

Editor's Note

Quddus Mirza

Zadie Smith, in one of her essays, reflects upon writing fiction; particularly her novels, which include characters outside of her community, surroundings, history, such as a Malaysian girl, a Chinese man, a White American male. She, as a creative individual, defends the author's choice, capacity, and right to imagine the world not directly connected to, or experienced by her. To her "The old — and never especially helpful — adage *Write what you know* has morphed into something like a threat: Stay in your lane.... This rule also "pertains" that "the experience of the unlike-us can never be co-opted, ventriloquized, or otherwise 'stolen' by us"¹.

She further states, "As the philosopher Anthony Appiah has noted, these ideas of cultural ownerships share some DNA with the late-capitalist concept of brand integrity."². Practices cemented in the idea of authenticity are present in multiple spheres today — under the proud and popular banner of originality and political correctness. These also germinate from the concept of political representation; being a spokesperson for a specific community; and barred from commenting on others.

Actually this is not a new phenomenon, because in the past, due to the limits of travel, trade routes, human exchange, communities were contained in isolations; and as a result fabricated firm fables on the purity, superiority, even the divinity of their modes of existence, resulting into the unbreachable categorizations of race, religion, gender, class. To cross these borders, or un-shelf was an offence, a crime.

However creative inquiries have been bridging conventional

gaps; a course that was also evident in examples from the past; and now emerged in multiple ways, and due to diverse desires. The search to know an outsider — may that be a living being, an unfamiliar faith, an unknown language, an alien terrain, strange flora and fauna — is an effort to include oneself into the world beyond, and simultaneously assimilate this insurmountable territory inside the cubicle of the individual.

The second volume of *IEDAs Journal* is titled ‘Intersectionality: Creative Inquiries’. The theme is explored by contributors investigating cultural heritage, memory, systems of contemporary pictorial productions, examination of history, soil, and environment, trans migrations, comparison of production of rural setups to hi-tech factories; through multiple lenses ranging beyond regions, periods, personal and collective.

Language, a tool the entire humanity uses, is the apt example to illustrate intersectionality. It connects individuals across faiths, genders, classes, communities, and regions. By default, it serves to come out of one’s usual situation to look and locate others, to discover, perhaps not similarities as much; but the interconnectedness. These relations are recognized in the long history of conversations between cultures. Language is a form of conversion; where differences matter, but the value remains identical.

This exchange, between individuals, groups, communities, cultures is called translations. Imagine if there were no translators who facilitate overlaps, encounters, and ties, eventually connecting people across continents; how pure — in reality poor, and empty literature — consequently the imagination of each language would be world over.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o discussing the colonial imposition in the guise of superiority of European tongues over African languages, a construct transmitted through official discourse and education, informs that in the occupied lands, speaking

in one's native tongue during those years invited penalty, if not the capital punishment. In his book *Decolonizing Language*, he declares that the language of translation is the common, equal, and prime language of humanity.

This reality was realized by Arundhati Roy who titles her 'The W. G. Sebald Lecture on Literary Translation', delivered at the British Library, *In What Language Does Rain Fall Over Tormented Cities?* She concludes, "how shall we answer Pablo Neruda's question that is the title of this lecture?

"In what language does rain fall
over tormented cities?"

"I'd say, without hesitation, in the Language of Translations".³

References:

01. Smith Zadie. *Dead and Alive*, Hamish Hamilton. London 2025. (p. 72-73).
02. *ibid* (p.73)
03. Roy, Arundhati. *Azadi: Freedom. Fascism.* Fiction, Penguin Books. UK 2020 (p. 52)