



THE POST COLONIAL

"Over there is like here, neither better or worse. But I am from here, just as the date palm standing in the courtyard of our house has grown in our house and not in anyone else's." - Tayeb Salih

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CONTENTS

PAGES 3-4

Contributors & Introduction

PAGES 5-8

Climate Activism in the Northwest Territories by **Teresa Berkhout**

PAGES 9-16

Kolkata & the Sundarbans: A Photography Report by **Berenice P. Fernández**

PAGES 17- 24

A Brief history of India's Third Gender by **Berenice P. Fernández**

PAGES 25-27

This month's book recommendations by **Berenice P. Fernández**

PAGES 28-35

Recognising Strangers by **Chaymae Mouziane**



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contributors

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A brief introduction

Greetings from the University of Barcelona! We are a group of students that gathered together in the illuminating course The Anglophone Postcolonial World, back in 2022, where we discovered that we shared many interests regarding the main topic of the course: Postcolonialism.

In the pursuit of understanding the multifaceted dimensions of this term, each of us focused on diverse points of interest and researched topics that went from Neoliberalism to EcoCriticism.



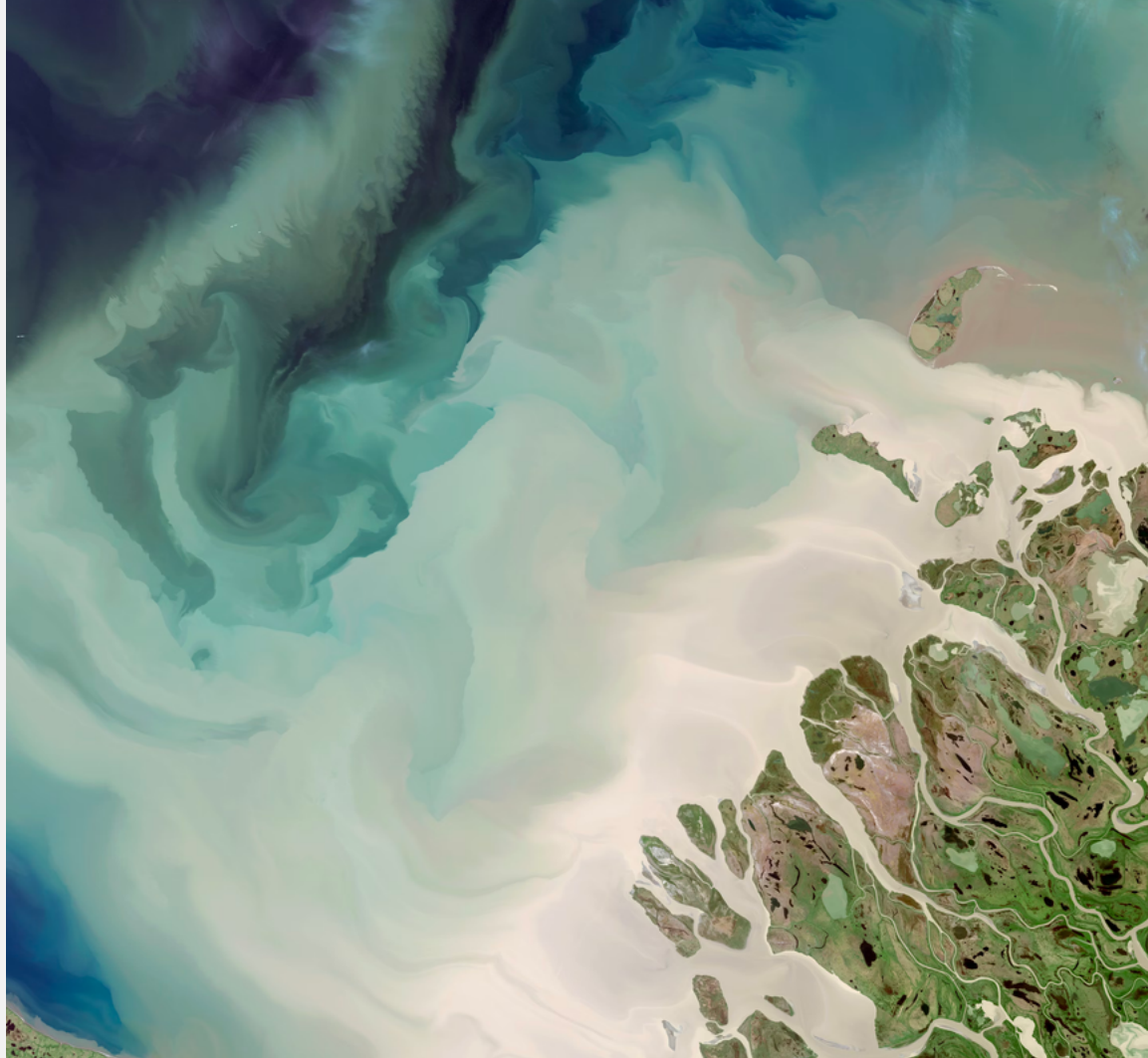
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The result is shown in this compilation of our individual work. It is just a brief sampler of our contributions, that we hope you enjoy and learn from. Immerse yourself in this collective journey through the Anglophone Postcolonial World.

