

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The interlocutor is often given an unfair reputation. Edward Said once referred to it as “someone who has perhaps been found clamoring on the doorstep, where from outside a discipline or field he or she has made so unseemly a disturbance as to be let in, guns or stones checked in with the porter, for further discussion.”¹ Though Said readily admits that his definition is somewhat antiseptic, one needs to remember that the interlocutor carries an ability to intervene in the historical trajectories of strands of minutia.

As stated in our mission, the *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of South Asian Studies* was founded to provide a space wherein undergraduates can publish their work in the broad field of South Asian Studies. The term “South Asian Studies” is misleading – it makes one think of the field as a cohesive unit. However, the submissions to the journal have proved this otherwise: we accept and have received submissions from those who study anthropology, history, political science, and religion – scholarship from across social sciences and humanities addressing the region of South Asia.

With the publication of our first issue, it became clear that the study of South Asia has become increasingly common at the undergraduate level and an interlocutor’s intervention in bringing these articles to public view has been necessary for quite some time. Here, the word “common” should not be seen as an inference of a saturated environment containing poor study. On the contrary, we received nearly thirty excellent articles from across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. After two months of deliberation, we chose three articles to publish, believing that these three represent the best of a highly competitive cohort. These articles reflect the diversity of South Asian Studies, as they are drawn from the fields of history, political science, and film studies. Undergraduate scholarship in South Asia has heretofore been provincialized in the confines of a classroom. We hope that, as a small interlocutor, we can open a space for undergraduates to publish their work. With this, the entire editorial collective at the journal hopes you enjoy Volume I, Issue I of the *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of South Asian Studies*.

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¹ Edward Said, “Representing the Colonized: Anthropology’s Interlocutors,” *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (Winter 1989), 210.