

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

It makes me happy to present to you this JTREL issue though happiness in Covid-hit times is increasingly an elusive, almost alien, emotion for millions across the globe. As we go through grim, gloomy days, a thought that has often crossed my mind (and may have crossed yours too) is how literature can help us cope with these troubled times.

Literature always plays a significant role in helping us define who we are as human beings and enriches our lives in multiple ways. This becomes more obvious in moments of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic that threatens human civilization today. While everything is not easily apparent unless we delve deep, literature offers a critical support and succour as many in our society have become anxious and lonely souls, full of fear of an invisible virus. In dealing with this unprecedented crisis, literature offers a range of insights and intangible rewards that make life worth living in an epoch of uncertainty and unfolding tragedy.

It is in this spirit that we bring to you the latest issue of JTREL with the fond hope that you will find the pieces here to be an engaging mix of literary merit and thoughtful research. We are extremely thankful to all our contributors for enriching this issue with their creativity and research efforts. In addition to five research articles, we have also included an original poetic endeavour in the quest to open a new vista for JTREL.

The first paper in this issue provides a perceptive analysis of a pithy but powerful short story. Through their paper entitled, 'The Voice of Protest in B Rangrao's 'Farewell', Hitesh H Siju and Milind Solanki strive to illustrate the plight of the suppressed classes of Indian society. In particular, they examine how B. Rangrao's short story addresses the age-old dogma of untouchability, easily one of the most cruel social evils that scarred the Indian landscape for centuries. The text under study, according to the authors, also highlights other related problems such as pollution, public law and forced migration. In a nutshell, their reading reflects the insightful manner in which this short story amplifies the voice of protest.

In the next paper, entitled 'Interplay of Love, Sex, and Politics in Asif Currimbhoy's *Goa*', Satya Paul highlights how the author has interwoven these elements in his dramatic creation. It brings to the fore how the playwright draws a parallel between the love stories in the play and the story of Goa's invasion. The paper also underlines the artistic skills of the playwright who presents his thoughts by implication and innuendo rather than by direct statement. In addition, Currimbhoy's stylistic improvisations and allusions, inseparably woven into the soul of this haunting play, have also been analysed at length.

Another piece on an insightful play is 'Interrogating Human Identities in *Seven Steps Around the Fire*.' Neelam Srivastava analyses Mahesh Dattani's effort to bring out the predicament of marginalised communities with special reference to eunuchs presented in this celebrated radio play. The paper argues that Dattani's play investigates the social and mental suffering faced by the community of eunuchs whose identity is largely unacknowledged in society. This reading suggests that the central message of the play is to inspire society to be more responsible and give due

space to such invisible minorities.

In a somewhat similar vein, Neha Raghav analyses four anti-slavery speeches given by Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Abraham Lincoln, and William Lloyd Garrison. Entitled 'Crusade Against the Wrong: Abolitionist Rhetoric in Anti- Slavery Speeches', the paper analyses these speeches primarily in the light of theories of rhetoric and attempts a short comparative study of the speeches. The author also examines the use of ethos, pathos, and logos in depth and seeks to establish how the credibility of the speaker's character, facts, and emotions play a crucial role in these speeches that helped in the abolition of slavery.

The next paper entitled 'Digital Poesy on Corona Pandemic: Peek into Plight, Pain and Purgation' seems particularly poignant given the Covid19 challenge that surrounds us. Ritu R. Agarwal explores the way the pandemic inspired the sensibilities of the present generation to voice their feelings in a poetic form. She uses digitally expressed feelings on social media about the pandemic which capture the myriad emotions of people worldwide. In particular, the paper looks at the effect of the lockdown when people were desperately looking for consolation and reassurance. The author argues that language emerges as a powerful medium to combat the virus and the pandemic poems move from expression to empowerment and fear to hope in a spontaneous outburst of creativity in a crisis.

Finally, we have a creative piece of poetry by Ms. Karthika. J. Her pithy poem talks about the young digital natives today who are comfortable with the online language of computers and social media but seem distinctly uncomfortable, even afraid, of real-life conversations with peers, friends and acquaintances. Her poem reflects the apathy of digital natives towards relationships in the real world which stands in sharp contrast to their compulsive anxiety to hold on to links and interactions in the virtual world.

In conclusion, one hopes that reading the articles offered in JTREL will help to lift your spirits, despite the dark, distressing times confronting us. Let me end by sharing a few thoughts to make the burden we are all carrying a bit lighter. Instead of fear and despair, we need to always remember that there are nice people willing to go that extra mile to help and there are lots of them across our nation and the globe. Together, we will build back better with them and our collective effort will hopefully inspire all of us to negotiate and overcome these difficult days and ensure the ultimate triumph of the human spirit!!

Be well and stay safe, folks!!

Warm regards,
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