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# Editor's Note

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# Editor's Note

**Trish Salah**
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Summer's nearly over, and this issue of JCRI comes to you later than we'd like. Eleven months into the genocide in Gaza, eleven months into global protests against genocides (as activists work, with uneven success, to link Palestine, Congo, Sudan). Since our last issue, Israel's spacio-cidal (Hanafi, 2013) and genocidal violence has rendered Gaza virtually uninhabitable, with over 40,000 Palestinians killed and 92,000 wounded as of this writing. In that time, we have seen an inspiring and massive student mobilization in campus encampments, one that has been actively repressed through a combination of administrative and police violence. We have also seen blocked and ineffectual UN sanctions and international court cases and strategically abandoned or sabotaged negotiations towards ceasefire, and, through it all, unfettered U.S. and Zionist exceptionalism.

The contributors to this open issue of JCRI reckon with histories of racial, gendered, capitalist, and imperial violences and with such violences' enduring presence and power in this world and time.

The durable and entrenched character of colonial epistemologies is much in evidence in Sania Hashmi's essay, "Performing Anti-Muslim Racism; Or, Muslim Self-Fashioning in Ayad Ahktar's Plays." Reading the aesthetic politics of Ahktar's *Disgraced* and *The Who and The What*, Hashmi applauds Aktar's stated aim of undoing Muslims' experience of subjectivity as constructed by a Western gaze as well as his success in mainstreaming Muslim stories and characters to the American stage. However, in her argument Ahktar's plays nonetheless re/produce an essentialized, backward Islam inimical to Americanness and Modernity on stage and retrench old Orientalist tropes such as the brutal Muslim man and the veiled woman in need of saving.

Our featured *Intervention* for this issue, Janine Mogannam's poetry series, "Like Wildflowers Through the Smallest of Cracks," precisely refuses subsumption in a gendered Orientalism and settler homonationalism that would deny her existence and political voice as a queer Palestinian (American). In a brief poet(h)ics statement, Mogannam locates her poetry in her intersecting diasporic Palestinian identities and her commitments to

steadfastness in the face of genocidal violence, to transnational Indigenous solidarity, and to striving for collective liberation.

Sally M. Kessler's essay, "Joseph Anténor Firmin: Racial Equality, Solidarity, and Sovereign Body Politic," joins a body of work newly attuned to the contributions made by the turn of the century Haitian diplomat, scholar, Pan-Africanist, and early anthropologist. Locating Firmin's theoretical contributions in relation to his conception of national self-determination and to economic and political negotiations between the French colonial legacy and U.S. imperial ascendency, Kessler particularly teases out the crucial work done by Firmin's understudied 1905 text, *Mr. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis et la République d'Haïti*.

Shaila Kumbhare's "Beauty is in the Eye of the Colonizer: South Asian-Canadian's Narratives of Shadeism" explores second generation South Asian-Canadian women's experiences of aesthetic racism enacted within commercial media and inter-generational and familial networks. Primarily focused on the narratives of her interviewees, Kumbhare situates their experiences in relation to intertwined colonial and caste system constructions of "fairness" as beauty and marriageability, drawing upon Critical Race Feminist and Post Colonial lenses in her analysis of how such constructions are internalized, materially reproduced, and lived today.

In a related vein, an image of Meenakashi Ghadial's stunning painting *Sun Death* graces our cover this issue. Depicting a wilted marigold (a flower often used in marriage ceremonies) against a pattern based on her mother's wedding bindi, Ghadial's painting raises questions about the situation of the queer Punjabi daughter vis a vis familial and gendered expectations.

Two book reviews round out the issue: Eden Elliot gives an engaged and challenging reading of Syd Zolf's *No One's Witness: A Monstrous Poetics* and Shanice Wolters provides a generous and contextually rich review of *Making History: Visual Arts and Blackness in Canada*, a collection edited by Julie Crooks, Dominique Fontaine and Silvia Forni.

## References

Hanafi, S. (2013). Explaining spacio-cide in the Palestinian territory: Colonization, separation, and state of exception. *Current Sociology*, 61(2), 190–205.