The Royallite Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism

Iram Fatima and M. Subha

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Preface

Literary theory/ criticism is an umbrella term that encompasses all the literary theories. Literary criticism is basically the study, evaluation, interpretation of literature from various perspective altogether. Different Literary Theories are like lenses that aid and help the critics to study a particular text with the application of a particular theory. In a nutshell, we can say that theories act like lenses that helps us to dig deeper into the nitty gritties of a particular piece of writing.

Literary theories are considered as a means to understand the different ways in which people read and interpret various texts. In other words, we can say that literary theory is the act of applying various ideas and methods while reading any piece of literature. Interpretation of a particular text with respect to literary theories provide a different understanding and different interpretation. We are able to read a text from an entirely different point of view. This is the beauty of reading a text when literary theory is applied on this. Literary theory also acts as different tools when attempting to understand any text of literature. Different theories applied to different texts from different contributors have been taken into consideration in this book.

Dr Shivangi Srivastava, in her research paper, has find out and portrayed the influence of Colonialism on the indigenous cultures and how Postcolonial Archaeology aids in Cultural Globalization which constitutes the investigation of hybridity, the role of essentialism in the construction of colonial discourses over the past century and the problems

inherent in voicing the marginalized. Postcolonial archaeology and cultural globalization are seemingly interrelated in terms that postcolonial archaeology studies the aftermath of colonialism or historical and cultural past of colonies as well as it also involves cultural transmission and hybridity by paving the way to different cultures of the world. This also identifies many individual issues that need to be considered and are relevant. Examining critical theoretical perspectives can shed light on these issues on a larger level. The distinct areas in which postcolonial studies could articulate with archaeology are: In the study of colonial past through the archaeological records, in the study of archaeology's role in the construction and deconstruction of historical discourses and as a methodology for the decolonization of the archaeological discipline and a guide for the ethical practice of contemporary archaeology.

Neha Tripathi in her research paper has highlighted that the Asian/ American woman in Hollywood cinema is bound to sexuality as essential to any imaginings about her as well as her actual appearances in popular culture. The particular sexual subjection for the Asian woman occurs at two levels. First, the Asian femme fatale's sexual subjection in film involves an inherently different sexuality essentialized to race and culture. That is, her sexuality is ascribed as natural to her particular raced and gendered ontology. Second, the Asian femme fatale's sexuality is framed in a rivalry with a white woman, in terms of competing for heterosexual femininity. The Asian woman's racial visibility works against the white woman's domestic or tameable gender and sexuality. From the general Orientalized roles played by Anna May Wong to the detailed specificity of the "Half Chinese, half Japanese" O-Ren Ishii played by Lucy Liu in Quentin Tarantino's popular *Kill Bill* in Hollywood.

Riya Raj in her research paper talks about the trauma that the people who undergo partition face. The

trauma of the partition is still relevant in the literary circles even after more than seven decades. The up-surged mass hysteria and the ever-shifting identities at that time have been"sensationalized" something as banal. Taking the idea further,this paper explores the least talked history along with the madness it surrounds, with reference to Pritam's *Pinjar*. Furthermore, this paper shall also investigate the identities on the verge of drowning in the sea of bloodshed and exodus exacerbating the already traumatic situation of the people. The paper also delves into the internal combat of the characters of the text againsttheir delirious identities. The enmeshed destiny of the psychological states of the characters (their madness) withthe nuances of the space they hold in the text can be understood onlythrough the unapologetic study of the disputed identities in the text.

The study of life, exploration of existence, convoluted dynamics of the self and what it means to be human remains a succinct yet detailed one. It explained in a great deal; why people have to embrace their ambiguity instead of fighting and how to be free, one must wish to be free. We are condemned to ambiguity rather than choice. The research paper of **Tanbir Shahnawaz** presents such unresolved dynamics of the self that interact with the external world and set conventional decrees. From the pioneering author of *The Second Sex* comes a progressive discourse on ethical accountability and idea of freedom. In her classic introduction to existentialist philosophy, French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* pays homage to and engages in conflict simultaneously with her eminent French contemporaries Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurize Merleau-Ponty, arguing that the thought of freedom in existentialism has certain ethical obligations. Simone de Beauvoir argues that one must fight with the choices and actions of the opponents in order to gain true independence. It is a groundbreaking book that launched the feminist and existential theory of Simone de Beauvoir

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emphatically and created sensation in reading public.

