



## Editor's Note

Sunanda Mukherjee

Greetings!

A warm welcome to the third volume of *Intersections*.

Just as every activity, every production creates space which it might or might not call its own, this volume follows suit. Being a non-themed volume, it unfolds a techno-socio-cultural space which is less bounded by specificities that more often than not underlie academic projects; instead, it tries to encourage the free play of the creative intellect of authors and readers. Although every contributor to this volume is entitled to a certain degree of agency, and their articles autonomy, they are, nonetheless, shaped by a complex of pre-existing social relations as also by a complex of dialogic connections that they build when they come together in the shared space of the journal.

In his seminal work *The Production of Space* (1974), Henri Lefebvre argues that space is born out of everyday practices. The space that this volume of *Intersections* offers has likewise been created through academic practices of peer review, editorial decisions, and readership. All the stakeholders including the editor, reviewer, author, reader, and publisher play unique roles in shaping the content, direction and purpose of the journal. In line with Lefebvre's contention that space is both a product and a mode of production, it follows that it is in a continuous state of being reinvented. The perpetual 'becoming' of space, therefore, prevents it from attaining status quo; rather, it takes on a discursive nature marked by intervention, interrogation, and dialogue.

Doreen Massey, a feminist geographer and social scientist, explains the necessity of comprehending spaces which are invariably charged with social and political meanings. This space, which is conventionally considered academic, is a microcosm of the global society we inhabit. Social relations, needless to say, are heavily influenced by discriminative categories defined by race, gender, class, caste, politics, technology, education, culture and more. To be precise, inclusion in social spaces entails exclusion. Therefore, it is true that the admission of a few voices in this volume has, consequently, led to the shutting out of quite a few. In this context, however, I would like to submit a disclaimer: the list of articles as always, has been finalised not according to any singular premeditated design but through an exchange and aggregation of opinions of minds with diverse affiliations. The consequent spatiality, as Massey delineates in *Space, Place, and Gender*, has been produced through social relations that intersect at potentially unique points.

The articles in this volume include research in the fields of literature, music, films, and folk culture. The first article, by Elisa Sabbadin, in consonance with our preoccupation, is engaged with the problematics of space. It is an exploration of the spatial dynamics of Walt Whitman's poetry. The author argues that Whitman's affective poetry goes beyond intellectual engagement, creating a dynamic and electric space between the speaker and the reader. His poems become



an invitation to a profound exchange, where the reader becomes an essential part of the compounded self, bridging the abstract and the physical.

Avijit Basak begins by stressing on the relevance of reading Paul Celan – a Jewish-Romanian poet and a Nazi survivor – in an ‘age of ideological oppression’ and ‘enforced singularity’. The author explores the themes of language, trauma, identity, and witnessing through an examination of Celan’s later poems in the article titled “Translating Trauma, Voicing Silence: Paul Celan, the Politics of Language, and the Poetics of Witnessing.” His poetic response to the Holocaust involves deconstructing and challenging the German language as a means of confronting the past and its trauma.

Wong Kar-wai’s cinema reflects Svetlana Boym’s notion of reflective nostalgia, where the past is not idealized but reimagined and questioned in the face of an uncertain future. This reflective nostalgia is particularly pronounced in Kar-wai’s films set in the backdrop of Hong Kong’s transition from British colonial rule to Chinese governance, thus creating a sense of ‘pre-postcolonial nostalgia’ among the characters. This nostalgia, Ria Banerjee argues in the essay titled “Mapping, Memory, Nostalgia and Temporal Inflections in Select Movies of Wong Kar Wai”, is not an innocent longing for the past, but a necessity that is felt by the nation to reinstate its subjectivity against a new kind of colonialism. In essence, Wong Kar-wai’s films offer a profound exploration of human consciousness, where memory, nostalgia, and time intersect and create a tapestry of emotions and experiences. His unique cinematic style elevates these themes to an art form, making his work a contemplative journey through the complexities of existence.

Although a large number of scholarly articles and books have brought out the ignominious violence perpetrated on the people of colour in the United States, little attention has been paid to the psychological trauma suffered by young children and adolescents due to racial discrimination. Through a selection of literary works published during the last decade, Kavon Franklin attempts to bring out the deep-seated impact racism had on children of colour or belonging to mixed parentage in the article titled “The Hate Awakening: Children and Race in American Literature.” In addition to Critical Race Theory, Franklin makes deft use of socio-historical and political contexts to bring out how the expressions of racism have altered with time, but its primary tenets have remained intrinsically woven into the American experience. The title of Jyotismita Sarkar’s essay “Towards Agency and Communion: Sehnsucht or Life Longings of Chicana Women in Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*” is suggestive of her engagement with yet another cross-section of people who are subject to social trauma. Sarkar talks about how Chicana women survive thwarted aspirations, shattered dreams and a deep sense of alienation in the essay. It is a psychological exploration of the ‘sehnsucht’ or life-longings of Chicana women, especially the protagonist, Esperanza, their challenges and shared pursuit of agency and community in a racially segregated American society.



