia, which is neither programmatic nor having a blueprint, but an ongoing process that is an integral part of human nature and all of existence itself. (1968) “Utopias have often been ... dead structures conceived by economists, politicians and moralists, but they have also been the living dreams of poets.” (Berner 2019) After all, literature is an exercise in utopia. In his influential book, *What is Literature?* Jean-Paul Sartre emphasizes, “One does not write for slaves.” (1947) Implicit in this claim is the centrality of the freedom of others. Sartre sees reading as an exercise of being-in-the-world linked as it is to one's self-determinism. This underscores the importance of our imaginal stretch. As Arjun Appadurai suggests, “The imagination is today a staging ground for action, not only for escape.” (1996). Indeed, central to this special issue of *Critical Survey* is the link between reading, imagination, and utopia. After all, what links decolonization and utopia is the glue of imagination.

This special issue of *Critical Survey* is conceptualized to deliberate critical approaches to utopia as a decolonial tool. Drawing from literary studies, comparative literature, environmental humanities, gender studies, and philosophical thoughts on utopia as a decolonial tool, some of the questions that this special issue will address are: How can we reimagine utopia as the new infrastructure of decoloniality in our

present time? What is the critical purchase of utopia beyond the abstract and speculative frameworks in our present age driven by multiple crises? What do decoloniality and decolonization mean at a time when the planet is heading toward a sixth mass extinction? How can decolonial utopia as a theoretical framework provide us pathways for resurgence and insurgence from below? What insights can literary works provide us to understand the pertinence of utopia as a decolonial framework? How can decolonial utopia encourage us to reimagine the relational way of seeing this world, including the hegemonic relationship of privilege and oppression? The special issue is aimed to give a new direction to literary studies on decolonial utopia. Contributions should address literary representations of the following issues, but not limited to:

- Hermeneutics of decolonial utopia
- Human rights and global inequality
- Indigenous culture(s) and literature(s)
- Decolonial thought/praxis in literary histories
- Decolonial thought/praxis and worldmaking
- Migration, refugees and xenophobia
- Affect/emotions, ecology, and subjectivity as decolonial pedagogy in literary texts
- Neoliberalism and (post)colonial precaritisation
- Utopia of planetary future
- The Global South in the World Order
- Afrofuturism
- The literature of Dispossession and becoming human
- Social realism

Submission

Interested authors are invited to pitch their proposals to the guest editor at om_dwivedi2003@yahoo.com.

On acceptance, the complete article should be submitted by 1 October 2025. The length of each article, including endnotes and abstracts, is between 7,000 and 8,000 words. A brief author biography, including institutional affiliation and contact details, must accompany each submission. Please review *Critical Survey's* [submission and style guidelines](#) and refer to the journal's website for information about copyright agreements and permissions.

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