



Editorial Note

A journal of interdisciplinary literary studies which has been christened *Interlocutor* has its objective stated in the name itself. The Department of English, The Bhawanipur Education Society College, has undertaken to publish this annual journal which, we believe, will complete the pedagogical pyramid by providing a thriving platform for the highest praxis of academia: questioning.

As we publish the first issue of the journal, it is our earnest hope that we will be able to encourage a spirit of constructive, equable debate which will not falter in injecting new life into old topics, or bring new areas of reading and reflection to the forefront. We look forward to publishing well researched and well-argued articles by young, as well as older scholars, which will introduce the readers to upcoming domains of literary studies.

The review section has been introduced in order to bring to attention new creative, critical and theoretical works, as well as narration through the performative arts.

We would be happy to receive readers' responses to the articles, which will definitely help us to keep improving the future issues. The editors will use their discretion in publishing or sharing selected comments with the readers.

The first issue comprises articles on a wide range of topics. The diversity of subjects in this issue is an apt reflection of the various avenues of research which have lately been incorporated into what used to be the more classical areas of literary studies. We expect such multi-disciplinary approaches to become more central to Departments of English in this country, as they will equip students with a Liberal Arts approach, able to appreciate diverse viewpoints originating from different life experiences.

The literary strategies adopted by different writers, across various genres, to enervate the imagination and create a world which 'worlds' in the minds of readers or spectators is a central creative concern. It is what sets literature apart from literary studies. The contributors of this volume have used critical discourses to illustrate the workings of ideology through the pleasures of the imagination.

Spaces:

Representation of unfamiliar or fantastic locales in theatre which combines spectacle and imagination is the subject matter of Kaitlin Culliton's *The Tale of Herne the Hunter: Landscape, Stagecraft and Fictional Worlds in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'*. The essay examines Shakespeare's expansion of the theatre space into a metatheatrical one which is conjured up by the imagination, transporting the audience to places inaccessible to the common man, or existing only in fantasy. Shakespeare's deft conjunction of physical presence and fictional locales in the performance of the 'merry wives', according to Culliton, is an example of the metadramatic performance of folklore.



Edward Soja's book, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989) has turned scholarly attention "to see spatiality with the same acute depth of vision that comes with a focus on *durée*." The potential reconfiguration of spatial imagination in literature has involved the interpretation of spaces and their representations in contemporary works, as well as a rethinking of imaginary spaces in early modern works. Buchi Emecheta's treatment of community spaces, and their transformation in newly adopted lands and cultures is examined by Jashomati Ghose in *Voices in the Compound: Celebration of Female Identity in Buchi Emecheta's London Based Novels*. The essay deals with the postcolonial writer's journey towards a voice which has been muffled by colonial practices and the conjoining of the oral and written practices of storytelling, followed by the emergence of the library as a communal space which nurtures marginalised voices.

Keeping gender and alternative sexual identities as the formative structure of her argument, Srijit Saha explores the rippling effect of power in parallel space through a careful study of Suniti Namjoshi's novel in her article called *A Quasi-Queeristan: An Analysis of Suniti Namjoshi's The Mothers of Maya Diip as a Lesbian Heteropia*. Saha shows how Namjoshi's *Maya Diip*, which almost begins as a promise of a lesbian utopia, only to gradually dissipate into a space of parallel power structures embodying a heterotopia, finally degenerates into a dystopia. The article debunks the idea of a lesbian 'we' and interrogates the possibility of homogenizing sexual experiences in Namjoshi's novel.

The carnivalesque world of nonsense:

Srimoyee Roy's *Wonderland, Cats and Hiji bij bij*, is a comparative study of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1868) and Sukumar Roy's *Ha Ja Ba Ra La* (1921). Through an examination of the two Roy reiterates the carnivalesque nature of nonsense literature which upends the ordered adult view of the world by disrupting linear trajectories of time and the rationally mapped sense of space. The 'othered' space of the rabbit hole, the entitled tone of the talking cat which dismisses the failure of the narrator to comprehend the irrational – both are delightful subversions of accepted wisdom, enabled by deliberate nonsense masquerading as children's literature. The distance of time and location between the two texts illustrate this subversive impulse as a recurrent impulse in works of the imagination.

