
EDITORIAL. VIOLENCES: AROUND AND INSIDE

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I am delighted to write the editorial to the third issue of the journal of the Spanish Association of Indian Studies, *Indialogs*, as it gives me a great chance to acknowledge the excellent work that its editor, Felicity Hand, has done so far in the creation, maturation and promotion of a journal which has soon become indispensable for those of us interested in Indian and South Asian Studies, both in Spain and abroad.

The topic of this issue of *Indialogs*, “Violences”, is altogether harsh. However, violence in its many forms is unfortunately ubiquitous, and needs to be tackled. We cannot, or rather we should not, circumvent violence: it needs to be constantly discussed, critiqued, analyzed and besieged if we mean to find ways of diminishing it and easing our living together. We need to confront violence from an intellectual point of view if we want to find ways of putting an end to the multiple forms of exploitation and oppression which occur in this world of ours. Discussing violence also means looking for ways of appeasing painful memories of traumatic experiences, and thus helping to heal the past and move forward those men and women who have suffered, or who bear the imprint of violence in their ancestry. It means looking together towards the future, craving and constructing fully peaceful times. Violence as experienced in the Indian Subcontinent takes on many shapes and masks, and the articles, stories and poems contributed by seventeen different authors and compiled in this issue give testimony of this.

The Partition of India was the source of endless sorrow, and it has remained a recurrent topic of Indian and Pakistani fiction, as well as a focus of interest for historians and cultural critics. It is no surprise, therefore, that several articles in this issue should focus on it. Arunima Dey writes about Partition in “Women as Martyrs: Mass Suicides at Thoa Khalsa During the Partition of India”, where she explores a

particularly pungent episode of that period, interrogating the form in which it has passed on to history. Afrinul Haque Khan discusses the same literary text as Dey, plus a second one, in “Text, Representation and Revision: Re-visioning Partition Violence in Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* and Bhisham Sahni’s *Tamas*”. Like them, Tagirem Gallego García also studies representations of Partition violence as signified in bodily forms in “Conflicts During the Planning of Indian Independence and its Partition in *Pour l’amour de l’Inde* by Catherine Clément and *Indian Summer* by Alex von Tunzelmann. An Embodiment Approach to Violence”. The last to delve in the event of Partition and its fictionalizations, including those produced shortly afterwards as is the case here, is Cruz Bonilla’s article “Reasons for Violence: a Study of “Another Community” by R. K. Narayan”, which shows that Narayan’s apparent “gliding over” Partition is deceptive since communal violence in India cannot be fully comprehended without relating it to the catastrophic events of 1947.

Two further discussions on violence take us back to more distant pasts. The body is still a core matter in “Blood for the Goddess. Self-mutilation Rituals at Vajreshwari Mandir, Kangra”, where Alejandro Jiménez Cid provides a number of mesmerizing reflections on the theme of self-inflicted violence by Hindu devotees in a specific location of north-west India back in the 17th century. A completely different angle on the issue of violence is chosen by Edgar Tello García to develop his profound ruminations in “Returning to Sri Aurobindo: On the Enigmatic Dragon of Violence”, which evokes this singular figure from a historical and mostly philosophical stance.

To conclude what we could call this cycle of violence, Andrea de la Rubia takes us to Nepal in “Reflections of Violence and International Policy in Modern Abstract Painting of Nepal: an Unsolved Question”. It seems a proper cycle closure, as this study felicitously underscores the deep value art needs to be accorded in any society –here epitomised in Nepal–, as well as its functionality in both addressing violence and exorcising it.

The remaining texts in this section are not directly concerned with violence, and thus they provide a symbolic release of sorts. Rafael Quirós Rodríguez’s “S. Patwardhan & J. Krishnamurti: Hindu Women and the Guru-Shishya Relationship” delves into the life of another great Indian philosopher, J. Krishnamurti, offering remarkable reflections not only about the sage’s personal relationship with a very special disciple, S. Patwardhan, but also on the role of women in Hinduism. In “India;

Tourism, Cultural Construct and Reality in Oleguer Junyent's book *Roda el món i torna al Born (Around the World and Back to the Born)*", Carolina Plou Anadón revisits the incipient history of tourism in India and other eastern locations in the early 20th century, proving that some aspects of touristic accounts have not changed substantially, namely, a certain whimsicality in the description of places and attractions.

