

EDITORIAL: IN TRUST WE TRUST

Now that many of us have been placed under house arrest, so to speak, and have watched world economies and educational systems come to a standstill, we have been forced to take a hard look at the world which we have created and which some have deemed in need of salvation.

The pandemic has brought on the collapse of self-aggrandizing narratives such as the *Africa Rising* narrative of the past decade, which Achille Mbembe has justly criticized; possibly also the *India Shining* narrative in a caste-based society where “social distancing,” as Arundhati Roy would agree, ironically reflects on Dalit untouchability; or the sustainable narrative of the post-Brexit European nation-state, which is experiencing an unprecedented existential crisis.

As Universities worldwide are witnessing a slow return to the “new normal,” it looks like, as of next year, we will be entering a new academic, “blended” eco-system poised between the remote teaching by talking heads to other talking heads and traditional yet socially distanced *in situ* classroom interactions, while trying to overcome “the digital gap,” which is being experienced by a large number of students worldwide, even in the West.

But more positively, this unforeseeable crisis has opened the portal to larger online communities. When *Postcolonial Text* was founded in 2004, the editors had rightly intuited the growing importance of online journals, but they could not have anticipated that “going viral” would acquire a new meaning altogether. They could not have imagined that an unprecedented pandemic such as COVID-19 was going to reaffirm the innate conviviality of online communities such as *Postcolonial Text*, which is not exactly ‘a circle of trust,’ yet is based on trust.

Postcolonial Text experienced two incidents of ‘breach of trust’ in the past few months, but I will confine myself to the most recent one. A contributor approached *PT* and submitted an article that went through the usual rounds of reviewing. Once the Reviews were secured, the Section Editor requested “revisions.” The contributor then remained strangely silent for half a year, during which time we sent a flurry of reminders. The

contributor finally reacted and flippantly explained that the extensive and detailed comments of the *PT* Reviewers were indeed very helpful, and were used to submit the article elsewhere and, adding insult to injury, to file a national research grant. The fact that the contributor is a recent PhD faced with the pressures of making a quick mark in the field can explain such an errant behavior. However, what the contributor has not realized is that we are all, as scholars and academics, whatever our status, part of a community where research integrity and quintessential trust prevail.

Trust, I would argue, is part of the arsenal of emotions and affects that have been the object of recent research in the wake of the “affective turn” in the mid-1990s. Through the work of Lauren Berlant, Ann Cvetkovich, or Sara Ahmed, to name but a few, emotions have moved out of the private and individual sphere into the collective, plural sphere.

Trust is thus one of those emotions that have gone public. It is also trust in our collective capacity to fight the virus that guided everybody’s protective gestures during the pandemic and trust in each other has helped us create new affective economies. Such affective communities may well in turn help reshape our failing economies.

And it is also through trust that our editors’ and contributors’ conduct is annealed to the *Postcolonial Text* online community.

Chantal ZABUS, Editor-in-Chief