

The Immanence of Global South

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*“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”*

— *Arundhati Roy*

In the mode of categorization, a certain politics of identification of living worlds can transform their ongoing liminal existence previously unfounded in western thought, through which their histories and futures, and their place and participation in the world is redefined. It ensued and continues to do so in the curious case of North-South divide of the geo-political world, wherein a swift turn from being previously addressed as “third world” and “developing nations”, Global South has since made its consolidating presence. In this transformed contemporariness, the new order of Global South world encompasses a cartographic constellation of space reconceptualized along the non-aligned movement of nations, stepping beyond their post-colonial realities which have resulted in so far as being seen to be a potential host of much significant political economy than its previous addresses.

Thinking through space in his earlier works: *Spaces of Fiction/Fictions of Space* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), *Space In Theory* (Rodopi, 2009) and *Bodies and their Spaces* (Rodopi, 2006); the anthology’s editor Russell West-Pavlov’s attempt at deciphering Global South is a remarkable penetration in the hermeneutics of geopolitics. West-Pavlov revitalizes the conception of Global South, not from North-South paradigm of a mutually-surviving manual for the future, nor from the classical essentialist’s western theory program obligated to incorporate the “South”, but with a rigorous insistence on rendering Global South marked open as a space of affirmative politics.

This affirmative imagination and thinking with Global South run through the volume with an imperceptible idiomatic synchronicity and unequalled difference which presents Global South as “a geopolitical area, a

global economic process, a collective actor, a discursive event, and a body of theories, paradigms, and texts” (2).

The essay collection *Global South and Literature* at first glance may appear to follow a conventional genesis of thought in a relational equity, where Global South is the subject and Literature – a function extended upon a definite and a given body of Global South. While the function of Literature does explore further epistemic phylogenesis into the History, Philosophy and Politics of its subject-body (as literatures often function in populous multitudes), the reader of this volume will discover that the radical rhizomatic *potentia* of Global South makes it resistant to any type of subjection in quantifiable notions and in turn makes the volume *extrā ordinem*, that is “outside the order”.

A corollary of attributes, to the understanding of Global South by the volume editor, insist that Global South is anything but with a given definition. On the contrary it stretches “across epochs and contexts while signifying various forms of political, environmental, social, and epistemological agency arising out of the erstwhile colonized nations” (1). While South with its strategic nostalgia and nonaligned nations is signified as a form of a geo-political space, it is also a signifier of a larger symptom identified as a notion. Therefore, the South works as a notion which functions both within North and South, just like North’s historically dominating presence in the South (1).

A fundamentally empirical definition of Global South is hidden in its dialectic self-reflex: What is Global South?— where self-identification is essential to its logic and yet it resists all the delimiting forces directed at it.

What is Global South? then operates as a modality and an act of deterritorialization. It tells us that the Global South while unified as whole for the consolidation of geo-power in present has a parallel occupation of being destined to remain as a critical question in the face of the North in future. But this potential direction is marred with unwarranted risk of appropriations. Thus, Global South as a notion begs to be constantly activated at the smallest hint of biased and perfunctory identification by the structural hegemonies which will seek to reterritorialize all forms of subalternities. With such replete histories, there will be new hermeneutic attempts of reducing it to a fixed meaning, a definite binary and to fence it with a tangible language to be captured and controlled and ultimately obscured off the intellectual histories (see Hofmeyr, 307).

In its introduction, the anthology’s editor West-Pavlov rescues himself off the burden to definitize the term in a concept-proper. Instead, he attempts to “lay bare the workings of the concept and the discourse and the social configurations those workings may generate” (3). However, not without a significant declaration of a critical range of its predicative contentions that its subject may risk turning into a residual of “a grand narrative”, fawning “to the same institutionalized, depoliticized trajectory as its predecessor” and decidedly returns to proclaim Global South’s programmatic operation of “focalizing long-standing South–South cultural exchanges” and “as an epistemic catalyst for

future collaborations across the South” (3-4). In taking up this program, West-Pavlov invokes numerous corollaries that see to the comparative impossibility of term’s return to its past predecessor’s definite positionality and avoids any inadvertent homogenized understanding of the concept by the volume’s contributors.

The unsettled nature of its foci is bound to shift the understanding and reception of Global South and its positionality in contrast to its multiverse. Instead with the theories abound, its many localisations of meaning will be constantly vacated by the changing nature of its politics and people, with repetition of susceptibility, precisely because of its open “function” to incorporate the changing subjectivities of its sites as compared to the saturated futures of North’s assertion of being developed. Therefore, as an open concept-word, the volume makes an intelligible claim for its futuristic sustainability.

The construction of Global South project does not follow a premeditated trajectory; instead it makes its own lines of flight wherever it places its concern, as is shown by a range of literary and critical modalities shown by its contributors. The nature of its multiverse and polyvalent reality escape the grouping of ideas into mere origin, development and application while the essays are successive studies in its localized form of subjectivities and therefore each immanent and original in their function.

As the contributors of this volume try to assimilate on a horizon, Global South reveals itself to bear many names and forms. Its fundamental revolutionary potential is expressed in different variations of its political economy invoked in the collective imagination of volume’s writers, yet there is a contingency to the thought that the real of the Global South dodges any finality and attempts of absolutism.

The operative measures employed at understanding Global South will have to be as porous as the politics of its varied sites and the people concerned with as equally porous, varied and immense issues of caste, race, inter-colonialism and reterritorialization at a scale so massive that it is improbable to decipher or infer through linear binaries of understanding or application of the concept to make Global South seem as same to those who continue to bear different experiences in everyday lived-realities.

In “*Ambedkar Contra Aristotle: On a Possible Contention about who is Capable of Politics*”, Soumyabrata Choudhury draws a wager out of history by contesting the potential of epistemic agency between the subjects of North and South. As if proposing to the detractors of Global South, Choudhury notes that if possessing *Logos* is the criterion of being-political, then Ambedkar as a southern subject with “a cognitive consciousness emancipated from the habitual life of ‘assimilation and excretion’” dislevels all claims of North’s superiority over politics (Choudhury, 2018: 200).

As a core qualifier, it echoes the anticipation of its function with volume contributors Russell West-Pavlov, Dilip Menon, Sudesh Mishra, Andrew McCann and Vijay Mishra. Further, the far-reaching perpetuities of this

volume makes for an extensively rich assemblage by its contributors through which a certain Global South thinking is demonstrated in the courageous wagers of affirmative politics. A whole new set of vocabulary and intellectual assertions can be produced in thinking through the following extractions from this volume asserting the unparalleled potential of Global South's strategic idealism as an immanent force. From there, it follows in a set of multitudes that are mentioned as: Global South bodies working towards a decolonized state of sovereign living or Global South project harboring associations and trajectories across an egalitarian fraternity emerged from the non-aligned movement.

Informing the North of a greater difference to overcome and with the numerous operative possibilities expressed in the volume as above, *Global South and Literature* is a formidable collection of axiomatic investigations aligned in the spirit and functioning of Global South with the necessitated difference that its literatures apprise. Despite its rich attributes or because of it, Global South remains vulnerable to the history's exceptional repetitive nature of witnessing anti-foundational thought capable of affirmative biopolitics. It also risks turning into brutal majoritarian spaces retreating into a process of self-territorializing itself, therefore closing in on its radical potential. Keeping such dangers of the real in check, the volume succeeds in the assemblage of the conception of Global South at the height of its emancipatory potential.

Works Cited

- Choudhury, Soumyabrata. 2018. *Ambedkar And Other Immortals*. New Delhi: Navayana.
- West-Pavlov, Russell, ed. 2018. *The Global South and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.