

**EDITORIAL**

FELICITY HAND

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Welcome to the first issue of Indi@logs - Spanish Journal of India Studies, the first electronic journal in Spain that focuses exclusively on the Indian Subcontinent. The journal is a joint initiative of the Spanish Association for Interdisciplinary India Studies <http://www.aeeii.org> together with the Department of English of the UAB. The journal covers a wide variety of disciplines, ranging from literature, culture and film to politics, history and environmental studies. Indi@logs is an academic journal but one of its goals is to reach out to the general public and encourage a deeper understanding of the richness and diversity of India, its people and its extraordinary history. This is why we have opted for an open access system journal. Our objectives are to promote research on India from a multidisciplinary perspective and strengthen cultural and scientific ties with the subcontinent. Indi@logs is a forum where a network of scholars within Spain and abroad with common interests can publish their research and circulate their work in both English and Spanish. The Spanish Association for Interdisciplinary India Studies has worked hard in the last five years to create a space for Indian studies in our country and to put Spain on the international map of leading academic work on the subcontinent.

The journal, which will be published once a year, consists of scholarly articles and a Miscellanea section, where authors are invited to contribute memoirs, shorter academic papers, extracts from work-in-progress or other types of pieces aimed at the non-specialised reader. We are indebted to the scholars who have generously accepted our invitation to contribute to the launching of the journal. The eight articles in the first issue cover a variety of disciplines ranging from literary analyses to environmental studies, from the sociopolitical to the musical.

Proceeding in alphabetical order, renowned postcolonial scholar, Bill Ashcroft, deals with what he calls “*Midnight’s heirs*”, that is, a young generation of Indian writers who have carried on the Rushdiesque subversion of the grand narrative of nation. He

argues that the work of writers such as Arundhati Roy, Hari Kunzru, Aravind Adiga and Kiran Desai, have proved that the Indian Anglophone novel has reached a high level of sophistication in its global reach and pervasive social critique. Enrique Gallud Jardiel focuses on a play by Nobel Prize winner, Jacinto Benavente, which describes, in allegorical terms, the so-called *Sepoy Mutiny* of 1857. Benavente clearly sides with the rebels as he emphasises their tolerance, compassion and pacifism unlike the British who are portrayed in unfavourable terms. The *silandeses* – sea landers, that is, the British – consider themselves vastly superior to the natives but Gallud shows how Benavente criticises their materialism and cruelty.

Joel Kuortti takes a close look at one of the notorious episodes of the British Raj: the Amritsar Massacre of 1919. His article compares the narrative strategies used by two authors, Salman Rushdie and Shauna Singh Baldwin, to recount the incident. He suggests that despite the fact that the event described is the same one, they approach the colonial political situation from different angles. Joan Martinez-Alier, Leah Temper and Federico Demaria provide readers with a detailed analysis of environmental issues in India today. Through a series of case studies – responses in Odisha to bauxite mining, conflicts on sand mining, disputes on waste management options in Delhi and ship dismantling in Alang, Gujarat – they provide the reader with a clear picture of ecological distribution conflicts in India today. Their article concludes with a vindication of environmental justice movements as they contribute to democracy and constitute the strongest forces for environmental sustainability.

Agustín Pániker examines the figure of the father of the Indian constitution, Bhimrao Ambedkar, and his role in current dalit consciousness, which has grown in recent years. Pániker highlights Ambedkar's work in improving the socioeconomic status of the former untouchables despite the fact that he had serious disagreements with Gandhi. He points out the irony of the current state of Ambedkarite Neobuddhism, which has practically become another Hindu sect. Makarand Paranjape takes a close look at the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi through a detailed discussion of two films, one a British blockbuster and the other a typical Bollywood masala. Paranjape suggests that Gandhi's ideas have survived the passage of time. Attenborough's *Gandhi* casts him as a twentieth-century saint while *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* focuses on the Mahatma's afterlife and how his spirit can still be revitalized in contemporary India. What Paranjape calls Gandhi's "haunting of the nation" may become as transformative as it is therapeutic.

Òscar Pujol explores the work of Octavio Paz in *The Monkey Grammarian* in order to tease out the reflections made by the Mexican poet on language and poetry. The metaphysical raptures remind us that he was, until 1968, his country's ambassador to India. Pujol argues that Paz's ideas on language coincide with those of Abhinavagupta, the 11<sup>th</sup> century Indian literary critic and priest. He suggests that Paz's notion of reconciliation between the figure of the poet and that of the philosopher would have found favour with the 11th century scholar, despite the huge gap in geographical and temporal terms between them. Mohan Ramanan describes the power and effect of South Indian Classical Musical Culture and in particular the *Bhakti* tradition. His article describes in great detail the form and nature of *Kutcheri*, the South Indian music concert and points out the need to differentiate between Karnatak music and Hindustani (North Indian) music. Ramanan's article insists on the importance of Sanskrit aesthetic tradition and the concept of *rasa* in order to appreciate the emotional mood of Indian music.

In the Miscellanea section we are honoured to be able to include work by two well-known scholars in Indian studies. Uma Parameswaran focuses on the evolution of a South Asian community in the diaspora. Her own experiences in Winnipeg during the nineteen sixties show how these early pioneers slowly acquired diaspora consciousness even though this has meant that the community has become fragmented into linguistic and religious groups. However, she suggests that old ways of social interaction die hard as, for example, gender separation occurs almost unconsciously among affluent people among today's Indo-Canadians. Susie Tharu's innovative research is represented here in the extract from her book on dalit women. She shows how in the early years of the dalit and feminist movements, dalit women often clashed against well-intentioned male and female activists as they refused to forfeit their traditions or their identity. She states that *caste* patriarchy is a productive term to use in questions of dalit emancipation as both women's issues as well as problems of land, water, housing, bank loans, education, political leadership and domestic violence need to be addressed.

The articles that make up our first issue have set a high standard for Indi@logs. We look forward to receiving research articles from scholars in Spain and abroad as the success of our new journal depends on the international community of Indian enthusiasts. By launching it through the Open Journal System, we hope to encourage both the spread of Indian Studies in our country and the consolidation of Spain as an active participant in international arenas on India. We hope this task will come to

fruition in the issues to come with the help of the academic community to whom Indi@logs is addressed.