



Lapis Lazuli -An International Literary Journal (LILJ)

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Editorial

Theory, since its advent, has bedazzled and bewildered many scholars and beginners alike. Traversing the jargon-ridden illuminated territories of Theory remains the eternal quest of every researcher worth his/her merit in the contemporary era. According to Peter Barry, while the 1980's was thought to be the 'moment' of Theory, generating a barrage of books like *After Theory*, *Post Theory* and so on in the 1990's, Theory has proliferated far and beyond from its roots with sustained explorations in the constantly overlapping manifestations of Theory in Inter-disciplinary studies. Prafulla C. Kar talks of how Theory wound its way through the radical period of the 60's and 70's and went on to occupy a distinguished niche in the academia in the 80's and 90's. thereafter, the flow of Theory seemed to initiate a new kind of dialogue on various issues which had once held the sway in literary and cultural studies, notes Kar.

It can be claimed beyond any scope of argument that literary theory has irrevocably transformed the way in which we produce, distribute and consume literature. Raman Seldon makes a significant observation in this context where he says that while the radical outburst of critical theory has been given a reactionary and philistine response apropos the open challenge of

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new ideas that it ushers in and at the same time, constructive and genuine engagements with theory have sprung forth in trying to negotiate the question of how to best assimilate and make use of especially such theories as are difficult to comprehend and complex to apply.

Pramod K. Nayar defines literary theory as organized, systematized analysis of literary texts, the institution of Literature and a reflection on the interpretative strategies ‘applied’ to these texts; and cultural theory as moving beyond literary texts studying art forms, films, the super hero comic book, sports, fashion etc– all of which are cultural practices including of course, Literature.

It was from this premise that we invited papers for the Spring issue 2014 of Lapis Lazuli with special emphasis on **LITERARY THEORY**. The response was tremendous, with more than fifty papers reaching us, not all of which could be accommodated in this issue, though necessitating another issue sometime later on the same theme.

In “*Technocriticism and the Changing Contours of Literary Text Narrative A Theoretical Overview*”, Roshan Lal Sharma deals with technocriticism which came into being in response to the digital age marked by technological changes, particularly new media ecology which has serious bearing on the printed word/ literary text, to the extent that some would perceive it as a threat to conventional narrative. Sharma builds on theoretical insights of Michael Wutz, Michael Joyce, Katherine Hayles, Jayshree K. Odin and others to first underscore facticity of change in posthuman era caused by changing media environs that has nudged literature into a “meditative niche” and then re-align literary and cultural studies, cyberstudies with technocriticism to analyse hypertextual space, electronic textuality, electronic fictions to work out the changing contours of literary text/ narrative.

In his analytical article titled “*Poststructuralist Theory in Postcolonial Contexts- J. M. Coetzee’s Waiting for the Barbarians*” Sebastian Chalres Galbo considers the role of poststructuralist theory in the postcolonial writings of South African novelist, J. M. Coetzee and his *Waiting for the Barbarians* in particular. In light of Judith Butler’s influential work at the intersection of ethics and poststructuralist theory, Galbo concentrates on how these ethical iterations are addressed and elaborated in postcolonial contexts, specifically ways in which

perpetrators of colonial violence and occupation make sense of their identity and role in the perpetuation of imperialism.

Jennifer Monteiro, in an analytical piece titled “*The Presence in Absence- A Lacanian Interpretation of Heart of Darkness*” attempts a close reading of Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness* by analyzing the text through Lacan’s theory of Psychoanalysis, exploring the various journeys made in the novel. Monteiro proposes a Lacanian model of study as it appears in the “Introduction” to his Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”. As conventionally *The Heart of Darkness* is read as a post-colonial text, Monteiro attempts to mathematically deduce relationships among myriad characters and aspects of the novel to get near the notion of the ‘Real’ as coined by Lacan.

Anurima Chanda, in an informative article “*Relocating Ahmad’s ‘cultural differentialism’ in Rushdie’s ‘Ocean of the Streams of Stories’*” attempts to read Rushdie’s novella *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* with respect to postcolonial concerns with history and Eurocentricism. Using the writings of the migrant and displaced storyteller can escape the entrapments of both essentialism and nativism, and find a synthesis between the two in the creation of an alter-historiography to define the emergent nation-states in postcolonial spaces, Chanda finds that Salman Rushdie, one such ‘cultural amphibian’, seems to add to the discourse of postcoloniality a certain ‘translaion’ or a ‘place of hybridity’ in his novella *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

In an analytical article, “*Lacanian Praxis of “Unconscious”, “Lack” and “Desire”:* Reading Ashvin Desai’s *A Tale of Two Truths*”, Rohit Phutela dwells upon the psychoanalytic criticism and its post-humanistic progression ushered in by Jacques Lacan, one of the premier iconoclasts of the twentieth century whose deconstructive version of the Freudian unconscious suffused the literary theorizations with new psychological cryptology freeing the literary and the psychosocial from the restricted and corroded mythologies of the Freudian school. Phutela discusses Ashvin Desai’s *A Tale of Two Truths*, the fable whose psycho-historical constitution renders it a convenient Lacanian reading in terms of metaphorical and metonymic representationality.