When Derrida took up his pen, he de-created epistemology. The cognitive process which moved like a liquid flow from Descartes, is shredded at a molecular level when Derrida decided to look into the spaces between those molecules and went deeper in the sub-atomic of it to find the fracture in the identity. **Prof Debojyoti Dan** has look forward in finding an avenue to discuss his theories in context with literary texts and sketches and paintings. In this regard analysis has been made of the sketch 'Magic Mirror' by M. C. Escher, as to how it dissolves the subjectivity of the subject-as-an identity and try to see its diffused state of non-identity in the realm of non-hegemony of the singularity. Along with this sketch, Eugène Delacroix's painting 'La Liberté guidant le peuple' has been analysed to expostulate the idea of Derridan sign-substitution and political cogito in refraction of time and space. Analysis has also been made of Ezra Pound's famous poem 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' and Nobokov's *Pale Fire* as a centerless freeplay induced and used by Derrida to free ontology from the epistemic quest of singular center of meaning. Oral logic and dialogic of ' pharmakon' has been analysed finally to decode the rational fallacy of identifying word with a singular meaning.

Most of the literary and cultural theories developed after Marxism, somehow or other, discuss and analyse the function of different power structures in different societies. The research paper written by **Dr. Jasmine Jose and Dr. Sufina. K** attempts to analyze some of the major theorists who have discussed the role of power in the society. The key figures include Max Weber, Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Homi K Bhabha, Michael Foucault, and Green Blat. The basic similarities and certain dissimilarities in their approaches, among different societal power, are main matters of concern. The theories selected for the review include Marxism, Post structuralism, Post colonialism and New Historicism.

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Their research paper attempts to provide an overview on these power theories for their contemporary relevance in the literary research even though the '-isms' are hitherto in existence for two scores.

Asra Mamnoon in her research paper focuses on the recognition of the various traumatic experiences of Hosseini's characters in *And the Mountains Echoed*,and how it shapes their respective lives. This has been done under the larger framework of contemporary trauma theories and the concept of trauma in general. It also touches upon other of Hosseini's works, namely, The Kite Runner (2003) and A Thousand Splendid Suns (2007). Khaled Hosseini's writings are steeped in traumatic events, both personal as well as collective. He writes about a society where there is less space for the individual's control over his or her life. His characters are victims of circumstances, both in their personal lives and also in the larger milieu of the country they are part of, mostly unfortunately. Trauma, due to several reasons, is the reality of life for many of them.

The paper of **Dipak Kumar Mandal** explores the trauma faced by the socially, politically and culturally marginalized like Vikarmas and Nagas and traces how Lord Shiva effectively creates the enabling condition for these subalterns for social participation by engaging with them positively and replacing hegemonic laws of oppression and exploitation with socially responsible practices. Subalternity has been in existence from time immemorial. To view subalternity as an exclusive legacy of the colonial history of any nation is to limit its implication to one perspective. Subalternity forms an important aspect of human societies that are built upon hierarchical structures. Human history is the history of struggle between the privileged and the underprivileged. Political and social structures have been reinforcing subalternity at different times and different places. This is very true of ancient Indian society where economic,

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social and cultural hierarchies were based on Varna systems (Varna is a Sanskrit expression, obtained from 'vr'- to cover, to wrap, check, order, consider, portray or pick. The main notice of the Varna system was found in Purusha Suktam section of the old Sanskrit Rig Veda). For Spivak subalterns cannot be heard because their voices are misrepresented by colonial power.

Post-colonialism as an emerging trend finds its new dimension illustrated in the research paper entitled "Desire for Power Leading to Ambivalence: an Analytical Study of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko"* written by **Abhijit Seal**. This paper tries to highlight how the colonial encounter brings out the hidden ambivalence present in Aphra Behn's classic novella Oroonoko or, The Royal Slave (1688). The aim of this research work is to highlight the ambivalence present in the colonial setup in Suriname among Oroonoko and his close associates which has been discovered by applying Lacanian theory of 'Mirror Stage' theory and Hegel's 'Master-Slave Dialectic'. Special emphasis is given in postcolonial signifiers like mimicry in a subversive mood to find out the ambivalence present in the dynamic relationship between colonial master and colonial slave and among native labourers which to some extent brings their identity under question. This ambivalent relationship has been filtered out by exercising a post colonial approach propounded by Bhabha in his book The Location of Culture. Moreover, the dichotomous attitude present within the Narrator herself. In order to bring ambivalence under the limelight Bhabha's 'Mirror Image' theory is used by the researcher. Attempts have been made to show how desire for power leads both colonizer and the colonized to a situation of ambivalence.