Finally, Maurice O'Connor's "The Indian Diaspora in the UK: Accommodating 'Britishness'" explores the forms of coexistence with mainstream society devised by British Asian communities in the United Kingdom. In his conclusions, O'Connor points out that an ever-increasing sense of hybridity is the cultural hallmark of the present times in the UK –and, I would hasten to contend, in the world at large. Certainly this piece of good news seems to be a pertinent way to conclude these brief comments about the articles section.

I would now like to emphasize how proud we are to be able to offer in this issue a very special collection of texts which expose different forms of violence in a territory which has suffered enormously: Sri Lanka. Included in the Miscellanea section, these texts are mostly creative, and compile what we find to be a significant map of emotions crisscrossing the battered Island Nation.

The dossier opens with Walter Perera's "Chelva Kanaganayakam: A Tribute", a moving eulogy on the figure of the renowned specialist in Tamil and South Asian literatures who passed away prematurely in 2015. Chelva was a very dear person to all those who were lucky enough to meet him, and we want to dedicate the Sri Lanka dossier and this issue of *Indialogs* to his memory. After this opening, the Sri Lanka dossier goes on to offer a revealing panoramic review of fiction dealing with the civil conflict on the Sacred Island in "Terror, Trauma, Transitions: Representing Violence in Sri Lankan Literature", contributed by Maryse Jayasuriya, which comprehensively maps the territory of Sri Lankan war fiction. In "Poetry After Libricide and Genocide", poet and sociologist Rudramoorthy Cheran writes a forceful piece about the early stages of the conflict which blurs genre boundaries, partaking of scholarly writing, memoir and poetry. Symbolically and poetically, Cheran's text can thus be said to disrupt boundaries of any kind which separate humans, and we take the chance to declare this, the disruption of dividing boundaries which lead to violence of whatever kind, to be the main entry on the agenda of this issue of *Indialogs*.

Suvendrini Perera and Aparna Halpé grace us with insightful pieces of memory entitled, respectively, “Reading Lesson” and “At Sunset”, both of which are again especially moving. Each in its own way, they subtly connect the civil conflict with the innocence of childhood or adolescence. Indeed, for many Sri Lankan men and women innocence was forever lost in a darkness which lasted nearly three decades –and which in some senses spans longer. These two stories also share a more or less prominent reference to the fact of diaspora, which has become an integral part of the national identity of Sri Lanka after so many thousands were forced to flee the country because of the state of affairs.

Unfortunately, after the civil conflict ended, other types of violence keep plaguing the nation, as testified by Ameena Hussein’s short story “It Must Be”, a saddening tale set in a very recent present which was inspired, as stated by the author herself, by a true story. Albeit so heart-breaking, this story incorporates in our dossier the experience of Muslims in Sri Lanka, and by extension that of minorities such as Sri Lankan Christians, Malays, and others, regularly sidelined in the confrontation between the two major ethnic groups

The Miscellanea dossier concludes with two poems contributed by Jean Arasanayagam, a foremost figure of Sri Lankan letters, entitled “Checkpoints I” and “Checkpoints II”, from her latest collection, *With Flowers in Their Hair* (2015). The fire in these poems is sparked by the poet’s visit to the north of the island, where havoc has reigned for so long. There, the devastated landscape stirs her memories of the violence that she and her family endured in the 1983 riots, when the conflict started. We believe that this provides a superb rounding up to this, truly special, Sri Lanka dossier, as going back to the beginning would mean the opportunity to start afresh, giving peace a new opportunity.

We are truly thankful to all the authors for their unique contributions, as well as the reviewers and copyeditors for their splendid effort. We hope you enjoy these texts as much as we do, and that you find them as relevant. To you all, thanks for reading.