

## EDITORIAL

Even as the year 2021 has reached its midpoint, human communities continue to suffer in manifold ways from the Covid-19 pandemic that brought the world to a standstill in more ways than one in the previous year. Life, be it in families, educational institutions, or workplaces, has changed drastically. Human behavior in the social spaces has been altered forever. However, social scientists will tell you that human beings have amazing resilience to adapt themselves and thrive even in the midst of the hardest of challenges. Life must go on; and it does go on, even when events such as the pandemic leave their indelible footprints on it.

It has been a year of daunting challenges and creative innovations at Saint Claret College. Online mode of education became the lifeline for students and staff. On the research front, conducting on-field studies was a challenge due to the pandemic restrictions on movement. Even in the midst of many challenges, we are glad to bring out the latest issue – the eighth volume – of *InterViews* with a diverse array of articles that offer exciting possibilities for future research. In this issue, we carry five articles, one book review, and one film review.

The first article by Jijo Paulose Kandamkulathy is an exciting proposal for a semiotic study. Combining Saussure's concept of arbitrariness with Peircean morphology of signs, the author builds a case for transmodal arbitrariness across various sense organs of a human person. Kandamkulathy is specifically interested in exploring the possibility of such transmodal arbitrariness linking the cutaneous sensation with visual perception. If his hypothesis is proved, one can only imagine the interventions possible for the visually challenged to perceive objects around them through their cutaneous sensory abilities. The paper is essentially a mapping of the possibility. We shall await the results of the empirical testing of such possibility.

In the current world scenario wherein refugee and migration crisis has become a much-debated human interest issue, internal migration within a country remained off the radar. This has been very much the case in India, where the sad plight of such migrants hardly captured anyone's attention – until the pandemic struck. Many metropolitan cities have been built and kept functional by the sweat and tears of such migrants who were taken for granted. When the pandemic struck them hard and left them without a job and food, they began their walk back to their homes, thousands of miles away and, sadly, with little help on the road and death breathing heavily down their necks. It is time India woke up to the plight of the migrants and how they are treated by their own fellow citizens. In this context, the research by Jyoti Verma into the socially represented image of the Bihari migrants serves as an eye-opener. May this study inspire serious in-depth research into the plight of the migrants, which may favorably impact administrative policies and societal attitudes and make life a little bit easier and dignified for the migrants.

It would not be a hyperbole if one were to say that the three passions of any Indian are religion, movies, and cricket – not necessarily in that order, though. Of concern for us in this issue is the impact of the movies, especially in constructing narratives and solidifying stereotypes about minorities and genders. Sonam Sultana Shah does an appraisal of Muslim women in contemporary Hindi commercial cinema. She traces the stereotypical depiction of Muslim women and their objectification in Bollywood and how far such representation has changed, for better or worse, over the years. Art imitates life, but art can also shape life. Hence it is necessary to consciously change the narratives of the Other for the better so as to fashion a more inclusive, tolerant, and humane society.

Internet and social media have been a nightmare for parents and teachers. Not so long ago, they would have done anything to get the youngsters off such media. However, the pandemic has drastically changed the landscape. Internet, mobile, and related social media have become *sine qua non* for online education necessitated by the pandemic. In such a scenario, it is hard to dismiss the threat caused by such media's abuses, if not supervised carefully. Ugyal T. Lama Yolmo offers some interesting conclusions and ideas for further research on the effects of online gaming, very specifically focusing on the uses and abuses of PUBG. When engaged optimally, there are positive gains; however, when the content of the game engaged as well as the time

spent is excessive, the results are negative, he reports. Parents and teachers might want to take note.

As always, *InterViews* offers space for culture and society closer home to Northeast India. Tamar Badi and Vokendro Singh offer a reading of the syncretism in the religious practices of the *Tagin* tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Tribal communities are not insulated from globalization and mingling with the wider world. In such interaction, new perspectives – be they religious, political, or cultural – enter through social osmosis. Such osmosis affects indigenous religions as well, resulting in assimilation, accommodation, and a desire for preserving the indigenous faith. The authors present how syncretism has influenced Donyi-Poloism in the district of Daporijo.

The review section offers a book review and a film review. The book reviewed is not a new entry, but a masterpiece that has universal and lasting relevance for human societies. Junu Elapra reviews Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Given that this is a prescribed text book for students of literature, this review should help them. Arunachal Pradesh is no Bollywood; however, when the State does produce a movie, it offers a cultural and anthropological glimpse into the nuanced life of her inmates. *Crossing Bridges* is such a movie that captures the conflict between modernity and tradition, between the village and the city. Evana Tissopi analyzes its many-layered meaning for us.

A varied and rich menu. Wish you a happy reading that nourishes the soul.

Ziro  
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