

EDITORIAL

Felicity Hand
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
felicity.hand@uab.cat

Welcome to our eleventh issue of *Indialogs*. The theme of this issue is “The Colonial Legacy” and we are delighted to see how many authors responded to this by submitting exciting articles that focus on the complexities of Indian identities viewed through the lens of the colonial relationship. Even though post-independence may be a more fitting term through which to view India’s current global position, Britain’s colonial past cannot be easily swept under the carpet. The articles in this issue provide nuanced ways of looking at the complexities of postcolonial India. We know that scholars from different disciplines –historians, literary critics, anthropologists, political scientists and economists— will beg to differ on the colonial legacy and in keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of *Indialogs*, we are delighted to include articles from various fields of research.

Dolores Herrero’s essay on Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome* presents a decolonial reading of the novel as she argues that “Ghosh’s novel pits India’s old-time wisdom and spirituality against Western science and English colonial presumptuousness”. She makes a powerful claim that science –read Western science– is biased and inherently Eurocentric. Herrero’s apt conclusion points to Ghosh’s project in unmasking the negative legacy of British rule as certain colonial assumptions and discourses have not been relegated to the historical broom cupboard.

Juan Ignacio Oliva presents an ecological reading of the Partition of India from two different perspectives. The poems by two authors, Jibanananda Das (1899-1954) and Taslima Nasreen (1962-), despite their aesthetic and chronological differences, share several points in common. Oliva’s article shows how they both envisage the land –and the people – of Bengal as a biological unity, making the partition of the land an open wound still suffered by subsequent generations.

Lucero López Olivares takes us back to the political philosophies of two founding fathers of modern India: Jawaharlal Nehru and Bhimrao Ambedkar. Her article traces the two different concepts of modern India that the two men defended and she claims that their ideas are still relevant in the India of the 21st century.

Ana María Crespo Gómez discusses two diasporic Indian authors and throws light on how the concept of the “New Woman” in Bengal shaped gender identities in nineteenth century India. Her insightful reading of two diasporic Indian writers, Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee, explores the enormous influence that the social category of *bhadralok* and *bhadramahila* can still exercise over first and even second-generation migrants in the US.

Ishmeet Chaudry and Longjam Loyaangamba Meitei focus their article on a particular region of India: Manipur, and they examine how language has shaped the foundation of historic and cultural identity in this region. They lament the lack of official backing of the Manipuri script and the slow disappearance of minority languages and dialects, especially those of the Northeast owing to the preponderance of Hindi. Likewise, Sachidananda Panda analyzes another region that has been overlooked in scholarly articles. He vindicates the cultural traditions of Odisha, an area that has not been in the political spotlight for economic revival. Panda makes a passionate demand for an acknowledgement of the potential losses of this culture and this language due to advances in technology and cultural intrusion –read English or perhaps Hindi– so as Panda expresses, these cultural traditions “should not be left unaccompanied to die down the lanes of apathy”.

Our miscellanea section is admirably represented by Carolina Núñez-Puente’s excellent summary of the work of Indian ecofeminist activist Vandana Singh. Núñez-Puente analyses Singh’s output and suggests that her work both foresees and dialogues with a number of well-known authors in the field of ecocriticism. She claims that Shiva’s oeuvre reaches out to a variety of disciplines and foresees what is currently being called ethical posthumanism. Maria-Sabina Draga’s review essay on a recent study of Salman Rushdie’s oeuvre, Dana Bădulescu’s *Rushdie’s Cross-Pollinations* (2022), is a thorough analysis of Rushdie as a very engaging storyteller and critical intellectual. Bădulescu invites the reader to read her book through the lens of love as a way to –in Draga’s words– “reposition the multi-faceted, multi-cultural personality of the author in today’s world”.

Draga extols the way the author highlights Rushdie's "fertile intertextualities and cross-border encounters that make up [his] writing". The two remaining reviews both deal with recent work on Dalit Bangla writers. Aparna Singh examines Mandakini Bhattacharya and Jaydeep Sarangi's translation of Jatin Bala's *A Life Uprooted: A Bengali Dalit Refugee Remembers* (2022). Singh points out that Dalit autobiographies tend to focus on the collective suffering of the community. She claims that the English version, despite the difficulty of preserving the richness of the original dialects, allows readers to perceive Bala's voice and appreciate his sensitivity towards his fellow Dalits. In a similar vein, Ruchi Singh reviews a collection of interviews with Dalit authors conducted by Jaydeep Sarangi. She claims that these conversations showcase contemporary Dalit literature as a powerful tool for raising Dalit consciousness.

I wish to conclude this short editorial by thanking all the scholars in India studies who have contributed to this new issue of *Indialogs*. The reviewers and copyeditors all do a magnificent job in keeping the standard of the journal high and of course our thanks goes to the authors who have shared their research with us in this volume.