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Climate Activism Across Canada's Northwest Territories



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The land is not just a where, but also a how and a why for the populations living in the remote Northwest Territories. The *bush* has traditionally allowed the indigenous Dene people to exist and thrive. Now that their lifestyle has been altered to **the new norm of gas-heated bungalows and industry jobs**, the land has shifted to a peripheral space in their communities, but its integrity is still crucial.

The mainly **indigenous organizations of the NWT area** are constantly asking for measures that take better care of the vast land inside their jurisdictions, to not only preserve its nature and its resources but to fight the climatic change hazards that will be suffered in years to come.

**Teresa
Berkhout**

In the last decade, **the whole world has seen an increase in climate change** related issues, and the NWT are no exceptions; new reports detail effects of changing Arctic climate affected by both global warming and nonstop emissions.



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The involvement of the indigenous people in this issue is imperative. **The federal government of Canada, the Northwest Territories and the Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne government** have been working together to create an Indigenous protected area around Great Bear Lake: the world's eighth-largest freshwater lake.

The lake is considered one of the most intact ecosystems in the world, with immense cultural significance to the Dene people, of course. It was declared a **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve** in 2016 and is surrounded by boreal forest, and now that it seems like the western world is

seriously considering environmental standards, indigenous communities are being listened to and are achieving the protection they have been so long asking for.

The three governments signed a letter of intent at the **COP15 biodiversity conference in Montreal**, which the First Nation publicly described as a major win. Having fought to have the lake declared an Indigenous-protected and conserved area, this marked a hopeful premise for the rest of the country.

However, although Toronto declared a climate emergency in 2019, and Vancouver has plans to address climate emergency, the model of



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many Canadian cities allows a low population density while being an economic focus, forcing residents to live further away and extending commutes.

From what came from the Biodiversity Conference, it could be said that **efforts to protect nature at COP15 will fail without Indigenous people.** Jennifer Corpuz, an Indigenous lawyer from the Philippines, was quoted in many media outlets saying that **Indigenous people around the world “have long been the best guardians of nature”.**

Climate activism inside Canadian borders, and in the rest of the world, is a synonym for indigenous involvement. **The Northwest Territories are leading the way for a greener future** In the country, as well as a more democratic one, in which the interests of the community are taken into consideration in major legislative reforms.

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and further reading:

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Source: [CTV News - Efforts to protect nature at COP15 will fail without Indigenous people, leaders say](#).

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- "Protected Areas Strategy for the Northwest Territories" (PDF)

Source: [Government of the Northwest Territories - Protected Areas Strategy for the Northwest Territories](#)

- "What We Heard Report: Forest Act" (PDF)

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- "How Canadians can cut their carbon footprints"

Source: [CBC News - How Canadians can cut their carbon footprints](#)

Photography report on Kolkata & The Sundarbans

November 2019



We landed in Kolkata late at night, however, the city appeared to remain awake. An aura of light encapsulated the city, making it look as if the sky, full of stars, was on earth and not above it.

