

**CUSP Vol. 1 No. 1: Journal for Studies in Culture-Subjectivity-Psyche**

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The first issue of CUSP is on *Violence*.

It is about the infinite varieties of violence, “from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives” (Foucault in Deleuze and Guattari, 2000: xiii), including the violence of global obsessions around what could be called elite do-goodism and developmentality. It is about the subtle and not-so-subtle violence of even the medical and the mental health clinic. It is also about the obvious violence of political action: “how does one keep from being [violent], even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant”? It is about the epistemic violence of “what is all-too-human in mankind”. It is about the violence of not just “*neurotic modes of living*”; but also about the everyday violence of the “neurotic's dream of a tranquilized and conflict-free existence”; and our impossible yearnings and efforts at reaching and maintaining such tranquilized and conflict-free (s)existences.

The papers in the first issue – edited by Sabah Siddiqui and Kimberly Lacroix – approach the question of violence from different angles, sometimes all too explicitly, at times tangentially. Critical and cultural psychoanalytic traditions of thought and enquiry remain however as the main perspective or framework in this volume that incessantly examines the interfaces of violence with questions of subjectivity and psyche.

‘Dialogue on Violence’, the interview with AshisNandy, is on the elusive structure of violence in the Indian sub-continent, in comparison with the larger state(s) of violence across the world. Through a dialogue on the December 16, 2012 rape in Delhi, and instances of communal violence from partition onwards, the interview attempts to understand psychoanalytically a/the ‘culture of violence’, as opposed to violent cultures.

‘Symptom, Seduction, Subversion’ (by China Mills) is a paper that attempts to bring together political resistance (to colonialism) and psychoanalytic resistance (to the asylum) by engaging with narratives of individuals in mental institutions. Using psycho-pharmaceuticals as the central axis with which to examine the violence and oppression of psychiatry and colonialism, as also frameworks of global mental health, the paper questions the very concepts of mental illness, disability, normality/normalization, and resistance.

‘Narratives of Coercion’ (by BhargaviDavar) elaborates on the relation between law, mental health institutions, and patients in such institutions In India. Through interviews with numerous employees at mental hospitals across Western India, the paper looks at how law intersects with prototypical understandings of the ‘good patient’ and the ‘violent patient’, which in turn influence care given in the hospital, as well as discharge. The paper ends by trying to formulate a macro-level picture of the status of mental health in India, categorized here as largely under-trained, over-worked, and therefore perpetuating violence instead of care for its ‘patients’.

'An Exploration of the 'Dai Question' over time: Mapping its Subversive-Ambivalent Relation with Modernity-Development' (by Rakhi Ghoshal) looks at the contested position of women as dais and birthing bodies in a larger historical frame influenced by colonialism. The paper argues for a dynamic violence perpetuated on the dai (and consequently on birthing bodies) through (fe)male medicalization of childbirth, as well as through development agendas of the colonial State. Modernity transforms the dai (question), and through, on the one hand, discourses of medicine, and pollution and purity on the other, the dai comes to symbolize an indigenous form of backwardness. The paper elaborates on the larger contestations and violence of knowledge systems through the question of the transforming the dai (knowledge-praxis-life form) over time.

'Men, Masculinity, and Sexual Violence' (by Ranjita Biswas) is on the exploration of masculinity in light of the enormous extent of sexual violence in our society and a largely aggressive relation of masculine men towards women. The paper begins by elaborating on gender-role theory as a psychological interiorizing and development of 'masculinity' and moves to a nuanced understanding of masculinity itself. A distinction of sorts is made between hegemonic masculinity and relational masculinity, both in relation to violence against women, particularly rape.

'Brown Skin, Brown Masks' (by Sabah Siddiqui) is an attempt to explore the life and work of Masud Khan, a psychoanalyst who trained under Winnicott and had an 'unconventional' practice of psychoanalysis. Masud Khan can be read here as an analyst who reconfigured the pre-given boundaries of psychoanalysis to fit his own therapeutic model. Masud Khan can also be read here as an analyst conflicted with his psychoanalytic training, his Muslim roots, and his own motivated irrationalities. Through Masud Khan, the paper juxtaposes the tension between being from the Orient and learning Occidental knowledge in an individual.

'Madness: A Female Malady' (by P Radhika) looks at madness-as-illness and its relation to women through an exploration of reports from asylums in the Central Province of India. Linking together discourses of mental health and feminism, the paper is an exercise in re-claiming the 'lost knowledge' of the mad woman, while simultaneously producing a critique of mental health in its contemporary form. Moving from a representation of women in mental health to theorizing the woman as perspective and knowledge, the paper locates a fracture in the (modern) Subject through the entry of the mad woman in its discourse.