The research paper of **Suparna Roy** has focused on how Anand was successful in creating "business of human body relieving itself" both for a 'casted man' and 'casted woman'. The paper revolves around the various aspects of

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Identity. Identity itself seems to be about a question- 'who am I?' Patriarchy, if considered a mutating drug resisting virus and as the source of all inequalities, constructed identities, restrictions and markers for all bodies in a society (under the pretext of all being "natural"), then 'marginalization', a product of power regimes, is used to operate, control and construct bodies and deprive them of their basic rights. Marginalization is a broader operation to segregate and mark bodies on the basis of caste, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, social, cultural, economic, creed and other factors. The subject, 'I' or 'we' in the identity equation, involves some element of choice, however limited. The concept of identity encompasses some notion of human agency; an idea that we can have some control in constructing our own identities. There are, of course, constraints which may lie in the external world, where material and social factors may limit the degree of agency which individuals may have. In this regard Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable (1935) do brings into consideration the 'question of identity' of the Dalits in pre-independent India.

The research paper of **Ghiasuddin Alizadeh and Masoud Farahmandfar** attempts to trace the elements of change in the early and late Shakespearean tragedies from the viewpoint of style and the writer's ideological stance. Shakespeare's tragic writing undergoes certain modification as he moves further in his career. One aspect of this modification is the change in the protagonist's dynamism. Although Romeo and Juliet both show certain signs of development which separates them from comic characters, they still lack the psychological depth which is witnessed in Shakespeare's late tragic heroes. It is true they realize their tragic fate, yet they fail in gaining full consciousness of their situation and their contribution to their own destiny. Another aspect is the change of diction toward a more 'natural' employment of language and rhetorical devices. In Shakespeare's mature

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tragedies, we do not see the experimental lyricism we witness in *Romeo and Juliet*, as the playwright seems to adopt the classical notion of decorum, according to which each character should speak in accordance with its social status.

Tridib Khan in his research paper entitled Oriental Influence: Vaishnavism and Subculture and Counter-culture has discussed about Vaishnav Religion and how it plays a pivotal role to make hybrid culture, subculture, and counterculture in different parts of the world. The people are taking 'Diksha' and embracing the Vaishnav religion. The acceptance of Vaishnav religion is on the one hand is the acceptances of religious faith and rituals that originated and are deeply rooted in undivided Bengal and on the other hand the acceptance of Bengali Culture. This religion, at first creating a hybrid culture and then a subculture when the community is expanding and then counterculture when the community is expanding further and devouring the native dominant culture of that land. The process is slow but steady. Once the European culture dominated and shaped the culture of Asia, and Africa. The occident with its superior look devoured the culture of the Orient. But now the Orient is influencing the Occident, though on a small scale. Vaishnavism is originated in Bengal and it is deeply rooted in the culture of Bengal. Now the Vaishnavism is creating hybrid culture, subculture, and counterculture, dominating the Occident in the arena of Religion and Culture. It is a reversal and it establishes the fact that Orient can also influence the occident.

The research paper of **Dr Nargis Tabassum** titled "*A Cry in Wilderness: Strands of Ethnicit and Feminism in Saoli Mitra's Nathabati Anathabat [Five Lords, Yet None a Protector]*" concerns itself with Saoli Mitra's feminist play *Nathbati Anathbat* in which Mitra blends the Bengali *Pala* style with that of the *Pandavani* of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to foreground the story of Draupadi of the *Mahabharata* and her condition in a patriarchal society where she remains lonely

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like an *anath* or " an orphan" in spite of having five royal husbands. Mitra's accomplishments as a playwright and as a woman voicing the plights of other women will be assessed in this paper to establish her femenist undertones in the play. Mitra has weaved the strand of ethnicity, the subaltern tradition of storytelling , a subculture often attributed to the domain of the dissent voice of women under the dominant culture of grand narratives; with the strand of feminism to voice Draupadi's existential anguish, her sense of loneliness and suffering, a loveless marriage and remaining essentially "an object" to be possessed, utilized and discarded by men. These two strands are intertwined with each other in a way that taking out only one would still leave creases of the other in it, ergo the inconvenience of one single focus. This paper has concentrated on two aspects of the play: ethnicity and feminism.