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In “*Postcolonial Transnational Indian Novel in English- A Study of Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses and Amitav Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines*”, Abhinaba Chatterji uses the transnationalist discourse to closely examine two remarkable novels: Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*. Chatterji talks of how the transnational postcolonial novel imbibes the theme of migrancy and hybridity that chutnifies Western and Eastern forms as also the bigotry of national ideologies seeks to bridge the schism created by the vast difference between the experience of place and the cultural perspective and language available to it. In the space of transnationalism, cultures undergo a dialectical interplay and create inter-layered and mixed identities.

In “*Homi Bhabha’s Minority Concerns in The Location of Culture*” Manjinder Kaur Wratch discusses how the contemporary nature of Homi K. Bhabha’s critique of ‘cultural hybridity’ with inputs from Frantz Fanon’s audacious discourse against racism offers cultural re- visioning that goes beyond the polarities of majority and minority, the center and the periphery. While safeguarding the minority’s ‘right to difference in equality’ it focuses on articulation of cultural differences by initiating new signs of identity and sites of collaboration amongst diverse communities promoting social solidarity.

Siddhartha Chakrabarti, in “*Why do Academicians have Blank Stares- An Essay in Search of the Origin of New Paradigms and Creative thinking*” writes unconventionally, approaching the paradigms in social sciences which create structures for thinking about cultural texts in a novel manner, and how a scholar soon realizes that the point of theory is to merely create stepping stones in order to evolve better and more evolved ways of looking at the same (and other) texts. The paper traverses from the writings of Kuhn to Koans in order to look at how, why, when, where and what are paradigm shifts. The paper attempts to think of theory as a creative and ever expanding subject which has definite practical applications for a student, realizing the underlying principles of theory and move ahead viewing theory as ‘de-finite’, as an opposition to the finitude implies growth and creativity, taking inspiration from the lived experience of scholars engaged in furthering this growth and creativity in the field of theory.

In “*Towards a Critique of Anthropocentrism: The Case of Andrew Marvell*” Raj Kumar Mishra describes how Andrew Marvell in his poems glorified the innocence of nature, castigating the then scientific developments and seeing everywhere a craze for hybridization.

Mishra traces out eco-centric visions of Marvell talking about how according to Marvell, people's happiness depends on his/her relation with nature and if he/she is in tune with nature, he/she can enjoy life fully.

Savitri Ashok, in her article titled *“By God, If Wommen Hadde Writen Stories: A Feminist Glance at the Wife of Bath’s Love-Versions and Subversions”* talks about the famous tale of the Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales* and how Geoffery Chaucer, by entrusting the narrative voice to an unconventional woman, and inscribing her desires, fears, and furies, succeeds as a brilliant androgynous artist writing *écriture feminine*, transcending the limitations of his gendered life to write a vibrant woman's life as she herself, perhaps, would have written it. In so doing, Chaucer fulfills the very longing for women writing stories that he has infused into his Wife of Bath.

Mousim Mondal, in an informative article titled *“Gender Geometry: A Study of A. Revathi’s Autobiography- The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story”* studies the process and effect of heteronormative gender colonization that the hijra community of India witnesses, by taking into account the autobiography of A. Revathi’s *The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story*. Mondal describes how the autobiography “is the first of its kind in English from a member of the hijra community” and it clearly shows how the hijra community of India suffers lingual, sartorial and economic colonization at the hands of this heteronormative society.

In an article titled *“‘In Search of Bronte’: A (Re)-reading of Wuthering Heights and Rethinking Feminism”* Sunayan Mukherjee begins with the premise of Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* having been classified as one of those seminal texts which shook the foundations of patriarchy, going on to talk of how *Wuthering Heights* marks Bronte’s journey of creating a distinctive space for herself. Mukherjee attempts to interrogate questions like why is the kitchen given such a predominant position in the novel, why are there hunger strikes, can these be read as forms of resistance towards patriarchal dominance and if so what is the nature of this resistance?

Darsha Jani in *“Munshi’s Jaya Somnath: The New Historicist Approach”* explores Kanaiyalal Munshi’s most mature novel *Jaya Somnath* through New Historicism and analyzes the historicity of the text by relating it to the configurations of power, society and ideology in a

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given time, identifying it as a “cultural construct” of the era, with Munshi as Father of Historical Novel in Gujarati witnessing an abiding influence of cultural atmosphere including prejudices and taboos existing during the historical time of the novel (11th century) and the period during which the novel was written (20th century).

