

## Celebrating a Decade of *Asiatic*

This year *Asiatic* has crossed a significant milestone; it has entered into its tenth year of existence. The Journal has grown rapidly over this period. When the journey began in 2007, it was a tentative and uncertain one. We had no clue then how long the Journal would survive or how well it would do in the competitive world of academic publication. Journals come and go but only a few make their mark. Since the arrival of online publication, this has become even more true. With relatively little cost involved in online publication, more and more new journals are appearing on the scene every day. Then, of course, there are the predatory journals which have turned the demand for scholarly publication into a form of business. Therefore, nowadays almost anything can be published as long as one is prepared to fork out a certain fee. This is how capitalism has infiltrated the academia and adulterated the world of knowledge, which should ideally and effectively remain – if we aspire to the best for our common future and not some shoddy, selfish, short-term gain – honest, honourable, edifying and wholesome.

*Asiatic* has grown and reached its present state against such a challenging backdrop, and it has served the academia honourably during this period by generating and disseminating knowledge free of cost for both the author and the reader. As an open access journal, it has remained true to its mission by removing all price barriers for publication, subscription and licensing. The principal focus of the Journal has been on quality and merit, and we have sought to ascertain this by maintaining a rigorous peer-review policy. However, this has not been an easy task. Locating the right reviewers for all the submissions we receive has become increasingly difficult with the Journal's expansion over the years. In the earlier days when the submissions were fewer, finding suitable reviewers was relatively simpler. But now, with more than two hundred articles received on average each year, we have been constantly pushed to extend the network of our reviewers, which has invariably helped both to strengthen the Journal's base and to augment its reach and quality.

A journal's reputation lies mostly in its quality, but perhaps of equal importance is its regularity. Truisms such as "better late than never" have no place in journal publication. If an issue is not published on time, there will be a lot of brouhaha from readers, colleagues, contributors and, more importantly, the various abstracting and indexing services that often consider timeliness as a precondition of a journal's entry into their database. It will also slowly erode the confidence of potential contributors and subscribers to the journal, who want and expect the issues to come out in time. Since its inception, *Asiatic* has not

failed once in this regard; come hell or high water, we have brought out all our issues *justo a tiempo*.

Anyone browsing through the Journal's website will notice that *Asiatic* has emerged as a truly international journal, with a global presence of articles, writers and scholars in it. We receive submissions from almost every part of the world, but publish only those that fit the theme and scope of the Journal and which meet our stringent review standards. As the first and only journal devoted exclusively to Asian literature and Englishes, we have published many important articles in the field and proactively contributed to its ongoing dialogue. We have also brought out several special issues on major Asian writers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Edwin Thumbo and Shirley Geok-lin Lim; national/regional writings such as Asian American literature, Southeast Asian literature and Hong Kong literature in English; and contemporary issues/topics such as South Asian diasporic literature and South Asian Women's Writing (which is one of the foci of the present issue). We also have special issues on Asian Englishes and Asian drama/theatre scheduled for December 2016 and December 2017 respectively. We will revisit the theme of South Asian diasporic writing again in June 2017, as diaspora voice is increasingly gaining more traction in the body of Asian literature and in Asian imagination and culture generally.

We are grateful to many people for helping to bring *Asiatic* to its present level and for the respect and recognition it enjoys among general readers and within the academic community. First and foremost, I must thank the Journal's core editorial team for the moral and practical support I receive from them every day: Dr. Eddie Tay, Professor Somdatta Mandal, Dr. Susan Philip, Dr. Siti Nuraishah Ahmad and Quaratulain Shirazi. It is hard to imagine a better team for the Journal than this one, and certainly it would not be the same to run the publication without their constant support, help and encouragement. I should also record my gratitude to several other people who have been instrumental to the Journal's inception, survival and success: Professor Syed Arabi Syed Abdullah Idid, Professor Zaleha Kamaruddin, Professor Mohamed Ridza Wahiddin, Professor Ratnawati Mohd Ashraf, Professor Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, Professor Ibrahim Mohamed Zein, Professor Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf, Professor Nuraihan Mat Daud, Professor A.K.M. Nurul Amin, Associate Professor Hazizan Md. Noon, Associate Professor Badri Najib Zubir, Associate Professor Zahariah Pilus, Associate Professor Mohd. Ridwan Wahid, Dr. Maskanah Mohd Lotfie, Professor Shirley Geok-lin Lim (University of California, Santa Barbara), Professor Philip Holden (National University of Singapore), Professor Nilfer E. Bahrucha (University of Mumbai), Professor Sharmani Patricia Gabriel (University of Malaya), Professor Jasbir Jain (University of Rajasthan), Associate Professor Chitra Sankaran (National University of Singapore), Associate Professor Chingyen Yang Myer (Siena

College, USA), Dr. Paoi Hwang (Durham University, UK), Ms. Noor Seriyanti Bt. Zuber, Ms. Norfarhana Bt. Morad and Ms. Noorsiah Bt. Abdullah.

I would also like to convey my utmost appreciation to the many reviewers who have read and adjudicated articles, interviews and creative works for *Asiatic*. Good reviewers make good journals; they help to ensure that only items worthy of publication get to the level of the editor's consideration, and our reviewers have served the Journal very well in this regard – with professionalism and academic integrity, and often within a tight schedule in spite of their many commitments. Last but not least, I should thank Dr. Husna Jamal, my former student and colleague, who helped me tirelessly to establish the Journal during its early years and coordinated many of its activities voluntarily.

*Asiatic* is now listed in significant online research databases such as the MLA International Annual Bibliography, EBSCOhost, Scopus and Thomson Reuters. It has also been a member journal of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ). These too are measures of its success, as some of these databases set high benchmarks for journals to gain entry to their lists. More importantly, they generate more exposure for the Journal, as researchers all over the world access these databases for up-to-date information on their respective fields of research. Let's hope that *Asiatic* will continue to flourish in the years to come, realise its greatest potential and actively serve as a venue for the latest, most advanced and pioneering research within its focus areas, as well as outstanding creative works by Asian writers of all genres and backgrounds, young and old, living "at home" or "away."

The articles in this issue address two different themes and are grouped into two sections. Section I has ten articles on South Asian Women's Writing and Section II has four articles and an Introduction on the topic of "Journey on/toward Identity." In addition, there are two interviews and twelve book reviews in the issue. Although I have thanked these people once earlier, let me express my heartfelt gratitude to them again for helping me to put the issue together: Professor Nilufer E. Bahrucha, Professor Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, Professor Somdatta Mandal and Associate Professor Susan Philip. Their advice and cooperation throughout the process have been invaluable, and without their active support we could not put together the quality articles, interviews and book reviews that we have in the issue.

**Mohammad A. Quayum**  
**Founding Editor and Editor-in-Chief**  
*Asiatic: IIUM Journal of English Language and Literature*