
Editors' Note

“Colloquium” is the first venture by the Department of Arts of the Bhawanipur Education Society College. It gives an opportunity to the members of the faculty and other young scholars to express their views on diverse fields of interest which is implied by the title of the journal.

This issue of Colloquium deals with the concept of space from a multi-disciplinary perspective. ‘Space’ is a concept which has been present from the time of ancient civilization in the fields of art , architecture, literature, music, dance and science. The notion of space or spatiality has now become central to an understanding of multiple disciplines in the post modern era. In the fields of history, sociology, political science and international relations, studying space can open up new possibilities for defining territories, identities and policies. From a literary and cultural perspective, space can be realized variously as a concept - discursive, psychological or imaginary. It can also be seen as a textual construct whose meaning is fluid and relational with respect to social factors. Finally, a discussion of space and spatiality invites concepts of plurality, multiculturalism and interdisciplinary analysis of ‘spaces’.

Space and spatiality is a diverse eclectic subject matter the mention of which can be traced back to the works of Aristotle and Plato, Bergson and Einstein, Euclid and Carnap, and perhaps the likes of Newton, Descartes, Leibiz and Kant. Modern writers such as Doreen Massey, David Harvey, Manuel Castelles and Henri Lefebvre write about space and spatiality as social and cultural as well as quasimaterial productions. Massey, along with Harvey and Thrift, shows how with the changing times the notion of space and spatiality have moved well beyond the Cartesian and Newtonian concepts, and have spread throughout disciplines.

The production of historical knowledges of space have been viewed by the modern critics from various points of view. Colonial and post colonial geographers look at it from the viewpoint of imperialism and empire, colonialism and ante colonialism and the development of such. The notions of nation building and geopolitics incorporate territory and place, imaginative geographies and geopolitics, and identity and the nation. The concept of historical hierarchies include class hegemony and resistance, race and gender. The built environment plays an important role in the concept of space and it includes the role of nature and the environment, making sense of urban settlement and geographies of urban morphology. Place and its meaning are also important and this includes landscape and iconography, conceptualizing heritage and its performance, spectacle and power. The concept of modernity and modernization is always important in understanding space and spatiality and it encompasses capitalism and industrialization, culture of science and technology, modernity and democracy. Beyond these borders are concepts of globalization, governmentality and nature-culture. As can be seen, the notion of space and spatiality is wide and varied and the articles in this journal have tried to address the issues associated with it. This collection of invaluable articles diverse in character and construct are based on the concept of space.

Jashomati Ghose examines African diasporic fiction through Helen Oyyemi's debut novel *The Icarus Girl*, which is inspired by her own experiences as a Nigerian growing up in London. Jashomati delves deep into the psychological problems that beset young Jess growing up in London who is caught up in a web of cultural identities. She delineates Jess's journey through multiple cultural spaces in search of identity.

As Gargi Talapatra has written in her paper, literature maybe regarded as the unofficial histories of a period complementing

factual documentation. In it, Gargi has shown how Charles Dickens relocated the uprising of 1857 in India to the island of Belize which was an English colony in his novella *The Peril of Certain English Prisoners*. This novella is very different from the other works of Dickens and some of the events which are portrayed in the novella are drawn from factual accounts of the siege of Lucknow.

Anirban Guha Thakurta has examined Oodgero Noonuccal's poem "We Are Going" showing how the colonial superstructure or colonizer defaces native history, culture and identity. The poem is elegiac in tone, mourning the repression and deterritorialization of the Aborigines by the 'Whites' in Australia. The author explores the ramifications of superimposition of 'White' culture on the Aborigine culture.

Partha Sarathi Nandi writes about the case of Gregor Samsa and his loss of human identity in Kafka's famous novella *Metamorphoses*, in subjugating his desires for his family. The author shows how Samsa's metamorphosis leads to a subsequent change in his family. His plight, alienation and ultimate death leads to a rejuvenation of his family members.

Nilanjan Chakraborty's paper is based on Rituparno Ghosh's multilayered film *Chitrangada*. It is a foray into the space of gender violence that is caused by society's bias against transgenders and gay population causing cultural, social and psychological alienation.