At sunrise, we were surprised to find **a cloud of smoke** blocking the sun. Everything we could see from our hotel balcony was the contour of some trees and buildings that seemed ethereal. It felt like a dream.

**Bere P.
Fernández**

Not much later, we got to know from the locals that the smoke was worse than usual at this time of the year because farmers started **burning stubble**, which is actually **very harming to the environment**. This is currently illegal in the country, but people that have nothing to lose are not worried about the consequences of going against the government, I guess. The smoke produced by those pyres rose to the air, increasing the levels of pollution and its hazardousness. Many people on the streets were covering their faces with cloths and masks.



We decided to explore the city before moving to the Sundarbans (our main point of interest). As soon as we were on the road, we quickly noticed the dynamics of Kolkata's traffic. The organization seemed different from what I was accustomed to, and drivers appeared to deviate constantly from traffic regulations. The multitude of vehicles weaving through lanes, even creating new ones, was quite noteworthy. It was surprising to witness a such a situation without frequent accidents. Evidently, locals are used to navigating through this distinctive traffic landscape.

No later than a couple of hours, after dealing with the traffic, we took a turn in hopes of evading the congested lanes that never seemed to end, but unexpectedly, we ended up stuck in what seemed to be a river or maybe just a flooded road. We got to know that the days prior to our arrival, there had been heavy rainfall, and Kolkata is very prone to suffer floodings during these meteorological calamities.



In one of our stops in the rural areas between Kolkata and the Sundarbans, we experienced first-hand the conditions in which people lived in. Their hygiene practices were forcefully limited by the poverty of the environment. We discovered that among the houses there was a small spot where people used to walk to and throw their rubbish. The pile kept increasing against the plants that were trying to make their way through.

In order to escape the stifling atmosphere of the city and the emotions that arose during our passing through the rural villages, we continued our journey driving further from the city and into the wild, leaving behind the cloud of smoke and the building silhouettes that now were just mere tiny shadows in the distance.





Life became certainly different once we stepped into the Tide Country (the Sundarbans, as called by its locals), and we realized that the ones governing the land were animals instead of humans. As soon as we took out our food containers and sandwiches, we were surrounded by **bonnet macaques**, a very common type of monkey found in many places in the country. Some of them were completely unhinged and stole the food from our hands!

India is the **8th most diverse region** in terms of biodiversity in the world. Its tropical weather helps maintain the saturation of colors, especially green, in most parts of the country. The Sundarbans is one of them. As we made our way towards the Tide Country and prepared ourselves to leave signposts and paved roads behind, we couldn't help it but admire the vibrancy of our surroundings.

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Finally, after a 4-hour journey, we made it to the Sundarbans themselves. 60% of the land belongs to Bangladesh. The 40% that belongs to India is composed of **102 islands**. Of those, 54 are inhabited.

There were many shacks offering tourist services and a whole lot of boats that would take you through some of the channels that led to **the Bay of Bengal**. However, none of the tour guides would tell you the entire truth about the Sundarbans, that's why we offered money to a local fisherman and he took us on his boat.

He indicated us different spots of our interest, but he told us it was dangerous to get too close to the banks for you never knew when there could be a tiger close by... The tigers in this land are known for being **man-eating tigers**, and for the locals, who understand the performative power of language, the word 'tiger' means you're calling them.

In many places we spotted signposts of danger.





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There was a unique quietness as the boat rowed through the tidal channels. As we immersed ourselves in the depth of the Sundarbans, we started feeling smaller, as if we didn't belong there... As if the land belonged to someone else. To the animals; to those we could see in the trees and to those that were hiding but prowling around.

We were lucky enough to spot a **Bengal tiger** from the distance right before it was time to go back. Every single person that was on the boat went silent. The only sound was the wind blowing through and the water from the tide as it increased. For a few seconds, the tiger locked eyes with us. It was **a moment of recognition**. We were strangers in his land, and there was a warning in his stare.

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On the way back, the fisherman drove the boat through different channels. He told us that this was only possible because of the rainfall from the past few days. **The water level had increased so much and flooded so many villages** that there were new ways to move around the Sundarbans. As much practical as that seemed, it wasn't something to celebrate among the local people.

