



Editor's Note

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It is time to welcome you to the second volume of *Intersections*.

It has been a year since the publication of the maiden volume of the journal of the Department of English, Kidderpore College. The gnawing problems that the journal faced initially, though inevitable and worrisome, have also been a learning experience and an unfailing source of joy. While taking the first steps we suffered a stunning loss. One of the Advisory Editorial Board Members of the journal, Professor Samantak Das, a pillar of support to us, passed away in July, this year. The consequent void, we fear, shall never be filled up.

Borders and boundaries that are intended to act as ensigns in political, geographical and cultural spaces, engender, through their impositions, spaces of contest. The consequences of setting insignia, arguably regressive and destructive, range from mindless genocide to debarring people from crossing spaces deemed sacrosanct. Boundaries discipline, exclude, oppress, and empower. They endow fluidity to identities. Identities of every individual resist and complement one other. Therefore, notwithstanding their fluidity, identities created from within and imposed from without continue to be in a state of unremitting tension. Naya Quintana's essay 'Exploring Second Generation Cuban-American Identity in the Work of Ana Menéndez', while analysing Menéndez's short story, refers to Cuban-American struggles which resonate with our experiences of the "orient" in the face of the hegemonic domination of the 'West'. The complex politics of deculturation/aculturation that play at the interface of the Cuban and American cultures, and the relentless transcultural negotiations that a second-generation Cuban-American must manoeuvre through, raises some pertinent questions about identity formations.

Ahana Mitra uses two late twentieth century Bengali films in her essay 'Old Landscape, New Babus : A Study of the Representations of "Paschim" in Aranyer Din Ratri and Dadar Kirti' to show how the western margins of the Bengal Presidency, a popular destination of the nineteenth century Bengali Bhadrakol, continued to be the setting of Bengali cultural texts long after new political borders were etched along the Choto Nagpur Plateau. By positioning the 'pashchim' or the 'west' as the 'other' to the city pent Bengali Bhadrakol, twentieth century narratives perpetuate a discourse of borderscapes around the city-other binary.

Two seminal works on Dalit politics in India, *The Annihilation of Caste* by B R Ambedkar and *Gulmagiri* by Jyotiba Phule, which have graphical representations in *Bhimayana* and *A Gardener in the Wasteland* respectively, form the focal point of 'Understanding the Social Impact of Indian Political Graphic Novels in pushing out Caste Boundaries: Reading *Bhimayana* and *A Gardner in the Wasteland*' by Sumana Mukherjee. As the essay reminds the reader of the brutal alienation caused by Brahmanical imperialism in the Hindu society, it brings to light the strategic role that graphic novels can play in captivating the empathy of readers to effectuate change.

Sreya Chatterjee analyses five Bengali novels by Ashapura Devi, an influential twentieth century feminist author, in 'Travel as Transgression: Negotiating the *Sadar/Andar* Boundaries in Ashapura Devi's Fiction'.



She points out that travelling for women entails a series of negotiations through the private and the public spaces, the 'andar'/ 'sadar' boundaries. She claims that women's transgression of domestic boundaries throws up intersectional spaces marked by the politics of gender and class that endlessly de/construct female identities.

Aniket Roy's essay, '*And until we do, the war will not be over: The Mothers at War in Almodovar's Cinema*', is a reading of celebrated Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar's film *Madres Paralelas* (Parallel Mothers) in terms of its representation of women. His critical study of Almodovar's film, especially its delineation of the universal ethos of motherhood, highlights the fact that mothers across boundaries share commonalities that defy local cultures. The author also traces connections between Spain's socio-cultural history and its imprint on the lives of the Spanish people. The metaphors of death Almodovar uses reflect the haunting presence of a dictator in the re/creation of identities.

Aaron Phillips Hammes explores sex-gender borders from the perspective of Foucauldian necropolitics. In the essay 'Prison Logics, Border Expressions' Hammes claims that border is a political equivalent of neoliberalism and shows how borders, meant to provide protection, actually create spaces of exclusion which, he submits, is the governing principle of sex-gender categories. Open borders might allow non-normative sexualities and identities an impaired survival, but trans people, who form a minoritarian community, continue to be recognised-in-difference by the 'phobic public institutions' of the society.

In 'Through the Broken Looking-Glass: False Borders and Faltering Identities in Farida Khalaf's *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS*', Bhaswati Bhattacharjee studies the case of Farida Khalaf, a Yazidi woman survivor. The author uses the same theoretical premises of necropolitics to argue that in a highly militarised conflict zone, female subjectivity undergoes violent shifts, ultimately leading to a collapse of identity in the face of ruthless biopolitical oppression. The sole ray of hope comes from a refugee camp where the memoirist gains a new identity and the right to live, although as a "fallen woman". The population that faces the threat of extinction in the hands of the aggressor undergoes multilayered oppression and women, Khalaf's case shows, de-authentication of the severest form.

Shaun Tan's skill in combining the uncanny with the common is legendary. Nazneen Hoque's essay 'Dislocation and Home Space in Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing*' examines the Australian artist's renowned work, to analyse the complex processes that are involved in the creation and demolition of identities. In other words, the paper examines how identity and belongingness are meagre boundaries that are set up in order to create an illusory haven called "home" to which every individual must irrevocably belong. The essayist raises issues around the drawing of boundaries around the "home" and dislocation, of belonging and "othering", of alienation and acculturation. The graphic medium, needless to say, facilitates an unhindered dissemination of some of the fundamental but unsettling questions in a fragmented global world.

In the article 'The Circular Journey of Partition: Exploring the Migration of the Prostitute in Suraiya Qasim's Story "Where Did She Belong?"', Ritu Madan investigates the experience of the "home" among migrant refugees and migrant prostitutes. As the ideas of the "home" and migration assume new meanings



for each category, they interrogate each other's veracity. The dwellers of the red-light areas, she argues, experience a strange sense of continuity across borders that is denied to the masses.

The problematics of the home and homeland are further explored in the next essay that studies pre-war, war-ravaged and postwar Afghanistan. Tanusree Basak, in 'Mapping Guilt, Trauma and Displacement in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*', points out the absurdity of socio-political boundaries that compel victims to flee their war-torn homeland to seek refuge in a country that continues to prolong, even accentuate their trauma. The study underscores the transnational identity that the migrants must learn to live with. The mutability of such identities subvert boundaries which are no more than disciplinary barriers. The heightening of the migrant crisis and the rise in the number of "stateless people" endows this essay contemporary relevance.

Jean-Francois Lyotard had rightly pointed out that history forms one of the most important grand narratives of human life. While being manipulated by the bourgeoisie, historical narratives tend to obliterate the voice of the subaltern. However, with the rise of a postcolonial consciousness and democratization of the systemic structures, there has been a remarkable shift in the conceptualization of history. Tazeen Ali's article is a mediation in writing alternate histories. Dismantling the grand narratives of human history, Ali's article critically analyses the violent partition of India in 1947 from the perspective of children's memories which, have arguably been a neglected aspect of history.

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Best wishes.