

**Editorial**

In a world unbound by boundaries – physical, geographical or cultural, post-modernist discourses and discussions are important to make sense of the contemporary world that we inhabit. Today's world is not all-inclusive, and universality cannot be enforced. Any philosophical attempt of theorising the contemporary social landscape will ultimately turn futile. The truth is that the 'grand-narrative' has died out. But at the same time post-modernist discourses cannot really be divorced from the modernist discourse. The current edition of *Ad Litteram Journal* carries out such divergent streams of thoughts in its 5<sup>th</sup> (December) edition.

Post-modernism in the Indian context has been chosen for this edition of *Ad Litteram*, owing to the stress on local narratives and rejection of the grand western narrative. It would therefore not be incorrect to say that to do justice to the post-modernist discourse a specific localised Indian context would be truly instrumental. The concept-note of the current edition of *Ad Litteram*: 'Situating Postmodernist Discourse in Indian Context: Literature, Culture and Philosophy' is a step in that direction. The Journal has always strived to debunk traditional narratives and bring in wide-ranging and multiple viewpoints related to its concept note.

But engaging with a topic which in itself refuses to establish itself on a firm ground is a tricky task. If modernism is defined as the earthquake in European culture and thought, then post-modernism is the aftermath caused by the quake, where the firm foundations have been shuffled upside down and new cracks have appeared along with new counter narratives from within the layers of the older narratives. Hence, the current edition of *Ad Litteram* promises to bring forth its most ambitious edition yet, as it tries to engage post-modernist discourse with the Indian context. The research articles and papers in the current edition are a few steps in that direction.

Under the broad sphere of Indian English literature, the postmodernist tendencies have found an offshoot spreading in multiple directions of all sorts. Fluid narratives, multiple identities, a non-unified basis of identity, multiculturalism and subjective sensibilities have found its apt flowering in the Indian English literary scene, be it prose or verse. Hence, a significant chunk of the post-modernist debate in the present edition of *Ad Litteram* has given weightage to the Indian English literature.

Taking the expansive area of Indian English literature, Priti Vyas has analysed two popular literary texts by RK Narayan and Jhumpa Lahiri to highlight the dialectics of marginalisation and quest for identity in the post-colonial Indian space. Deriving her essay from acclaimed social feminists and theorists, the author has analysed the literary texts from a feminist point of view along with post-modernist sensibilities to show how the quest for identity for women and immigrants lacks adequate attention in literary spheres.

Post-modernism in the Indian context has found a significant expression in Indian English literature, particularly in the Indian English novel and Indian English poetry. Jasleen Kaur Nanda has analysed three different writers - Arun Joshi, Shashi Deshpande and Kamala Das to show the interlinkages in Indian English literatures with post-modern feminist sensibilities. There is a marked sense of fragmentation in these select authors that Nanda takes up for a detailed analysis.

Not just the post-modernist feminist discourse but ecofeminist discourses too find its apt expression in Indian English literature. Ecofeminism as a concept has emerged in the middle

of post-modern phenomenon and Susanta Sahu's paper in this edition investigates the interlinkages in Indian English literatures with post-modern ecofeminist sensibilities.

Neerja Deswal's paper is a characteristic study of the post-modern family and the world that encompasses Upamanyu Chatterjee's novels, many of which have been hailed as post-modern classics in the Indian literary scene. The post-modern angst, unfulfilled aspirations and the central metaphor of the Prufrockian hero become a potent source for studying post-modern sensibilities in the Indian context. The paper attempts to study the same and provide new insights into it.

Kamala Das is a highly acclaimed name in Indian English poetry for her portrayal of feminist sensitivities and for her confessional mode of writing poetry. The themes in her poetry, along with the metaphors and symbols employed rake up a post-modernist reading of her poetry. Vivekanand Rao's research essay attempts to delineate the post-modernistic elements in the writings of Kamala Das.

The paper by Anjla Upadhyay deals with the theme of political migration in *Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh, and also attempts to highlight the tragic condition of diaspora in the postmodernist context. Upadhyay's essay reads the decentred self in the novel which leads to multiple identities and hence contributes to the ongoing postmodernist debate.

Author Rabia Khanam reads Amitav Ghosh's select works to understand cultural fragmentation which is a major feature of post-modernist fiction. The paper begins with a conceptual understanding of postmodernism and goes on to probe it through Ghosh's major writings in the postmodern frame. Arbitrary point of views, fractured boundaries, non-linear narrative structures, multiplicity of genres and fluid narratives are some of the postmodern elements seen in Ghosh's writings. The author of the paper adds multiple dimensions to this to enlarge the already existing arguments.

Postmodernism stresses on multi-cultural identities in a world which is unbound by cultural or geographical boundaries. Author Shashi Prabha's research paper is a study based on the aspect of multiculturalism in *Desirable Daughters* by the Indo-Anglian novelist Bharati Mukherjee.