The paper of **Dr. Abdul Mubid Islam** aims to assess the imperatives of Hegelian dialectic and its appropriation in the context of Africa by the renowned psychoanalyst turned writer Frantz Fanon. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's 'master-slave dialectic' becomes a significant area of research as it provides a vantage point to assess violence in its variegated manifestations. The dialectic becomes all the more significant for its basic premise that mutual recognition and self-consciousness emerges out of a violent conflict. Therefore, it becomes imperative to bring in Hegel to answer a central question of the colonial project, namely, the binary of master-slave relationship and the resulting violence, which proves detrimental to the interest of both.

This edited volume of book represents the new perspectives that emerge in various literary theory and literary criticism. All the contributors have aptly applied various literary theory on different text of their choices.

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Postcolonial archaeology: A new genre of study

Shivangi Srivastava

Abstract

Postcolonial archaeology and cultural globalization are seemingly interrelated in terms that postcolonial archaeology studies the aftermath of colonialism or historical and cultural past of colonies as well as it also involves cultural transmission and hybridity by paving the way to different cultures of the world. This also identifies many individual issues that need to be considered and are relevant. Examining critical theoretical perspectives can shed light on these issues on a larger level. This research paper is intended to find out and understand the influence of Colonialism on the indigenous cultures and how Postcolonial Archaeology aids in Cultural Globalization which constitutes the investigation of hybridity, the role of essentialism in the construction of colonial discourses over the past century and the problems inherent in voicing the marginalized. The distinct areas in which postcolonial studies could articulate with archaeology are: In the study of colonial past through the archaeological records, in the study of archaeology's role in the construction and deconstruction of historical discourses and as a methodology for the decolonization of the archaeological discipline and a guide for the ethical practice of contemporary archaeology.

Keywords: anthropology, colonialism, decolonization, hybridity, imperialism, postcolonial archaeology

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Postcolonialism is a discipline that elucidates and explains the legacy of Colonialism. As a genre postcolonialism enquires and finds out the techniques of cultural perception and representation. It incorporates the way of viewing and analysing and of being analysed. It also represents the predicament of indigenous people who were exploited by colonial nations. Therefore, Postcolonialism is a body of literary study that illustrates and focuses on critical theory to understand the loss of power, identity, and culture due to colonialism. It is rooted in the history of the West's colonization, imperialism, and decolonization, though it has been broadened to include a more metaphorical bent as well as a diversity of geographical, racial, and cultural contexts and histories. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) are path breaking texts on Postcolonial Theory.

Postcolonial theory is applied today across a range of fields in humanities and social sciences such as anthropology, archaeology, political science, linguistics, literature, history, film studies etc. Postcolonial theory plays a significant role in the examination of assumptions and contexts in which Archaeological findings varies with culture. Postcolonial Archaeology is a recently developing area of study. Archaeology deals with history or past. Therefore, it would help to understand the past by providing chronological facts. Precisely, Postcolonial Archaeology studies about "how postcolonial theory intersects with archaeological issues and the practices of archaeology?" (Schmidt 412-414). There are several themes that have been focused on with archaeologists' encounters with postcolonial studies. This incorporates the critique of colonial institutions of thought, new exposition and elucidations of past that lay emphasis on thesubaltern and indigenous experiences, and strategies for restoration and decolonization. Many archaeologists have also reflected on how archaeology being a discipline, is shaped by colonial

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forces through tracing the close relationship between imperialism and forms of archaeological knowledge. As Chris Gosden says:

> Archaeology and anthropology are both out growths of liberal philosophy and their agenda has been to study the "other," an enterprise that has been fundamental in justifying colonial intervention, constituting the colonial tool of governance in charting and knowing subaltern people, and dissociating indigenous descendants from their heritage. (Rizvi, 111).

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Colonialism has been a significant aspect of world history for the last 5000 years and the dominant element of world history for the last 500 years. Archaeology,on the contrary, has focused on colonial 'forms' past and present, written reports and descriptions and oral or verbal histories. Colonialism has offered a broad horizon for researchers to study about people and civilizations belonging to a particular era or phase of past. It has not only influenced archaeology and anthropology but has also helped in preserving the information of habitats and rituals of tribes and indigenous natives of colonies.

