

## EDITORS' NOTE

This issue of *Postcolonial Interventions* is the product of a 2 day international conference organised by Advanced Research Centre for Indian Writing in English – P.G. Department of English and IQAC, Lady Bra-bourne College, Kolkata in collaboration with *Postcolonial Interventions: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies* on May 11-12, 2023. We received hundreds of abstracts and unfortunately could not include all the participants owing to lack of space and time. We had declared beforehand that selected papers would be included in either in an anthology or in a special issue of our journal. We are glad that we have been able to keep that promise by bringing out this special issue on Postcolonial Ecologies which includes some of the papers presented in the conference along with a couple of other papers which arrived after we had released our CFP. At a time when the climate crisis is gradually pushing us towards climate catastrophe, all such interventions are crucial pointers about the suicidal destruction we are bringing upon ourselves and the protracted history of capitalist-colonialist plunder associated with such impending doom.

Of course, in the current global and national scenario, the notion of doom is rather ubiquitous because the world and the country are riven with multiple maladies

of manifold dimensions. One cannot, for example, ignore the unrelenting crisis being faced by the people of Palestine in the wake of the Israeli onslaught which has violated all tenets of International Law and human ethics by subjecting an entire population to indiscriminate aggression in the name of eliminating the threat from Hamas which had launched a terrible attack against Israel on October 7th. The Israeli attack indeed started as a revenge against that attack and the proclaimed desire of freeing the hostages taken by Hamas. Critically, not only has Israel inflicted ten, twenty times more violence against the Palestinians but there appears to be no end in sight to their aggression which has also assassinated journalists, hospital workers, UN workers and other by mercilessly attacking hospitals, refugee camps, schools and even ambulances. An entire population is being subjected to a systematic, gruesome genocide even as the international community continue to twiddle its thumbs and mouth inane rhetoric without any actual commitment to either peace or justice. Like Eliot, we too could wonder, "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?". Like Adorno, we too might wonder if literature, academic knowledge or any cultural representation has any meaning after such macabre monstrosities.

It is with the burden of such realisation that Jibanananda Das had once written "The essence of creation, it seems, is hate: (1946-47'; translation mine). Das was writing these lines in the context of The Great Calcutta Killings

of 1946 and the subsequent Partition Riots which unleashed across the subcontinent inhuman atrocities of unprecedented scale and horror. Unfortunately, those traumatic events created scars and open wounds which some have allowed to assiduously fester for their own vested political interests, leading to the manufacturing of hateful majoritarian discourses of violence on the one hand and riotous carnages on the other. One of the most momentous of these calamitous events was of course the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6th December 1992 and the ruthless killing of hundreds of people across the country before and after that barbarous event. Yet, thirty-two years after that fateful event, armed by a Supreme Court order, a large section of the country went into a calculated hysteria over the consecration of a Ram Mandir at that exact spot where the Babri Masjid once stood without any sense of guilt regarding the violence that was unleashed, the lives that were lost and hatred that was maximised. With hordes of jubilant devotees, led by the Prime Minister of a supposedly secular nation, India hosted on 22nd January scenes that paralleled events in Germany in 1933 or thereabout. Of course India is not alone. Across the world, whether in Turkey or Hungary or in parts of Africa - similar forces of sadistic division are gaining momentum. All those utopian promises and potentialities that the postcolonial world had once generated continue to recede and wither and no possible shore of recovery is as yet in sight.

What are academics to do in circumstances such as these, especially in the face of growing authoritarianism which leads to cancellation of lectures by public intellectuals, vitriolic misinformation campaigns against noble laureates and sustained asphyxiation of individuals and organisations associated with civil society who champion liberal, democratic values? Words of sanity, amity and charity seems ineffectually inappropriate in this day and age when the public sphere itself has become almost a cacophonous marketplace where the loudest liars are able to claim sanctimonious supremacy in a society that seems to have become saturated with schadenfreude. But what else do we have? What else allows us to imagine, empathise and exercise reason if not our cherished words? The only thing we can still do is to amplify those words and carry them, relentlessly, indefatigably, to all corners, however dark and unresponsive, so that eventually the rays of light can shatters the shackles of darkness and usher in some horizon, however unrealistic at this point, of solidarity, sympathy and serenity to a world so desperately bereft of all these.

These hopes and prayers and dreams can only succeed when you, the reader, remain committed to our journey and match our steps with renewed vigour and conviction in the face of mounting adversities. Let these bonds never be severed.