B. Mangalam's scholarly research paper on Milton and Ambedkar focuses on the political activism of the poet John Milton and the poetic place of BR Ambedkar to understand the post-truth social space that both these writers have given shape to.

Y. Jaya's essay draws upon the select works by Maya Angelou and Bama Faustina to show the similarities in experiences by the Dalits in India and the Blacks in the USA. The narrative strategies employed by the two writers highlight a post-modernist outlook in terms of expressing the self. The paper is an attempt to understand the same.

Post-modernism not just altered the traditional modes of thoughts and philosophy but also literary modes and output. This can be seen in the rapid increase in the output of graphic narratives in the post-modern era and after. One such graphic novel is *Corridor: A Graphic Novel* by Sarnath Banerjee. The author has traced the influence of avant-garde literature in the post-modern context in the form of non-linear narrative patterns employed in *Corridor*.

Mini Gill in her interesting research paper talks about how postmodernity initiated intertextuality in Indian literature. The paper studies the same through *Loona*, an epic dramatic

compilation in Punjabi by Shiv Kumar Batalvi. This intertextuality is a key focus of the paper by Gill, with special reference to high Punjabi literature.

Jai Shankar Tiwari's paper revisits Longinus' *On the Sublime*, a classic work of literary criticism which defines the basic tenets of a good and a bad literary text. The author of the paper draws inferences and interlinkages of Longinus' treatise with the speeches, poetry and subject matter of Swami Vivekananda.

Postmodernism ushered in a new era of cinematic adaptations and film productions, unbound by traditional rules of film-making. To properly understand the outgrowth of postmodernist perceptions it is imperative to analyse the same through film and cinematic productions. This according to Navami Govind is evident in the New-wave cinema in the Malayalam film industry. The paper probes the postmodernist tendencies and outshoots in Malayalam cinema through a wide array of motion-picture films.

Ajanta Dutt's article in the current edition analyses the Indian Cinema and cinematic sphere through a postmodern lens. The author has taken up *Ghare Baire Aaj* (2019), dir. Aparna Sen, which is an adaptation of Tagore's *Ghare Baire* (1916). The author delineates how the movie is an attempt to simulate the postmodern entity in Indian cinema, particularly through the features of avant-garde movement which is a prominent part of the post-modern discourse.

Soumya Tiwari's paper is once again an attempt to analyse the post-modernist feminist discourses through a reading of Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* and showcases the multiple identities and hybridity which is an essential feature of post-modernist discourse.

Nayantara Sehgal is a prominent name in Indian English fiction and her most popular work *Rich Like Us* shows the sufferings of female characters who are bound in the web of patriarchy. Manoj Kumar Garg's descriptive essay attempts to study it in a realistic manner.

Jithin Varghese tries to read the anti-hero and the modern man with a post-modernist lens by a close reading from an Indian point of view. Certain films, literary texts and historical events have been examined to provide the dichotomy of the Anti-hero and the modern man, which is a part of the post-modern structure.

Mridul C Mrinal's essay revisits the Legend of Koragajja, the spirit diety worshipped in Tulunadu region of South India. The spirit worship is a social feature of the land of the Tulus. The author has attempted a historical and social evaluation of the act of spirit worshipping in the region to deconstruct the popular discourse of spirit worshipping and has given a historiographical reading of the same.

A joint paper by Shamem Banu and M. Kanimozhi on Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat* adds fresh insights on issues of fractured identities and multi-cultural narratives in this Pakistani-American fiction. The novel highlights the immigrant experience in a world with fluid boundaries and hybrid identities. The paper is a post-colonialist reading of the novel and shows the postmodern elements in a new light, i.e. from an immigrant's experiences.

Razeena P.R. probes the poems of Syam Sudhakar and highlights how the theme of death and mortality has been taken up in a postmodernist sense. The paper also attempts to examine how Malayalam poetry has dealt with this sudden and novel break in poetic sensibilities of South India.

Richa Singh's paper traces the modernity in pre-colonial India and attempts to define what she calls 'Alternative Modernity' in the pre-colonial Indian society much before the colonial intervention. The paper is a historiographic account of the phase of modernity in India.

Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* needs no introduction but needs a special mention while engaging with postmodern literary scene in the Indian literary sphere. Rita Joshi reads the postmodern elements in *Midnight's Children* in terms of narrative structure, narrative strategies, textual themes and several other elements which has led to its status as a classic of Indian postmodern fiction in English. The novel ushered in a new mode of writing in Indian literature and hence any discussion on postmodernist discourses in the Indian context cannot be complete without due attention to the postmodern elements in this work by Salman Rushdie.

*Ad Litteram* hopes to enrich the reader's perception through the wide gamut of research papers by acclaimed academicians and erudite research scholars across India. The wide-ranging ideas derive themselves not just from literature but also from society, culture and high philosophy. But the post-modernist discourse seeks to shy itself away from literature, culture or philosophy. It is everything, yet it is none. *Ad Litteram* wishes that the collage of research papers presented in this edition opens up multiple contesting views of the ongoing debate surrounding postmodernism in the Indian context.