Dialogic voices:

Sayantani Sengupta's consideration of opposing pulls in the plot of *The Deterministic World of the Polyphonic Texts: Pirandello's Puppets in 'Six Characters in Search of an Author'*, shows how the external completeness of the text and the internal freedom/open-endedness of the characters who demand to be given the right of a closure which has been denied to them, is based on Bakhtin's interrogation of the life of fictional characters in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) "...constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other..."



Reorienting Postcolonial perspectives

Shirsendu Mondal's *Resistance Denied: Things Fall Apart and Ruptures Within*, revisits the heroic saga of Okonkwo, the protagonist, and his final failure at leading a violent mass upsurge against the coloniser. Mondal contends that this inability cannot be read only as the failure of an individual due to his flaws and shortcomings; rather, it represents the transitional stage of the fragile Igbo society in its movement from collectivism to individuality. He asserts that if the colonial power succeeded in crushing the upsurge, the reason behind it was not only the hegemonic submission to the coloniser but the internal fault lines of the social matrix which enabled the colonists to succeed in breaking apart an attempted collective struggle at a flawed moment. Mondal's article complicates the simple binaries of the coloniser-colonised constructs by turning the focus on the internal politics and fragmentations of Igbo society, rather than the machiavellian strengths of the Europeans.

Peripheries in the focus

Soumyosree Banerjee's *Psychotic or Psychedelic?: Reinterpreting 'Madness' in Alan Moore's Killing Joke* invites the reader to look beyond what seems to be the surface reality in the graphic novel *Killing Joke* (1988). The Joker who was intended in popular culture to introduce an antithesis to Batman, Banerjee argues, testifies an overlap of psychodelia and psychosis. She provides a detailed study in the representation of the Joker by placing the novel against the context of the Counterculture Movement and the use of psychedelic therapy in criminal asylums. The article explores the possible connotations of 'madness' as seen in the Joker against the discursive domains mapped by Nietzsche and Foucault in this context.

In *Voice of the Voiceless Exploring the treatment of Maidservants in Ismat Chughtai's Select Short Stories*, Mahamadul Hassan Dhabak explores the intersectionality of power equations across the issues of class and gender. While it is well-known how important Ismat Chughtai is as a writer in Urdu literature, writing during a timespan when the literary arena was predominantly masculine in its articulation of passions and desire, Dhabak's article provides a study of select short stories to demonstrate the individuation that the maidservants - who are treated as no more than commodities to appease the cravings requirements of the ruling class within a feudal social structure, attain in the hands of Chughtai.

Re-interpretations:

While literary works are rooted in their own times and contemporary realities which enable an evaluation of the same from the perspectives of historical criticism, new perspectives imposed on them at later stages of literary estimate may lead to a plethora of re-interpretations where the same work yields different meanings - almost in a poststructuralist order, where gaps invite the readers to ascribe new associations.



Viral Porecha attempts a radical reinterpretation of Andrew Marvell's poems in his article called *The Apollonian and the Dionysian Aspects in the Poetry of Andrew Marvell*. He argues that the development of art which Nietzsche famously associated with the Apollonian and Dionysian duality in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), may also be found well-represented in select poems of Andrew Marvell which could be reinterpreted as a brilliant synthesis of the Apollonian and the Dionysian principles.

Film Review:

The connection between popular culture and larger philosophical discourse is no longer a contested territory. The inclusion of pop-culture in English Literature syllabi and the emergence of Film/Cultural/ Performance Studies departments in India indicates academia's acceptance of forms of narratives beyond the printed text. A cross-disciplinary review of Kamaleshwar Mukherjee's 2016 film, *Khawto*, by Soumyajit Chandra, applies Bakhtinian concepts to interpret a film which is not strictly classified as an art-house film, but does indeed raise questions about authorial agency even within the format of a psychological thriller. Chandra's review explores the porous boundaries between popular entertainment and art house intellectualism.

Putting together the first volume of *Interlocutor* has been like the beginning of a journey where the goal is known but the possible paths are many. The variety of the articles included in this volume indicate this exuberance of commencement. We look forward to a journey that will be enriching and even unpredictable, so that the journal may carve a special niche for itself at a time when there are a number of erudite publications in circulation.

Finally, a heartfelt thanks from the editors to the members of the Advisory Board for their invaluable guidance, the Editorial Team for the hard work that they have put in, the peer reviewers who have gone through the articles meticulously, and the management of The Bhawanipur Education Society College for extending their support to this venture.

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