

## Editor's Note

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Imagine, then, a journey. We start out in the South India of Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, whose conventional interpretation as a Gandhian village Nakul Kundra questions, arguing that it is in fact the spirit of B. R. Ambedkar which suffuses the place as well as the novel. Our next stop is in the contested region of Kashmir, whose fraught history is vividly brought to life in the poetry of Agha Shahid Ali. In his contribution to this issue, Junaid Shah Shabir reads Shahid's collection, *The Country Without a Post Office*, as an example of poetry's power to bear witness. Having crossed the Indo-Pakistani Line of Control somewhere along the way, we next find ourselves in the novels of Mohsin Hamid, where crossing borders is only one among several sources of disorientation. As Stuti Khanna shows, both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Exit West* benefit from being read as texts of displacement in which neither the words its characters use nor the cities they inhabit are ever quite stable.

How are your sea legs? Shall we venture across the Indian Ocean to the Arabian peninsula in an elegant dhow? You would prefer not to? In that case, let us avail ourselves of one of Hamid's magic portals and emerge none the worse for wear in the world of Arabic science fiction, which Musab Bajaber discusses in his essay on hybridity in the genre. From the interplanetary encounters of Syrian alien abduction stories, we will move to the interspecific empathy in Nawal El Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*, as analyzed by Uchechukwu Umezurike and Ademola Adesola in an article exploring the productive intersections of animal studies, postcolonial eco-criticism, and posthumanism. The third part of this issue's Arabic cluster is made up of an essay on the Palestinian author Adania Shibli's novella *Minor Detail*, which Taylor Roberts reads through an innovative framework he calls "boundary poetics," a timely reminder of the material reality of borders that are insurmountable for people holding the wrong passport or none at all.

Assuming that we manage to leave Shibli's Palestine (admittedly a challenging undertaking at the best of times), we shall traverse the entire Mediterranean Sea from east to west, trying to avoid collisions both with the cockshells carrying refugees (economic and otherwise) from south to north as well as with the European navies trying to protect Fortress Europe from the menace of poor immigrants. Having exited the *Mare Nostrum*

through the Pillars of Hercules, let us sail then, you and I, via what “the harder-nosed and misogynist yachtsmen” are fond of calling “the ladies’ route” to the Caribbean (Winchester 333).

For it is in that space known as the Black Atlantic that our next two articles are best located, notwithstanding the fact that the Trinidadian-British author Monique Roffey, whose novel *The Mermaid of Black Conch* Jutta Schamp reads through the lens of Jungian depth psychology, is white. The resultant complication of conventional conceptions of identity is continued by Anmol Sahni, whose essay on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah* finally pays serious attention to the novel’s occasionally baffling blog posts.

The issue is topped off by, and our journey concludes with, Suhaan Mehta’s book review essay on recent publications in the field of postcolonial graphic novels and comics, completing a dizzying tour of continents and literary genres, all accomplished at a negligible addition to our carbon footprint.

#### Work Cited

Winchester, Simon. *Atlantic: Great Sea Battles, Heroic Discoveries, Titanic Storms, and a Vast Ocean of a Million Stories*. Harper, 2010.