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Enquiries may be addressed to  
Rohit Singh (Tel: 24609330);  
E-mail: publication.iic@nic.in

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# EDITORIAL

**T**he photograph of the lifeless body of little Aylan Kurdi on a beach in Turkey jolted many of us. It put into context what is happening in the world today. Through the media we read, hear and see so much violence and strife for reasons of politics, religion and ethnicity that we don't react to it any more. The humanitarian crisis and suffering in so many parts of the world doesn't chill us as it should. Sadly, even the terrible image of Aylan will fade. What will it take to wake us up to the tragedies that are unfolding all around us?

This year has seen a surge of writings on the World Wars, many dealing with the history and narratives of Indian troops. In this volume, Mohanty looks at British literary responses to the War in the works of Ford Madox Ford, Aldous Huxley, Ezra Pound and D.H. Lawrence. The central point of the argument is the paradox of war as a site of both destruction and creativity.

Anil and Anjali Narang have an interesting stand on peace and conflict. They see no difference between violence against animals and violence against humans, and argue that vegetarianism can make us compassionate and further our progression towards true democracy and peace. Balslev takes this back in time to at least the 8th century when she writes that 'in its most rigorous formulation, the practice of *ahimsa* bars one from inflicting any form of injury or violence, not only against some select few but against all creatures'. Why, she questions, is the world so divided, so full of strife when the concept of *ahimsa* has been with us from time immemorial?

Gender constructions are seen through three different lenses. The idea of the body is reflected in Majumdar's study of assisted reproduction and the waiting room in infertility clinics as the space where hopes are nurtured. Ganesh, in her paper, tells us how renaming a dance form is not as innocuous as it sounds. Rather, women were caught in the debates on the 'morality' of the female performing class. The sexual division of work and limited

ownership rights for women in India and large parts of Asia come as no surprise. Kelkar tries to understand gender relations, with different forms of power and hierarchy between women and men in the institutional domains of household, market and the state.

The papers by Bhowmik and Dandekar et al., are relevant in today's economic scenario. Bhowmik looks at the plight of street vendors despite their contribution to the informal economy. Dandekar et al., bring to light the problem of migrants left behind in the rural countryside as well as the proliferating range of urban settlements and agglomerations. Both papers address the urgent need to foreground the rapid pace of urbanisation and its consequences for the less fortunate. On the international stage, Zingel examines the trade partnership between China and Pakistan. He argues that China is far more important for Pakistan than vice versa, and that politically and strategically their friendship is seen as a threat to India.

Fortunately the hottest summer in global history is almost behind us. We can now look forward to pleasant weather and a festive season ahead. While we enjoy the good weather and the festivals, let us not forget the millions in distress because of the senseless violence that we inflict on fellow human beings.



**OMITA GOYAL**