

## *Editorial Note*

The Special Volume of *Crossings: A Journal of English Studies* on Marx is indeed special. Some of the papers were presented at the two-day international conference that ULAB organized to celebrate Karl Marx's bicentenary on November 30-December 1, 2018. This issue of *Crossings* did not, however, limit itself only to the sixty odd papers that were presented at the conference; but solicited articles from some renowned Marxist critics at home and abroad.

The volume surveys a Marxist tradition of critical thinking by incorporating issues such as political economy, ideology, value theory, crisis theory, systemic analysis of capitalism, eco-criticism, neoliberalism, and aesthetic theory. These articles show how a realistic alternative to the current global marketplace can be deemed through reorganizing our sensibility.

The special issue on Marx begins with Fakrul Alam's paper in which he discusses the German revolutionary's writings on India, originally published in the *New York Tribune*. Alam draws attention to the historical precision and rhetorical force of Marx's essays and his powerful critique of British imperialism. As he argues in his essay, postcolonial critics, especially those whose works pivot on British rule in India, will immensely benefit from Marx's rich prognosis of British imperialism. Alam's reading, on the one hand, draws attention to the astonishing depth of Marx's knowledge about India, and, on the other, locates the history and origin of these ideas, showing how his insights developed and matured with time. He also offers his viewpoints on the controversy created by Edward Said's comments on Marx's views in the Palestinian-American's book *Orientalism*.

Bret Benjamin's essay revisits *Grundrisse* and *Capital* to understand Marx's critique of capitalism's "economic law of motion." In particular, Benjamin highlights how Marx frames capital as the living contradiction to overcome the inherent barriers that capital posits. One such example involves devaluation; that is, the movement of money to commodity. Benjamin recognizes that the globalization and monetization of our time is different from the industrial age that Marx studied. However, that does not exhaust Marx's relevance today. For Benjamin, Marx has offered us a blueprint to negotiate with the new set of social rules that we are experiencing.

In "Not Winnin' Anymore: *Boys from the Blackstuff* and the Literature of Recession," Joseph Brooker examines the reversal of social thought or ideological domain under Thatcherism. Economic recession, unemployment, North/South divide are some of the attributes of Thatcherism. Citing examples from different period dramas and regional dramas featured on British TV, Brooker discusses how deindustrialization has become a reality for contemporary Britain, and how it has atrophied the working class.

Shamsad Mortuza's review of a 2017 Bangla movie marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Naxalite Movement shows the "lapsed Marxism" and Maoist ideologies that led a group of progressive students to use a tribal village in India as the epicenter of a political tremor

that divided the communist party. The movie's leitmotif betrayal is elaborated through a multiplicity of exchanges between the past and the present to highlight the stalemate of left politics.

Khanh Nguyen offers a reading of two short stories by contemporary British sci-fi writer China Miéville. Terming the setting of the stories as the New Weird, Nguyen unpacks the spectacles of violence that Miéville has to offer. For this Marxist academic author, the slow horror of global warming and other environmental threats constitute our dystopian existence. Miéville uses cinematic language to blur the boundary between genres as if to question the sites of production. Using recent theories on eco-criticism and posthumanism, Nguyen shows how the new weirds are becoming the new normal.

Sean O'Brien scrutinizes BBC 2 series *The Fall* to address several questions involving precarity, representation, gender, labor, affect, value, reproduction, and the figure of the child. O'Brien points out several failings of capitalist class relation. For instance, citing the links to reproductive work with the construction of self-identity, O'Brien observes, "in the series, institutions of social reproduction are revealed to be sclerotic, exemplified not only in the austerity policies of fiscally insolvent national governments but also in the family and the couple, social forms integral to a system of crisis management that depends upon feminized reproductive work."

Joel Wendland-Liu's essay employs Aijaz Ahmed's understanding of materialist conception of history to revisit Marx's Writings on the US Civil War. Wendland-Liu reads the slave exploitation as a prototype of exploitation in global capitalism. The US Civil War for him offers a site for political, economic, and cultural struggles. He expounds his argument by mentioning some relevant Asian and African examples.

Finally, in his article "Allegorizing Neoliberalism," Sarker Hasan Al Zayed examines neoliberalism's relationship with capitalism and class. Positioning himself against Foucault who posits a subjectivist theory of neoliberalism, Zayed argues that subjectivism is an insufficient tool for understanding neoliberalism. By using the examples of Samrat Upadhyay's "The Good Shopkeeper" and Amitav Ghosh's the *Ibis* trilogy, Zayed suggests that neoliberalism can be better understood as a phase of capitalism with definitive cultural attributes and historical propensities.

I am sure these snippets will encourage you all to critically engage with the texts assorted in this volume. Enjoy!

On behalf of the Editorial Board,

**Shamsad Mortuza, PhD**

Editor