

## EDITORS' NOTE

**T**he latest issue of *Postcolonial Interventions* is being published at a time when the very idea of academia in India is under discursive and material assaults from multiple corners. Over the last couple of months we have seen the students of various premier academic institutions across the country taking to the streets to voice their anger against laws that are divisive, politics that breeds intolerance and violence, policies that strive to destroy the foundations of public funding in education, governmental regimes that deliberately marginalise sections of the population and take away their rights in the name of nation, security and law and order, elected representatives who are abominable in their bigotry and administrations that violate constitutional provisions for parochial political gains. In the process, such students and their institutions have also been subjected to assaults, threats, harassment, incarceration and vulgar stigmatisation in social networks and certain sections of the print and electronic media. And yet, those students, their well-wishers and sympathisers, their teachers and many other utterly unrelated individuals have also been able to create steadfast bonds of solidarity through which they have stood firm in the face of bullets, iron rods, acid, police batons, water canons, tear gas and the dissemination of atrocious calumnies. This is an Indian winter that sums up in many ways the essence of postcolonialism as a whole: oppression unleashed in the form of

binary-driven, colonially derived discourses of power and dominance juxtaposed with variegated shades of defiance, resistance and hope radiant with transformative, pluralistic energies that look forward to futures of untrammelled potentialities.

Some of these shades and energies are evident from the articles that are included in this issue. It begins with Arpita Chattaraj Mukhopadhyay's featured article on Toni Morrison which pays tribute to the majestic and pioneering oeuvre of nobel laureate Morrison whose novels not only document the consummate negation of racial bondage, dilocation and attendant violence but also evoke a panorama of hope through visions of love, compassion and solidarity. She was till her dying breath one of those ambassadors from the Republic of Conscience that Heaney spoke of and it is fitting that this open issue of 2020 should begin with recollection of her astounding literary achievements.

This is followed by Irina Armianu's exploration of female agency and embattled socio-cultural identities in the literary texts of contemporary African women writers like Malika Mokkedem, Nina Bouraoui, and Paulina Chiziane. Her analysis serves to illuminate the networks of colonial hegemony, patriarchy and migrancy within which identities and constantly assembled, re-configured and negotiated.

This is followed by Emily Shoyer's paper on the photographs of Owanto which foreground the issue of fe-

male genital mutilation which continues to be practiced in various parts of Africa and Asia even now. Shoyer's analysis showcases how Owanto's photographs mark a critical intervention in the debates surrounding FGM from multiple culturalist and feminist perspectives through a typically Barthesian framework.

The conflicts between colonial and eurocentric religious and cultural prerogatives and those advocated by indigenous religions and cultures of the colonised is something that also acquires centrality in Emanuel Adeniyi's analysis of Jorge Amado's *The War of the Saints*. The analysis focuses on the clash between Catholic and Yoruba beliefs and practices in the context of colonial Brazil and the reinforcement of colonial perspectives in Jair Bolsonaro's contemporary regime.

The perpetuation and interrogation of colonial stereotypes is also focus of Jameel Alghaberi's paper which showcases how the texts of authors like Laila Halaby, Rabih Alameddine or Alia Yunis are repeatedly questioning the orientalist stereotypes regarding Arabs which have significantly shaped popular perceptions in America and the West, especially in the context of the post-9/11 scenario and attendant growth of Islamophobia.

However, considerations of race and gender are also intricately associated with networks of capital and this

is foregrounded in Crystal Baines' analysis of Arundhati Roy's recent novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* which critiques the idea of development by portraying a wide array of exclusionary and marginalising processes that often underpin developmental projects. This is followed by Nadia Butt's analysis of Amitav Ghosh's canonical text - *The Shadow Lines* which acquires renewed relevance in our times on account of the flames of communal discord that are constantly being fanned in the subcontinent as well as the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan.

The final contribution of this issue offers a review of Nirmala Menon's *Remapping the Postcolonial Canon: Remap, Reimagine and Retranslate* which seeks to chart avenues for future research within the realm of postcolonial studies.

If there is any undelying note among these diverse articles it is that of a shared comitment to justice, plurality, compassion and solidarity. These are not just keywords for journal articles or classroom discussions. These are ideals which are being threatened and these are ideals which we must protect through conscious, concerted actions. Let us hope that all our reading, writing and research will help us protect these ideals - for us and our future generations - both within the academia and in the wider world which it strives to improve.