In the next article, “*Women within Precincts—The Madwoman in the Attic and the Application of the Feminist Critical Framework to Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea*” Shilpa Bhat probes Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic* as illustration of women cramped within precincts. Bhat talks about the interconnection, intertextuality and critical application of theory in literature by a close examination of the three works. By a close analysis of the three texts, she concludes that the end result of such application of literary theory to a literary text is enrichment of intellectual comprehension of works of art. While on one hand they disclose various notions hidden in a text, on the other hand they help facilitate a new perspective on marginalized characters.

Muhammad Shoaib, in “*Electra Complex in Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night*”, argues that Viola and Olivia in Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night* (1623) are driven by their unconscious desire to possess their brothers who serve as father-figures for them. By applying Carl Jung's theory of Electra Complex and a related Freudian theory of penis envy, Shoaib makes a study of the phallic and the post-Oedipal stages in the psychosexual development of the two female characters, Viola and Olivia. The triangle of daughter, father (or father-figure) and mother (or mother-figure) will be discussed in the cases of both the girls. Shoaib goes on to prove that the two girls are possessed by an acute desire to replace and imitate their mothers by first idealizing the father-figures, and then by replacing the wish for their own fathers (or the father-figures) with the wish to emulate their mothers by possessing an ideal father, and having a child.

Sunij Kumar Sharma in “*Translation discourse and Foucault: Resisting and Producing Meanings*” dwells upon how translation is one of those literary activities that help in the production and resistance of various discourses and their meanings in different cultures and how translated narratives are providing meaning to some new discourses and resistance to the existing one. Sharma outlines the discussion on the issue of translation as tool of developing the global

understanding of things and replacing the need for universal language; but it has some problems and controversies. Sharma also uses Michel Foucault's idea of discursive formations while defining the role of translation in the maintenance and production of knowledge.

In "*Frailty Thy Name is Not Woman*", Rita Garg discusses her own novel *An Abbreviated Child* under the lens of feminist criticism. She discusses how the novel portrays feminism being a strongly worded dimension of woman's being a benefactor, and how this novel falls within the periphery of the Female Phase, as classified by Elaine Showalter. She describes how the novel hits at the epistemology of the feminism under the given circumstances and gives a full picture of social reconstruction where the possibility of bringing civilization to employment on an island is also presumed.

Sayan Dey, in his article "*Fighting the Colonial Shadow in the Postcolonial Marathi Theatre: A Redefinition of Culture, Tradition and Myths of India from 1843-Present*" describes how initially regarded as a powerful, celebratory concept, Postcolonial Theory is imprinted with several potholes. The sudden withdrawal of the colonial powers, created voids, which the nations are still struggling to fill up. The newly found independence created multiple conflicts and confusions in various fields including art and literature. Dev goes on to highlight the impact of postcolonial conflicts on Marathi theatre and its struggle against the colonial shadow.

In "*Scratching the Labels: A Feminist Reading of Shashi Deshpande's Select Short Stories*", Manjari Shukla talks about a handful of celebrated novelist Shashi Deshpande's short stories, trying to show how women characters are in the clutches of patriarchy in one or the other way, but each one of them makes their Identity known by trying to break free from patriarchal shackles. The feminist theoretical practices intervene in the writings of Deshpande thereby projecting the idea of being a woman in a common middle-class family set up. Shukla proposes how on both the thematic and stylistic levels, Deshpande's short stories reach a high watermark.

Jobin Thomas, in "*A Sense of the Self from the Margins: Theorizing Adivasi Experience in Kerala*", analyzes two Adivasi self-representations, *Koccharethi* (1998) by Narayan and *Janu: C.K. Januvinte Jeevitha Katha* (2003) by Bhaskaran, which challenge the identity strait-jackets projected on to the Adivasis and attempt to refashion and recreate their identities, politically as well as culturally, on the basis of their lived experience, to build upon the context of a battle over the right to represent/mediate political modernity in Kerala.

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In the paper entitled “*Existential Strains in Anita Desai’s Cry, The Peacock*” Neetu Tyagi discuss about the existential dilemma of everyday life and how Anita Desai depicted the existential trauma of her female protagonists.

In the concluding paper “*Colonial Outlook and Human Values: Postcolonial Preoccupations in Munshi Premchand’s Karmabhumi*” Ashish Kumar talks about the colonization and decolonization with reference to the changing paradigms of the present cultural setup with reference to Premchand’

With these twenty two enriching articles, we present to you the Spring issue of **Lapis Lazuli -An International Literary Journal (LLILJ)**. Happy reading!

Khem Raj Sharma

Kalyanee Rajan