The boat circled around a village that was completely flooded with water. It is important to mention that, due to **climate change**, this situation in the Sundarbans will just keep on getting worse throughout the years, as **it is expected an increase of 0,60cm in the water level** in less than a hundred years. This implies bad news not only for the locals, but also to non-human fauna.



We decided to come back because it wasn't looking good. A dark cloud was covering the sky and approaching the Sundarbans and the city of Kolkata. The people from the villages assured us that something bad was coming and that as of lately, Bon Bibi, the goddess of the Forest, had not been able to protect them.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIA'S *third gender*

Written by Bere P. Fernández

*H*ijras, the third gender of India, have a special place in Hindu religion. However, their relationship to modern society is not as easy as it may seem.

Hijra is a Hindi term. Depending on the situation and context, it can be derogatory.

Most Hijras are born male. It is known that only some of them are born with intersex variations. Today, many Hijras perform at ceremonies and give blessings, beg for money, or are sex workers for survival.

"While recognition of genders outside male and female has only recently been discussed in Western societies, in Hindu society, people of non-binary gender expression have played important roles for over 2000 years."

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A group of hijras in a slum, where they share a settlement, in Mumbai.



Hijras in ANCIENT TEXTS

This community appears in ancient literature. Hijras held significant roles in very important texts of Hinduism: the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, also in the *Kama Sutra*.

"Hijras held important positions in court and various facets of administration during the Mughal-era India, from the 16th to 19th century. They were also considered to hold religious authority and were sought out for blessings, particularly during religious ceremonies."

"Hijras belong to a special caste. They are usually devotees of the mother goddess Bahuchara Mata, Lord Shiva, or both."

"One of the many forms of Shiva, a principal Hindu deity, involves him merging with his wife, Parvati, to become the androgynous Ardhanari."



Bahuchara Mata, considered patroness of the hijra community.

The HIJRA *community*

*M*any Hijras live in organized communities. Some of them undergo a rite of initiation called "Nirwaan", which refers to the removal of the penis, scrotum, and testicles.

The most significant relationship in the Hijra community is that of the guru (master or teacher) and chela (disciple or student). The Guru usually supports Hijras emotionally and financially.

Koovagam is a village in Tamil Nadu, India - famous for its annual festival of Hijras, transgender and transvestite individuals. They perform ritualistic dances, hold beauty pageants and hold seminars to discuss the basic rights of transgender people.



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When THE BRITISH arrived



Queen Victoria

When the British came to power in India, authorities attempted to eradicate the Hijras. British colonialists decided to pass a law in 1897 classing all eunuchs as 'criminals' and 'a breach of public decency'. Violence against Hijras, especially Hijra sex workers, was often brutal in public places, police custody, prisons and even in their homes.

As with transgender people in most of the world, they face extreme discrimination and ignorance in health, housing, education, employment, immigration and law.

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“ SECTION 377 OF THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with 1 [imprisonment for life], or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

”

The HIJRA hand-clap

Hijras seek attention through a distinctive and loud clapping, conveying their presence to passersby.

This clap is characterized by horizontal, flat palms striking against each other perpendicularly, fingers spread, deviating from the typical applause-style with a vertical palm and closed fingers. I perceive this gesture as an extension of their physiological identity, a way of asserting, "I am who I am."

Sociologists propose that subtle variations in the 'taal' (rhythm) of the hijra's clap serve not only to capture the attention of 'normals' but also to convey codified messages. In contemporary times, some hijras might be using this unique identifier to integrate easily into mainstream society.

Activist Laxmi Narayan Tripathi discourages the continued use of the hijra clap because it is primarily associated with begging and collecting money. More recently, hijras have gained recognition for their auspicious role and are frequently invited to bless significant celebrations such as marriages and births.

B ut beneath the surface of their theatricality, hijras often harbor tragic narratives, including involvement in the sex trade, exploitation, brutal castrations, social rejection, and persistent humiliation. Within India's LGBT community, hijras maintain a still widely unknown.

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Hijras make a living by appearing at weddings and whenever a new child is born to perform blessing rituals and receive money for it.