The two articles that follow capture the woes of the Partition of India in 1947. “Tracing the Motif Behind Violation and Abuse of ‘Untouchable’ Women’s Body in the Post-Partition Narrative of Jatin Bala’s “The Poisoned Lust” by Anuja Laha is another article that examines the plight of a doubly marginalised community. It discusses the overlooked and suppressed history of Dalit migrants from East Pakistan during the tumultuous 1947 partition of India. Dalit women in Bengal have been victims of exploitation, especially sexual, in the wake of the partition. The author analyses how Jatin Bala emphasizes the enduring impact of the Partition on the Dalit identity, shedding light on the hypocrisy of a society claiming religious and cultural purity while perpetuating violence against its most vulnerable members. “The Mind Getting Debilitated: A Detailed Study of 1947 Earth” by Debasmita Mahajan is yet another essay that explores the traumatic aspects of the partition of India, focusing on Deepa Mehta's 1998 film "Earth" – an adaptation of Bapsi Sidhwa's semi-autobiographical novel "Cracking India." Deepa Mehta uses Lenny, an eight-year-old Parsi child's perspective to convey a universal message about sorrow, loss, and pain that stems from the partition. The film displays how hatred between Hindus and Muslims persists, leading to acts of vengeance, which interrogate the worth of the 1947 Partition.

Ayushi Ray analyses the transformation of the city of Bombay to Mumbai as evidenced in Amrita Mahale’s *Milk Teeth*. The significant changes in the protagonist Ira’s life seem to happen in tandem with the changes that the city undergoes and helps Ira deal with the crises ensuing out of this radical transformation. She focusses on the shifting landscape and architecture of Bombay and delves into the historical processes that precipitated the change. Ray goes on to show how the public-private dichotomy is destabilized as space is redefined and reinterpreted.

Chhutan Dey’s article “Consumer Culture and the Postmodern Urban Reality: A Study of Salman Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*” critiques Rushdie’s use of the narrative of rock and roll to explore the influence of consumer culture and mass media on urban realities. The love story of Vina Apsara and Ormus Cama is an occasion to expose the commodification of culture in postmodern urban spaces and underscore the pervasive logic of consumption that encapsulates the complex dynamics of media, market forces, and popular culture.

In the article “Girls Can Do Anything? Dissecting the Usage of Post - Feminist Rhetoric in K-pop”, Somya Dimri shows how in a deeply misogynistic society, that more often than not reinforces traditional gender norms, the K-pop industry uses the concept of ‘girl crush’ to portray female idols as empowering figures. The essay underscores the need for a more balanced approach that acknowledges the restrictive lives of female idols and the necessity of addressing gender injustice. It also emphasizes the need for female idols to have agency, to be able to define their identities and rights, and to challenge a gender-normative industry.

Mukulika Batabyal’s essay “Confined to the Kitchen and Excluded from the Discourse in Life and After” is another essay that exposes the workings of gender stereotypes in a sexist social fabric. It takes a close look at the portrayal of women across cultures and emphasises their archetypal role as caregivers, while being confined to the kitchen. This archetype, however, has two sub-categories: the ‘good mother’ and the ‘evil mother’. The author maintains that in the South Asian context, particularly in Bengal, this archetype has been sustained and exploited



to preserve traditional gender roles. Women, even in death, are not liberated from the identity inscribed by the kitchen. They often appear as ghosts or witches and continue to provide for their families. The essay explores the politics surrounding this gendered identity in Bengali short stories and draws our attention to the constrictive nature of such identities.

Folk art forms present one of the most interesting convergences of the study of both the literary origins and the socio-anthropological practices of a community of people, thereby providing a unique peek into their cultural milieu. Mousumi Sen's article reads like a report on *Kushan Gan*, which is a very prominent folk-art form in the northern parts of West Bengal in India. In this article the author explores, how this form of folk art may provide us a unique opportunity to study the cultural practices of the Rajbanshi community, since these songs, and their additional presentation techniques have been handed down from one generation to another, in a manner quite similar to mnemonics. Sen has engaged in extensive field work, by conducting interviews with artists of *Kushan Gan* like Kashinath Dakua, in order prepare this report about her findings into the cultural heritage of the Rajbanshi community. Folk culture in general and *Kushan Gan* in particular, have now come under serious threat due to the rapid progress of cultural capitalism and displacement of indigenous art forms in a global market.

Before signing off I must express my gratitude to Dr Abhijit Ganguly, Principal, Kidderpore College and Patron of this journal who unfailingly supports our endeavour always. Thanks to the authors, advisors, members of the editorial board, reviewers, and associate members of the team for their patience and co-operation. Thanks also to the cover artist for taking up the responsibility at a dire moment.

I welcome you once again to comprehend, shape, and relate to the placeless space this volume has created, and to reinvent spaces through your invaluable interventions.

Best wishes