

EDITORIAL: “Revisionings”

One of the pleasures of my work for *SARE* is to be able to see first-hand, and before their publication, the multiple ways in which taken for granted concepts and old complexities can shine new light on being subjected to critical revisioning. I am very pleased in this regard that our December 2019 issue features the relatively new and emergent field of critical love studies. In creating this special issue, the guest editor had issued a call for papers conscious not to be prescriptive about the scope, methodology or source material for her collection. Love is after all a slippery concept, more so in this age of advanced globalization, capitalism, technology and the effects, whether utopian or sinister, of transnational mobility. The outcome is a special issue which explores the various hues, nuances and dynamics of love, both in its personal and political deployment, across the boundaries of geography, time and culture. As most studies that think critically about love have taken Western texts and contexts as their subject, the analyses collated and curated here by Wernmei Yong Ade contribute to the developing field of love by engaging representations and perspectives from within and across Asia, aware at the same time that “Asia” is not a self-contained and delimited formation but one that should be conceived in relation to its imaginative affinities and geographies. I wish to thank Wernmei and her contributors for their immense hard work and valuable revisionings.

In our general section, Hannah Ho considers the dominant gendered and religious framework through which meanings of “race” are constructed in Brunei, arguably the only remaining independent Islamic sultanate in Southeast Asia. Her article is particularly interested in exploring what room is left to Muslim women’s agency in the production – and possible revisioning – of “Malayness”. I am pleased that *SARE* continues to play a role in bringing into visibility in English-language scholarship the work of writers of the region such as, as in this issue, the eminent Bruneian novelist Muslim Burmat (who writes in Malay). Also noteworthy in this regard is *SARE*’s commitment to provide a much-needed space and platform for a distinct and important, and growing, constituency of scholars in the literature of Southeast Asia.

We are also in this issue delighted to feature Shalini Nadaswaran’s interview with Bill Ashcroft, a founding exponent of postcolonial literary studies, and one of *SARE*’s advisors, who not only elaborates on the forms of revisioning inherent in his idea of the “transnation,” which lies at and across the borders of nations, but also points to the tenacious character, and continuing relevance, of postcolonial theory. Kok Su Mei and Sharifah Osman evaluate for us new works by Malaysian authors Bernice Chauly and Hannah Alkaf, respectively. We round off this issue with an assessment by Agnes Yeow of Rajat Chaudhuri and Zafar Anjum’s collection of “the best Asian speculative fiction” of 2018. This close is also fitting as it looks forward by signalling our next special issue on speculative fiction from Asia.

We hope the diverse voices, insights, perspectives and approaches presented in this issue will reach new audiences and continue to take the journal forward. As another year draws to a close and we continue working towards a strong and resilient future for *SARE*, we also hope that the journal will continue to be guided by the inclusiveness of its founding vision and aspirations. As always, I am deeply grateful to our peer-reviewers for giving so generously of their time and expertise. We remain greatly indebted to them and their service to *SARE*. I also wish to thank Susan, Renukha, Qysha and Juno for their help in readying this issue for production.

As we enter a new decade of our century and as *SARE* moves and matures from its first flush of being, and knowing, may love's revisioning power lead the way in providing us with new goals and possibilities for critical imagination and action.

Happy 2020!

Sharmani Patricia Gabriel