Hijras' RIGHTS today

By 2014, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh had formally recognized third-gender individuals as citizens entitled to equal rights. The Supreme Court of India affirmed the right of every human being to choose their gender, emphasizing that the recognition of this group is not merely a social or medical matter but a human rights issue. The court directed the government to extend educational and employment opportunities to all third-gender communities.

Despite gradual advancements, it wasn't until 2015 that the first hijra mayor was elected in Raigarh, India, and in 2017, Kochi employed 23 hijras for its public transit system.

However, progress has been sluggish, and a significant portion of the third-gender population continues to grapple with poverty, even as they persist in bestowing blessings of prosperity upon Hindu families.

On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India decriminalized homosexuality by declaring Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code unconstitutional, which provided for a more inclusive environment for the hijra community.

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THE THIRD GENDER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JILL PETERS



About the photographer: Jill Peters is a highly acclaimed photographer whose photographs explore identity, sexuality, and culture, capturing both past and present nuances. Her work has earned recognition in prestigious publications such as GQ, Esquire, Marie Claire, Harper's Bazaar, Details, and Elle.

Peters was an alumna of RIT in Rochester, NY, and specialized in narrative documentary photography during her studies.

Sources and further reading:

- "Third Gender" by Jill Peters Photography

Source: [Third Gender](#)

- "Third Gender and Hijras: Case Studies" by Harvard Divinity School

Source: [Third Gender and Hijras](#)

- Supreme Court of India Judgment on Transgender Rights (2016)

Source: [Supreme Court Judgment](#)

- "In India, Landmark Ruling Recognizes Transgender Citizens" by NPR

Source: [NPR Article](#)

- "A Brief History of Hijra: India's Third Gender" by The Culture Trip

Source: [A Brief History of Hijra](#)

- "Transgender People in Vedic Times" by Kashish Singh

Source: [Medium Article](#)

- "Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019"

Source: Transgender Persons Act

- "Unnatural Offences: Decrypting the Phrase 'Against the Order of Nature'" by Times of India

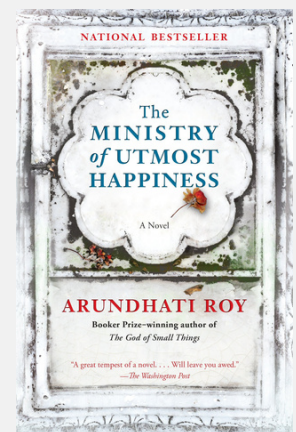
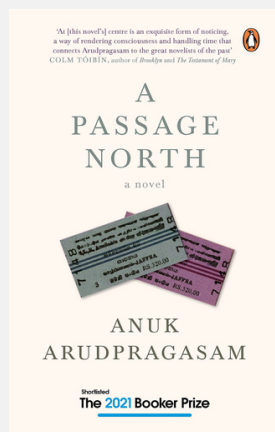
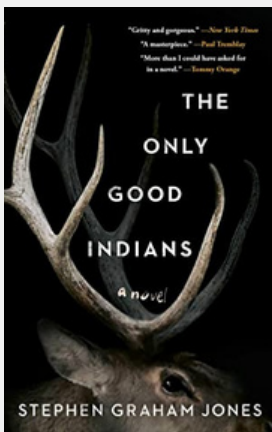
Source: Times of India Article

- "How the British Tried to 'Erase' the Hijra" by BBC News

Source: [BBC Article](#)

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

In this month's book recommendations we are including works from some authors that we have discovered during the course and some others that we came across by chance and that have given us a chance to enjoy their narrative skills and have provided us with an insight into some historical facts that are still relevant in the present.

