



Editorial

"The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at the moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein."

Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" (1986)

Over the past few decades, Critical Theory and studies in literature, culture, language and representation in the postmodern hyperspace have increasingly addressed the relationship between text and context, power and knowledge. Texts are no longer period pieces frozen in time, they exist as narratives and can be read only through a simultaneous, non-teleological network of meanings which (as Edward Soja remarks) inextricably connect "real-and-imagined spaces" (1996). Texts are thus narratives - cartographies mapping dispersed yet contingent relationships between ideology and human experience.

Critical Cartographies: Mapping Shifts in Narratives of Space and Identity attempts to integrate research articles on popular and contemporary readings of the spatio-temporal with specific focus on the politics of identity in Postcolonial and Postmodern realms of academic research in Humanities and the Social Sciences. New Literatures, Gender Studies, Popular Culture, Science Fiction, Linguistics and ELT are some of the diverse spaces addressed to underline geo-political approaches to the intimate poetics of language, representation and politics of identity.

In their phenomenal work *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari locate the politics of minor literature in the collective: "There isn't a subject, there are only collective assemblages of enunciation" (1986). Written from the margins, minor writing interestingly subverts the notion of marginality by de-territorialising notions of centre and spatiality, thereby the fixed

essence of subjecthood. The research articles selected for this edition of *Artha Journal of Social Sciences* foreground such a collective, an assemblage of voices emerging from, yet questioning boundaries of race, class, gender, indigeneity, community and the nation. They reinforce the inter-textuality of identities and underline how the language and territory of power which claim to be super structures are in essence temporal processes, therefore arbitrary and relational. Ideologies of race and nation for instance operate at the interstices of language and perceptions of gender are closely related to the production of body images in the liminality of the gaze. Ideologies demarcate, but their lines blur and shift. Thus boundaries themselves enable crossing-over and walls are scaled from both sides of the divide or shaken at the foundations.

An overview of the articles

Ravichandra P. Chittampalli's article, *Historicising Silence: An Introduction to Australian Aboriginal Poetry* undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the epistemic violence of silence inflicted by a grand narrative of colonial history and its museumised metaphor of the Aborigine. The article extends the possibilities of reading modern aboriginal poetry in Australia as New Literatures which deflect continued politics of the colonial gaze through new techniques of vocalisation and representation.

Etienne Rassendren's article, *'Little Wolf' and the Alphabet: Nationality and its Spaces* explores the intersectionality of language, space, culture and nationality in the context of Ulfilas' biblical translation and his missioning attitude, resulting in a commentary on the project of Gothic conversion to Christianity and its attendant controversies, particularly that of Arianism. The article is valuable for its historical insights into the significance of religion in forging imaginaries of community, thereby nationhood in non-structured geo-political spaces.

The next article in the series, *Pedagogic Spaces and Identities: Film as Text* by Mini Mark Bonjour explores the contemporary relevance of using film as text in undergraduate classrooms and the interface of audio-visual elements in teaching and learning. As the product of an action research initiative, the article is extremely relevant in its

intervention into pedagogy and the changing dynamics of learner identity, interactive media and spatiality in modern classrooms.

The politics of embodiment and feminine identity emerge in Suchismita Dattagupta's article, *Reading Hair as a Symbol to Understand Changing Gender Roles in "Rapunzel" and "Rapunzel's Revenge"*. The article examines the dialectics of hair as significant to the representation of conformity and deviance and highlights how Rapunzel becomes one of the earliest and most popular metaphors for a feminine aesthetic based on conformity. Further, the author enables feminist readings of the re-visioning of this popular myth in contemporary narratives of Rapunzel.

Meera Vinod & Gaana Jayagopalan jointly explore one of the first significant science fiction narratives from India. In their article *A History of the Future: Time-Travel, Technology, Dystopia and Postcolonial Anxiety in Vandana Singh's "Delhi"*, the authors have undertaken a postcolonial reading of science fiction. Vandana Singh's manipulation of popular tropes of time-travel, technology, dystopia and narrative techniques are analysed to situate Indian Science fiction within the framework of postcoloniality.

Charting new maps and overlaps

English Studies, as is evident in most universities and research centres across the world today, constitutes an inter-disciplinary, often post-disciplinary praxis of a signification. Ideologies and texts are thereby recognized as productional processes and narratives are constituted by multiple readings which give various points of access to production and consumption of meanings. In essence, this enables a researcher in English Studies to acknowledge that Political Theory and Sociology not only intersect in the workings of race and class relations in a postcolonial text, but that their boundaries do not exist and are indeed reinforced by departmentalisation of academia. Dialogues in inter-disciplinarity have initiated the creation of new disciplines which combine two or more readings, approaches and theoretical frameworks. Whether this essentially questions disciplinarity is debatable. Further, most 'disciplines' in Humanities and Social Sciences are innately inter-disciplinary in their approaches to human conditions, for even the

most imaginative literature is grounded in human experience. Through this edition, we sincerely hope to have extended possibilities for transcending disciplinary boundaries and charting new cartographies of research.

References

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1986). *Kafka: toward a minor literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Foucault, M., & Miskowiec, J. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics*, 16(1), 22-27. doi:10.2307/464648

Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.

Sushma V Murthy
Issue Editor