Post-colonial literature is a subversion of the imperial centre and for others it is an assertion of identity both in theme and language.Lingual, historical, social and national issues are very important themes under the wider term 'Postcolonialism'. It defines the aftermath of colonization in the literary and social world that has been affected by colonial process. The domination of European countries particularly of England, over the rest of the world began in the fifteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century England was the single largest imperial power ruling over the whole world. Postcolonialism started right from the time of British invasion in those countries, which are now known as

Colonies. Colonization brought with it the conflict of social, historical and cultural identities. There was an inherent clash between the natives, indigenous precolonial cultures, and the culture imposed on the natives by the imperial forces.

During late 1980s or rather early 1990s 'Postcolonialism' emerged as a discipline in the literary study. This resulted in a drastic change in the literature of that period. Literature written during this period has been placed under the umbrella term 'Commonwealth Literature' or 'New Literatures in English'. In other words, it undertakes those literary works that are influenced by colonization. This discipline has got wider acknowledgement and applicability under the influence of the works of certain eminent critics like Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin, Gareth Griffith, etc. Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin and Gareth Griffith rightly observe:

> These writers also work to reclaim the past, because their own histories were often erased or discredited under imperialism, and to understand their own culture and personal identities and chart their own futures, on their own terms rather than the terms superimposed on them by imperialist ideology and practice. (Ashcroft et al 151)

Colonialism was a force that has been imposed by the colonizers upon natives, in order to establish their regimes. This not only implies a static view of both the cultures but has also generated the encounters between the two differently discrete cultures. Thus, colonial cultures are "complex mixtures of their original parts, where these parts do not remain separate from each other but blend into something new" (Gosden 243). This complex mingling of two diverse cultures leads to the birth of a new hybrid generation.

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This hybrid nature of the colonial culture refers that "All participants in that culture, colonizers and colonized, have vital inputs into the structures of power, domination and resistance that result" (Gosden 243). Foucault on the other hand had his own views regarding hybridity, he said:

> Power is inherent in all human relationships and this view lies at the heart of the notion of hybridity: all participants in a colonial culture bring something of their own to the culture; all have agency and the power to shape their world, although this is nuanced and constrained in different ways. (Gosden 243)

Another core element of postcolonialism is that it emphasizes on the culture, architecture, use of language in speech and writings, rituals and traditions followed by natives, dressing behaviour and how the change came with affect to colonial domination. As far as postcolonial archaeology is associated with this concept, cultural, lingual, architectural details have been approached by tools of literary texts and historical evidences. Hodder throws some light on this by his ideas:

> Context is as ubiquitous a concept in (Post) modern archaeology as it of critical importance to the discipline since it not only establishes the stratigraphic and chronological basis for organizing the archaeological record but has also been foregrounded as the conceptual key for post- processual interpretations of the archaeological evidence. (Hooder 118-146).

In one his essays Chris Gosden has referred that, "all archaeology today is Postcolonial" (Gosden 241). The engagement of Postcolonial thoughts and the subject matter of archaeology resulted in exploration of various new genres

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which are now not limited to the past practices of archaeology where archaeological scientists simply study artifacts. Archaeology now is a vast discipline, which encompasses human habitat, rituals and traditions, dressing behaviour, language used for verbal and written communication, usually every detail and facts that could help in the deep understanding of a particular period. There is a wide scope and need to scrutinize every aspect whether it is social, cultural, regional, or political. Archaeological sites and remains are not only open to the discourses of science but they can also be experienced as remnants to carry past to the present. The three distinct areas in which postcolonial studies articulate with archaeology are: in the study of colonial past through the archaeological records; in the study of archaeology's role in the construction and deconstruction of historical discourses and as a methodology for the decolonization of the archaeological discipline and a guide for the ethical practice of contemporary archaeology.

Archaeology also encompasses the ordinary everyday objects from the past. This has been used as ananswer to the susceptible questions of historical heritage by world scientists from centuries. Small things replicate and talk about day to day lives of ordinary people. This factor had been very important for understanding of the historical archaeology in the countries like United States, Canada, Australia,New Zealand and elsewhere."The archaeological study of the recent past, where the historic context in rich, can be justified on the grounds that things reveal information about people who have no monuments and no historical voice: slaves, indigenous people, women, the illiterate and the poor" (Little 1994). Thus, archaeological sites and research are closely correlated to 'subaltern' histories, which have been dominantin challenging imperial narratives.

Postcolonialism and archaeology are seemingly interrelated with each other as both the genres study about

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history, people, civilization and colonial relics and ruins. Postcolonial archaeology studies the consequences of colonialism or historical and cultural past of colonies as well as it also involves cultural transmission and hybridity by paving the way to different cultures of the world.

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