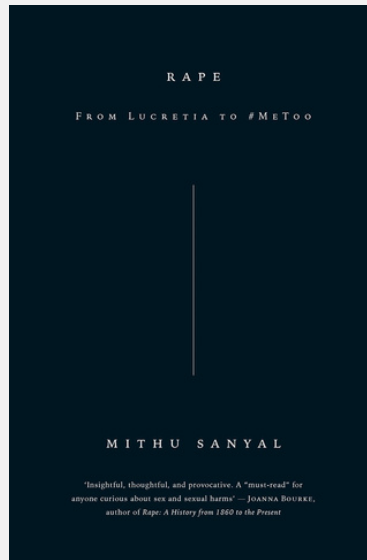
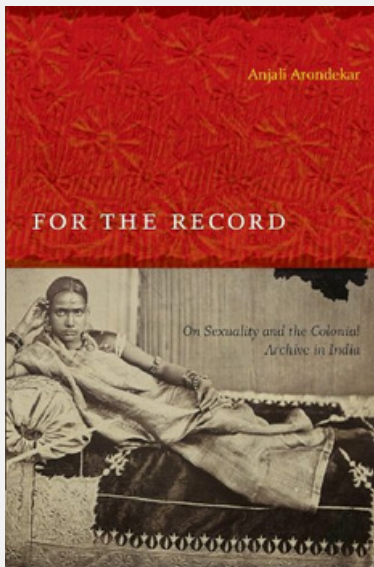


The Only Good Indians (2020) by Stephen Graham Jones. Horror fiction dealing with traditions and cultural identity.

A Passage North (2021) by Anuk Arudpragasam. Historical fiction delving into the recollections of Sri Lanka's conflict and the enduring trauma it has left behind.

The Parcel (2016) by Anosh Irani. Cultural fiction about a hijra's life in the red-light district of Mumbai. Set in postcolonial India.

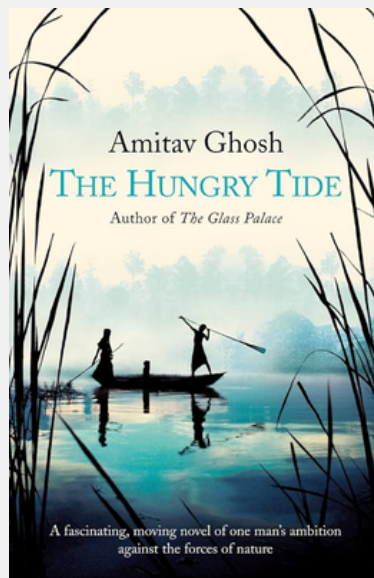
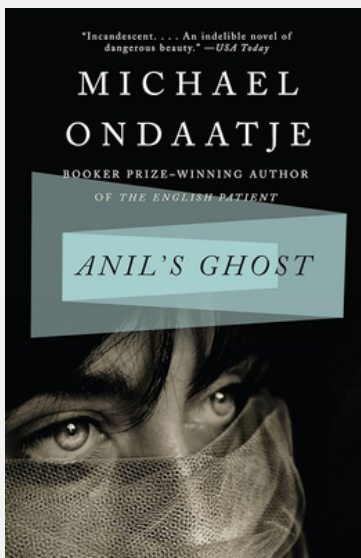
The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) by Arundhati Roy. Cultural fiction set in India and dealing with political issues.



For The Record (2009) by Anjali Arondekar. Queer history in colonial India.

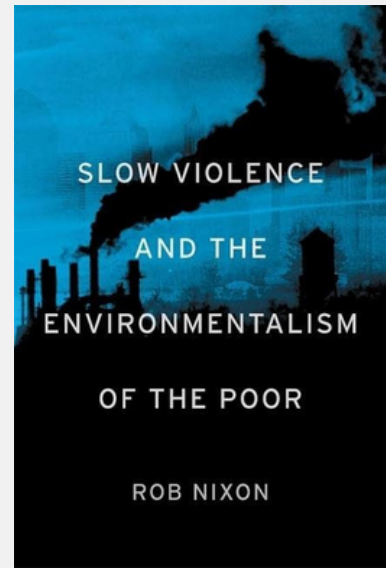
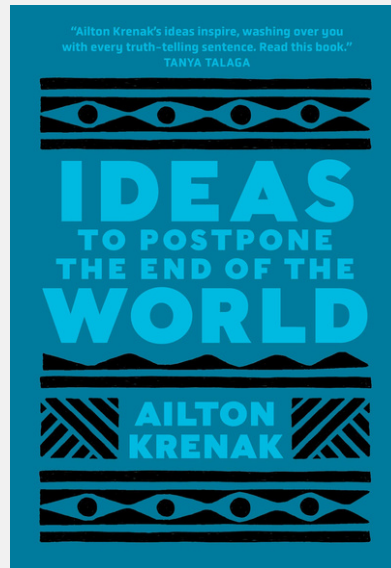
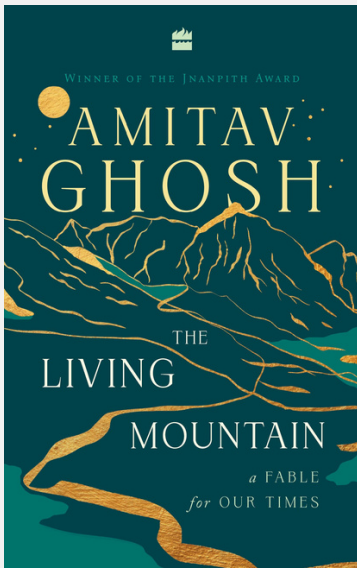
Rape (2019) by Mithu Sanyal. Nonfiction feminism, "from Lucretia to #MeToo".

