

Editor's Note

It is with great pleasure that we present this issue of the NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry, which brings together a diverse collection of original research reflecting the dynamism and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary scholarship. The contributions featured in this issue 1, of volume 24, engage with pressing theoretical, intellectual, cultural, and social questions, demonstrating the continued relevance of rigorous academic inquiry in addressing the complexities of our rapidly evolving world.

The articles in this issue span a broad spectrum of themes, methodologies, and critical perspectives. Collectively, they explore the intersections of literature, language, culture, history, philosophy, and society, offering fresh insights into both established and emerging areas of research. The first article by Boaventura de Sousa Santos opens the debate about new political, economic, cultural, social, and epistemic tools. His article offers a paradigmatic shift of seminal importance to understand the need of a plurality of non-western-centric modernities in a pervasive climate of western-centric modernity. Presenting different modes of epistemologies of the South, the article cites their thrust to improving the present living conditions of the exploited and the dispossessed populations who are facing discrimination. The articles most interesting debate hinges on a revival of a three-centuries delayed conversation to safeguard the imminent ecological collapse.

*Reading through Tania James's *The Tusk that Did the Damage*, the second article by Kalsoom Khalid and Sofia Hussain presents a case study about animal exploitation and delves into the plight of the poached animals from an ecofeminist perspective. Using Shiva's theoretical insight of 'maldevelopment' as one of the lenses, the article charts out various forms of animal trafficking and its impact on the natural environment, a phenomenon disrupting the ecosystems of some parts of the Global South for late capitalist patriarchal interests. Tahreem Soomro and Yun Gong's paper explores selected short stories from Mo Yan's 2001 work, *Shifu, You'll Do Anything for a Laugh*, to critically examine governance, survival, death, and the instability of human subjectivity in post-socialist China. The paper is an in-depth inquiry into how power operates, not only, through life, but also how death is instrumentalized. While the article 'Born Free' questions the modes of non-human subjectivities, 'Governing Life' foregrounds the importance of studying the human subjectivity as mutable under conditions of extreme deprivation, war-time trauma, and inadequate moral framework due to economic pressures.*

*Using a sociolinguistics and feminist theoretical perspectives and research models of AntConc 4.3.0 (Anthony, 2024) and Lutz's (2016) doublespeak framework, the next article of Tariq Mehmood et al examines how linguistic manipulation obscures gendered victimization and oppression in the novel, *A Pathan Daughter* (2024). Rooted in the interdisciplinary research on language, power, and literature, the paper navigates through the dialogues of different characters and studies, through*

empirical data, the different modes of doublespeak. Amina Razaq's article examines how cultural pressure play out to shape individual identity through the concepts of Jungian persona and shadow, which consequently, hinders the process of individuation in this postmodern age. The paper explores how digital persona results in either a chronic psychological stagnation or a psychological burden.

While each contribution addresses a distinct subject, together they underscore the value of critical engagement, theoretical innovation, and methodological diversity in advancing scholarly discourse.

As editors, we remain committed to fostering an inclusive academic platform that encourages dialogue across disciplines and intellectual traditions. We particularly value research that not only deepens disciplinary knowledge but also bridges geographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries

We hope that the articles presented here will stimulate further research, inspire critical reflection, and encourage productive scholarly conversations across disciplines. We invite our readers to engage with these contributions thoughtfully and to continue advancing the spirit of inquiry that lies at the heart of academic endeavor.

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