

## *Editorial*

In this postmodern world, the universe, the world, society and individual life is in a state of flux; more so in the cerebral sphere where every minute ideas are built and the next minute new ideas mushroom to contest, and often defeat, what has just been theorized. Like a child confounded and yet mesmerized by the sound of the ocean inside a sea shell, contemporary researchers are enchanted by the postmodern condition- that of perpetual uncertainty- when they throw themselves, some wholeheartedly, and some tentatively, into critical intellectual engagements. It is interesting to note how the postmodern condition is like a hologram sticker where on one side we see a divergence of thousands of ideas from a core point, scattering and splitting into heights of specialization with a centripetal force that throws them into the open space. On the other hand, an opposite turn of the sticker reveals all these quarks of specializations converging towards a centre with a centrifugal force that dissolves the boundaries of disciplines and discourses into grey areas. Here, the dichotomy between schools of thought becomes blurred, and all knowledge is relational. Such is the paradox of post modernity.

In a scenario where 'superstars' of the academic world posit theories that would change not just "the way you think about everything, but everything about the way you think" (A reference to Derrida in a documentary, *Derrida: The Movie*), the contemporary researcher is apparently captivated by themes of ghosts, mysteries, magic, science fiction, time travel, animation movies, movie series like Harry porter and Lord of the Rings, alternate realities like The Matrix, multiverse, and so on.

The 1970s ushered in the beginning of an academic activity that questioned traditional scholars and critics because of its forays into fields which had earlier seemed quite remote from each other. For instance, literary studies which had hitherto been familiar with feminist or post-colonial reading had undertaken activities quite remote from anthropology, linguistics, sociology, economics and philosophy. However, the interrelations between them have been revised and have led to the production of an intimidating interdisciplinarity for upcoming scholars.

Concepts like multidisciplinary, intersectionality, intertextuality, multiculturalism, cross-cultural, are thrown around the lawns of academia. Having said this, the crux of the matter is that everything is subject to change. Academia too evolves. However, an academician is better equipped for having a sense of history as posited by T.S.Eliot in his famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent". To further expand this idea, creativity and originality is a product of canons that have been established down the ages.

In the sphere of literature, the primary concern of the researcher has evolved from contextual critical analysis of texts, where authorial intent, readers' response and practical criticism came into play, moving on to the notion that reality is a construct; language is a construct and literature is studied from the point of view of structuralists, poststructuralists and deconstructionists.

In the sphere of science too, research has moved on from physics to phenomenology. Understanding the world through laws of cause and effect no longer holds water. There is a shift from positivism to post positivism, likewise modernism to postmodernism. What we have today in the arena of research is critical realism. Opposed to subjectivism, a critical realist recognises that there are alternate/ multiple realities, all knowledge is fallible and there are multiple knowledge systems that strive to reveal the truth about this world but this truth is always elusive. Another concern of the modern day researcher is that all knowledge systems are theory-laden and theorists, scientists are influenced by cultural, social, psychological, environmental experiences.

Yet why do we still study, Plato, Aristotle, *et al.*? It is true that ideas too have 'survival value' and that knowledge undergoes variation, selection and retention. Trochim calls this process the 'Natural Selection Theory of Knowledge'. Therefore, the true worth of research is evaluated through this 'fire ritual' whereby in the course of time it still shines like gold.

Once again this Issue V (2014-2015) of the Fazl Ali College Journal presents the reader with such endeavours in the field of research. With all the modern concerns, it has now fallen on the researcher and reviewer alike to focus on the uplift of the standard of academia in general and journals in particular. Knowing too well the pressures put upon academicians for their career enhancements, researchers are now more committed to getting their works published. A sweeping perusal of the articles reveal that while some authors are professionals in their area of academic research, some are still new to research activity. For this reason, the present issue consists of an assorted collection of papers that are either light or heavy. One of the key purposes of this Journal is to provide an unintimidating platform to beginners of research to articulate their academic engagements and concerns. Hence, to have attempted to understand the wonders of Nature and to have contributed one's share in illuminating the world is laudable. Congratulations to all who have made the effort. And special thanks to the referees whose invaluable insights and suggestions have been incorporated in the articles and whose expertise have contributed immensely to the quality of this Journal.