

## EDITORIAL: “Transformations”

This issue of *SARE* launches us into our thirty-seventh year of publication. This is the year also of *SARE*'s transformation, as readers familiar with the journal will observe. Borne from several initiatives that converged, *SARE* is now not only more immediately accessible as an online journal but is also showcasing a brand new look and website, which we hope will revitalise and enhance our goal to carve out a distinctive space to highlight new writing and criticism. We also hope our new Open Journal System makes your reading experience more efficient and enjoyable.

The world of 2017 certainly is different for *SARE* from that of its inception in 1980. We are honoured to publish this issue's critical essays, all of which resonate in important ways with the theme of transformations and proceed as well from a twenty-first-century understanding of the global, the digital, and the capitalistic underpinning of present-day nations and societies. Through his astute reading of Rohinton Mistry's second novel, *A Fine Balance*, Eli Park Sorensen reconfigures contemporary understandings of literary realism to show how literature can be an alternative 'worldly' response to the sorts of crises precipitated by global politics and finance. Surinderpal Kaur draws our attention to the multiple ways in which categories of identity are imagined and re-imagined in the online world, foregrounding the ambiguities but also productive possibilities and desires underlying the reconstitutions of gender and sexuality of the materially-bo(u)nded offline body. Kok Su Mei tracks the shifting attitudes and engagements with the Bard and his metamorphosis from the colonial to the contemporary stage to reflect the gradual but discernible globalising of education, and the changing cultural politics of identity, in Malaysia. We have to look back to look forward. The essays remind us that the intricacies of our location and history are significant to our understanding of ourselves and our relationship to politics and policies. Literary form, the CyborgianTrans, and the Malaysian Shakespeare are all in various ways tropes of transforming societies and communities in the making.

While we wish to open up boundaries and stay true to the international perspectives established for the journal, as reflected in our distinguished advisory board, we are also mindful of our further aim to draw attention to the diversity of voices, perspectives, and material deriving from the Asian – specifically the Southeast, South, and East Asian – experience. These aims need not be mutually exclusive. At *SARE*, we are always working to heed what scholars and writers from all around the world have to say, even if this means that most of these voices happen to come from Malaysia, and from Universiti Malaya, as in this issue. We are open and receptive to everything that is original, meticulously-argued, and worth reading.

In line with our endeavour to serve as a forum to feature original creative work, we are delighted to carry in this issue six poetic vignettes by Leonard Jeyam that work to wonderfully perceptible and moving effect. We also include Carol Leon's lively and insightful interview with Shivaji Das, which showcases how the author uses 'non-required travel' to build careful stories of human connections and meeting points in unlikely places. Nicholas Pagan also reviews a book for us.

Our next issue will be published in December of this year. As always we look forward to your contributions. Please refer to our 'Aims & Scope' for more information on the kinds of submissions we are particularly interested in receiving.

We thank the members of our editorial and advisory boards for their invaluable encouragement and support. We also wish to record our enormous gratitude to our specialist readers and to Renukha for her always-ready and -available editorial assistance for *SARE*. Together we hope that the contents of this issue will give readers a sense of how much *SARE* is being buoyed on by the imaginative sense of possibility and transformation.