The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida (2022) by Shehan Karunatilaka. Historical fiction set in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1990.



Anil's Ghost (2000) by Michael Ondaatje. Historical fiction set in Sri Lanka.

The Hungry Tide (2019) by Amitav Ghosh. Historical fiction set in the Sundarbans, India.



The Living Mountain (2022) by Amitav Ghosh. Cultural non-fiction dealing with climate change.

Ideas to Postpone the End of the World (2020) by Ailton Krenak. Cultural non-fiction also dealing with climate change from a more indigenous philosophical point of view.

Slow Violence & the Environmentalism of the Poor (2011) by Rob Nixon. Environmental non-fiction dealing with climate justice through literature.

RECOGNISING STRANGERS

CHAYMAE MOUZIANE

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INTRODUCTION

This part of the fanzine project will be focusing on the topic of identity and more specifically the one of a stranger.

Sara Ahmed is a British-Australian writer and scholar whose areas of study include the intersection of feminist theory, lesbian feminism, queer theory, affect theory, critical race theory and postcolonialism.

She was born in Salford, England on August 30, 1969, to an English mother and a Pakistani father. She emigrated to Australia in 1973.

Currently, she is a Race and Cultural Studies professor at the University of London.



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In her book *Strange encounters*, Sara Ahmed challenges the presumption that the stranger is simply anybody we do not recognize and instead proposes that he or she is socially constructed as somebody we already know and have encountered. Therefore I intend to analyse, from an etymological and a social perspective, the figure of the stranger and the series of mechanisms that his or her presence inside a distinct community engenders.

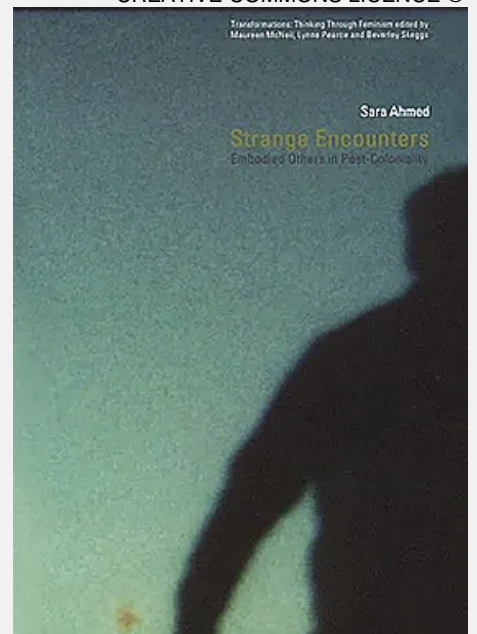
How do you recognise a stranger?

“Recognising strangers” is the title given to the first chapter of *Stranger Encounters*, and from an etymological point of view, Ahmed’s word choice can be said to be paradoxical. More precisely the verb “recognise” means to “know again, to acknowledge and to admit” according to the Collins Dictionary. Therefore it is worth wondering how can we know a stranger again?