Satyajit Ray has written many supernatural stories which appeal to all, both young and old. Nabanita Das's paper explores these supernatural spaces.

Sonal Kapur shows how Gita Hariharan's book *Where Dreams Travel* takes off from where *Arabian Nights* end, in her paper. It delves into the stories left untold, the disnarrated spaces, the other side of the *Arabian Nights* into the world of Dunyazad and Dilshad's stories.

Arunabha Ghosh has taken the poems of Wendell Berry in his *Farming : A Handbook* which deals with issues related to the environment as the subject of his paper. He writes about Berry's preoccupation with the land and his notion of culture which is derived from the way life that he leads. He shows how place and space are almost synonymous to culture and nature in these poems.

Nawazish Azim attempts a reading of various articles written by women of colour. She concentrates on the African-American, Asian-American and Native-American where she shows that the body of the coloured American woman becomes a site for power struggles which is either accepted or denigrated according to the social and spatial setting.

The poetry of Sylvia Plath has been the focus of much critical attention. In her paper Kuntala Sengupta focuses on a selection of poems by Plath in which she discourses on the prevalence of images of places and spaces in them.

Swati Mukerji focuses on the realist writers of the 19th century when she writes about the emergence of the Urban novel in America. She focuses on a few specific writers namely Charles Brockden Brown, Henry James, Stephen Crane and Frank Norris. With the rural world gradually giving way to urban industrialization we are given insights into a new world as seen by the writers.

The genre of the superhero film has always been popular. With time the audience has grown and the themes have become more serious. The superheroes have created a parallel world which mirrors problems to which the superheroes have solutions. Sourjya Roy explores this area focusing on five specific films.

Rupsa Banerjee focuses on the poems of William Carlos Williams namely 'Paterson' and the 'Maximus' poems of Charles Olson. Williams was a key member of the early modernist movement in

America. He personally mentored Olson who was a second generation modernist. In the paper, the author shows how the language used by the two poets creates a balance between imagination and reality and opens the boundaries between intellect and sensuousness, and helps in the understanding of the concept of space.

There has been in India from ancient times a long drawn and continuous struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, majority and the minority, powerful and weak, forwards and backwards, affluent and marginalized over the question of space. The former trying to encroach upon the space of the latter, and, the latter in turn trying to preserve and establish its identity and protect, safeguard and create its own social, political and economic space. In extreme cases this turns into a demand for the formation of a separate state within or even outside the Indian Union.

It is equally true in the case of the world scenario. Globalisation, for all practical purposes, refers to a process whereby the west is trying to dominate upon the economic, political and cultural space of the rest of the world, and the so called Third World trying to protect itself the against inevitable evils of the same. The two articles written by Dona Ganguly and Lopamudra Majumdar reflect upon the question of space from the micro and macro point of view, respectively.

Dona Ganguly discusses the demand for the creation of a separate political space in the form of the Autonomous Tribal State within the state of Manipur. She tries to establish how “despite of being the occupant of the major proportion of the total geographical space” the Hill Tribes of Manipur are subjected to decades of exploitation and oppression by the dominant Meitei communities which has resulted in acute identity crisis. But the author has her reservations about supporting the demand for statehood and emphasizes the need for

“consolidating a space called India which would be proficient in accommodating an assortment of diverse identities”.

Lopamudra Majumdar focuses on the fact that globalization has resulted in shrinkage of geo-political spaces. It has created not only a ‘global market’ but also a ‘global culture’. Globalisation has transgressed “the borders of honourable identity, dignity and autonomy of the people and the nation states, that are on the periphery of the global order”. But the author insists upon the need to preserve and protect one’s own cultural space against the dominance of the global society.

We are happy to include three articles contributed by our students. Paramita Dutta explores the blending of spaces in Tagore’s *The Home and the World*. Barnana Sarkar examines the validity of Wordsworth’s Philosophy of Nature in the present age. Srijita Basak re-explores Milton’s *Paradise Lost* as a reader of a changed time and space. The fresh and youthful views of these papers add to the richness of the volume.

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