

## Editor's Note

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"Hello again, my beauties! Is it happening?"

Thus spake Freddie Mercury to his adoring fans from the stage of the old Wembley Stadium on July 12, 1986, as documented on the Queen album *Live at Wembley '86*. Readers of Zadie Smith's debut novel *White Teeth* may recall the reluctant waiter Samad Iqbal's reflection that "this Mercury character was in actual fact a very light-skin Persian called Farookh, whom the head chef remembered from school in Panchgani, near Bombay" (155). In *actual* fact, this Mercury character, a very light-skin Parsi, was born as Farokh Bulsara in Stone Town on the island of Zanzibar, then a sultanate under British protection and now part of the United Republic of Tanzania, before spending his childhood in India, as recorded by Smith. After a brief return to his native Zanzibar, his family moved to England in 1964, where he studied art before becoming the quintessential global postcolonial rock star whose final concert tour included two sold-out shows at a venue originally known as the Empire Stadium.

This issue of the *Journal of Global Postcolonial Studies* echoes the trajectory of Mercury's early life insofar as it begins in Africa before moving to South Asia. Granted, not too many people read a journal from beginning to end in this era of chiefly digital publication—perhaps about as many as listen to an album from its first track to the last. Just as most listeners enjoy isolated songs cruelly ripped out of their original context by some soulless algorithm, most readers find their academic articles in one electronic database or another.

Nevertheless, those who still devote an afternoon to playing, over a cup of Zanzibari chai or English tea, two sides of a long-playing record—let's say Queen's eponymous 1973 debut—will be able to appreciate the stylistic diversity and thematic versatility contained therein, from the proto-"Bohemian Rhapsody" of "My Fairy King" to the psychedelic Jesus Rock of, well, "Jesus."

In the antiquarian spirit of the vinyl revival, then, side one of *JGPS* 12.1 begins with an invited essay in which our editorial board member Simon Lewis appraises the state of African Literary Studies at the present time. This is followed by Nada Ayad's analysis of *Revolution Is My Name*, Mona Prince's memoir of Egypt's 2011 Tahrir Square revolution. Osarugue Otebele's "Migration without Movement" then explores the concept of arrival in Sudabeh Mortezaei's 2018 Austro-Nigerian film *Joy*. The African

side of our LP concludes with Ufot B. Inamete's argument for the continuing relevance of traditional political systems in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The South Asia-focused side two of our notional LP continues the theme of reconciling modern states with traditional forms of governance in the form of Rangnath Thakur and Binod Mishra's essay on the Gandhian model of village councils in postcolonial India. Their essay is followed by Sten Pultz Moslund's ecocritical study of *Gun Island*, part of Amitav Ghosh's growing body of climate fiction or cli-fi. The album's South Asia side is concluded with Sk. Sagir Ali's article on the topic of Islamic sacrifice in Nadeem Aslam's novel *The Wasted Vigil*.

Queen closed their final Wembley concerts with a recording of their Brian May-arranged instrumental version of "God Save the Queen," a practice they had been following since their 1974 *Sheer Heart Attack* tour. Their debut album *Queen*, however, concluded with an instrumental version of what would later become the band's first hit single, "Seven Seas of Rhye." The full song, whose surrealistic lyrics are reportedly inspired by a childhood fantasy Mercury had created with his sister Kashmira (Songfacts), later appeared on their brilliant though unimaginatively titled follow-up album *Queen II*.

Not least because of the recent resurgence of Russian imperialism, one of our forthcoming special issues will be devoted to postcolonialism in the post-Soviet world. As a preview of that issue and another step in our journal's ongoing mission of earning the *global* in its name, this one concludes with an essay in which Mzia Jamagidze offers a postcolonial approach to literature from Georgia (not in the southeastern United States but at the southeastern edge of a broadly construed Europe). Don't take offense at my innuendo, but think of it as our teaser version of "Seven Seas of Rhye . . ."

### Works Cited

Queen. *Live at Wembley '86*. EMI/Parlophone, 1992.

"Seven Seas of Rhye" by Queen. Songfacts, [www.songfacts.com/facts/queen/seven-seas-of-rhye](http://www.songfacts.com/facts/queen/seven-seas-of-rhye). Accessed 4 Apr. 2024.

Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth*. Penguin, 2001.