

Call for Papers: Anthology of Critical Essays on Postcolonial Popular Culture: Texts, Artefacts and Affects

In a recent article Nobel laureate Professor Amartya Sen regretfully asked: “We did understand in our colonial past the inferior status of being a citizen of the British Raj. But can we really accept having a similar subjugation in our own democracy?” (ndtv.com. 16 April 2020). However, it is not just the political reality of contemporary India that resonates with reverberations of colonial heritage. The typical postcolonial dream of provincializing Europe and by extension the West, remains a distant mirage as various aspects of contemporary Indian reality continue to longingly look west in search of models that may be emulated. The entire cultural world as a whole bears testimony to this phenomenon in the form of multiple texts, artefacts and attendant generation of affects. The quest for NRI grooms, popular Indian cinema, tourism industry, advertisements, reality shows, fashion trends, cartoons and merchandise, cosmetics and cafes - all exhibit varying degrees of conscious and unconscious mimicry, generated by the hegemonic authority of Western culture and its negotiations with diverse currents of the Indian popular cultural domain. At the same time, this domain also remains fissured by competing conceptions associated with self, family, community and nation, based on hierarchies of gender, sexuality, class, caste, religion etc., born out of India’s pre-colonial and contemporary socio-cultural history, which necessarily condition the contours of cultural representations of various kinds. Added to these are growing concerns regarding ecology as various Indian communities, urban and rural, grapple with pressing problems associated with shortage of water, energy crisis, pollution, loss of habitat and so on. All of these concerns are reflected, explored and embodied through a series of popular cultural artefacts inclusive of films, advertisements, graphic novels, bestselling texts, real estate development, television programmes, music shows, stand-up comedy performances, web-based programmes, social media content, diverse commodities and much more.

The proposed anthology aims to focus on such examples in order to analyse how such concerns shape and structure the realm of popular culture as a whole and the various ideological and discursive pressures that impinge on cultural products and their

reception. We are looking for papers that would analyse different aspects of this vast realm from multiple theoretical perspectives in order to present a holistic picture of the diverse and polyvalent world of Indian popular culture, especially in the last two decades.

The entire anthology would be divided into different sections, focusing on specific sectors of popular culture and analysing individual cultural manifestations across multiple media such as

Bestsellers and Graphic novels

Commodities and material cultures

Media and communication

Leisure and sports

Ecology and activism.

The proposed sections are, of course, not finalised and other groupings may well be possible based on availability of papers. Nor should it be supposed that such categorisation in any way encourages watertight compartmentalisation of intersecting representations. For example instances of Crick-Lit or shows like *Inside Edge* or films like *Panga* can belong either to the realm of Bestsellers or Media and Communication or Sports. Likewise 'Leisure' may include a variety of consumerist pursuits, from salons and spas, to cafes to eco-tourism to mushrooming malls. The issue of activism is of course something that straddles multiple realms of experience at once and spans across diverse media with a kind of protean fluidity that of course demands analysis. The purpose of the anthology and the aforementioned structure is to offer a holistic, interdisciplinary examination of popular culture that would combine the material and the discursive, the textual and physical, the virtual and the actual in one interlocking grid mindful of evolving heterogeneities.

Such an anthology would be targeted not just at scholars of different forms of popular culture but also at students and academics who have to grapple with such issues in

accordance with changing demands of syllabi on the one hand and on the other, the changing horizon of academic research.

The papers should be within the range of 3000 to 5000 words, written in MS WORD (.doc/.docx) with Times New Roman, font size 12, margins of 1” on all sides and in accordance with MLA Stylesheet, 7TH Edition. Citations should be parenthetical. Avoid footnotes. Add endnotes, if unavoidable. Block quotes should be indented 1”. Suggestive templates can be sent on request.

Each paper should be accompanied by an abstract of 250 words with five keywords, a declaration of originality and a short bio-note of 50-100 words.

Authors will be responsible for necessary copyright permissions, if any.

Prospective contributors should send their full papers to pocopopculture@gmail.com within 30th May 2020.

Summary of Important Information:

Tentative Name of the Anthology: **Postcolonial Popular Culture: Texts, Artefacts and Affects**

Editors: Abin Chakraborty, Ramanuj Konar, Sayan Aich Bhowmik

Publisher: A renowned international publisher has expressed interest. However, as per their usual custom, they would confirm only after going through the full papers selected by the editors.

Send Full Paper/Query to: pocopopculture@gmail.com

Deadline for submission: 30th May 2020.

Communication of Acceptance: 4 weeks after close of deadline

[Authors may initially send their abstracts to check with us whether the paper fits the framework of this anthology or not. In that case, please send us the abstract, keywords and bio-note within 10th May 2020. Communication will be sent within 3days of receiving abstract.]