In *Strange Encounters*, Ahmed argues that strangers are not simply those we do not know, ‘but those who are already recognised as not belonging, as being out of place’. The figure of the stranger is thus someone familiar, someone we recognise because he has peculiarities that differ from the people we know, the knowable, rather than someone we do not recognise. Moreover, the stranger turns into a form of recognition: we recognise somebody as a stranger, rather than simply failing to recognise them.

So why can this argument be said to be surprising or provocative? We always expect strangers to be something completely unknown while Ahmed explains that there are some recurrent characteristics related to danger that make us feel like someone is a stranger more than others. It’s not someone we don’t know but it’s someone we know is dangerous, who constitutes a threat to our safety.

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"I turn around as you pass me. You are a stranger. I have not seen you before. No, perhaps I have. You are very familiar [...] I think I can smell you as you pass. I think I can hear you muttering. I know you already. And I hold myself together and breathe a sigh of relief as you turn the corner. I want you not to be in my face. I cast you aside with a triumph of one who knows this street. It is not the street where you live." - *Encountering Strangers*

ON RECOGNITION

How does the recognition take place?



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There are different techniques that allow us to differentiate between those who are strangers and those who belong in a specific area, such as neighbours. But all of the methods involve ways of reading the bodies of the people we come to face, on the basis of their appearance.

For example, Police hailing or interpellation can be considered as a typical form of recognition. The address of the policeman “Hey, you there” serves to distinguish between people who appear to belong and others who may already have been given a position as ‘suspect’. Therefore the police agent chooses among the people passing by who is the one they’re going to interpellate and they pick on suspicious figures because they are recognized as non-conforming to the background of the neighbourhood.

Moreover, the act of the police hailing associates the suspect to a discourse of criminality, which describes the one who is interpellated as a danger to property. The stranger is defined as the “unlawful entry” into a determined space, always in relation to the inhabitant, such as the friend and the neighbour.

We can also add that paradoxically, strangers are people who actually fit rather than not fit because the process of recognition of strangers serves to distinguish the strange from the familiar subject, the one who has the right to dwell. Thus, by being labelled as strangers, they actively participate in defining who is belonging to the community.

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND DWELLING

How do you recognise who is a stranger in your neighbourhood?

The ability to recognise strangers requires not only ways of seeing that can distinguish the ordinary from the strange, but it also requires ways of living which analyse how through the demarcation of social spaces, which entails including or excluding specific bodies based on issues of normativity and deviance, these bodies are identified as stranger bodies.

The neighbourhood functions as both a constrained geographic area with distinct boundaries and a social community where "residents do things together" and forge bonds of common interest. Therefore, the enforcement of boundaries might be seen as essential to enabling neighbourhoods to be perceived as organic and pure environments free from the threat posed by outsiders.



This can be well exemplified by this current tendency of white people unnecessarily calling cops on black people.

One example of safety measure adopted by these communities is the Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Such schemes began in the United States in the 1970s, and in the United Kingdom in 1982. The National Neighbourhood Watch Association is described as, 'the best known and most effective example of the police and community working together to prevent crime, build safer communities and improve quality of life'. However, in order to create secure areas with standardised regulations or a "ideal character, undesired "characters" that have already manifested or taken the form of "wandering homeless persons, violent beggars, muggers, anonymous black adolescents, must be ejected.

This can be well exemplified by this current tendency of white people unnecessarily calling cops on black people.

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Ms. Cooper, also known as a 'Central Park Karen', called the police on a Black bird-watcher in Central Park and falsely reported that he had threatened her.

STRANGER DANGER

How is the stranger linked to the social perception of danger?

Analysing how strangers are already acknowledged as constituting a threat to people and property is done through the discourse of “stranger danger”.

Violence is made possible by the projection of danger onto the foreigner and as a result, boundaries are enforced, protecting the home-nation as if was a “safe haven”. Consequently, the narrative surrounding stranger danger is an unwillingness to acknowledge how the creation of the home and community as such structures and legitimises violence.

Here, the stranger is seen as a vicious creature whose eradication would guarantee the safety of women and children. With this figuration, home can be seen as a haven of safety.

In conclusion, In addition to enabling the denial of any social or political accountability for the violence, the rhetoric on "stranger danger" serves as a justification for violent acts committed against those who are already recognised as strangers.



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**Thank you
for
reading!**