

EDITORIAL

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One of the most fundamental objects of reflection in the modern Western philosophy, the rational Subject, continues to be an inscrutable problem. Descartes's seeking of the Subject as the first principle of philosophy to situate certitude within rational Subject paradoxically finds the Subject itself as an immaterial, thinking substance which sets its agenda for next couple of centuries. Since then a range of exhaustive debates have spawned across many disciplines—present Issue included—with their focus on the Cartesian mapping of the Subject aimed at defining, containing, and rediscovering it.

The Cartesian overcoming of doubt to produce an autonomous, self-conscious Subject—outside of space, time, history, and corporeality—has witnessed radical challenges from within the Western philosophical discourse, spelt out by Paul Ricoeur in “Hermeneutics of Suspicion,” through Marx, Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. Their reflections periodically shifted the focus of philosophical discourse back upon Subject and unearthed the unfrequented structures of conditions that have gone into the making of human subjectivity. Critiques of Subject by these thinkers also cleared the ground for subsequent enquiries of thinkers like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Lacan, etc., who engaged anew with the reformulations of the slippery binary of subject and object. It also paved way to Ricoeur's multiple strategies of reading and understanding the narratives of the Subject, laying bare the inner tensions that divide and unsettle its apparently consistent and coherent accounts. The project of modernity, inevitably a project of understanding the configurations of human Subject as its basis, thereafter generates a thematic of human subjectivity running through modern philosophy, literature, science, and social sciences in a fundamental way.

The narratives of rational ground of Subject and human subjectivity fork into two where one strand of theoretical encounters drift towards a preoccupation with the Subject's experiences of the threshold drawing towards an unconditional erasure bearing upon human finitude—from Kantian system's confrontation with the ‘sublime’ to Freud's encounter with the ‘uncanny.’ These accounts of Subject's fragility, bordering on its erasure, have with time established a normative trajectory that has forged itself into the rational foundation of Western philosophy. These theoretical encounters are balanced against contrary efforts to embody the immaterial rational Subject into an embodied one where, despite prophetic claims of its erasure, rational Subject not only

thrives but regulates still new ways of philosophizing about the constitution of Subject with relation to communities, classes, and cultures.

This dual trajectory of thought forms the terrain of Subject explored by the invited scholars who have teased out its various dimensions in their essays. In the themed section, Donato Loia's paper entitled "On the Vaporization and Centralization of the self: The Notion of the Subject in Modern Western Discourse" presents the dialectical tension between the contesting theories over the erasure and preservation of the Subject. A simultaneous discourse also discusses the representation of both the aspects within the visual medium. Studying the matrix of absence and presence, Dong Xia's paper entitled "Negotiating Subjectivity and Body: Access to E-pistolary Corporeality" carefully engages with new ways in which digital media constitute subjectivity as ushered in by the internet era. It provides a space for recontextualizing narrative in digital format that results in constant remaking of all the engaged aspects. Dealing with the issue of multiple identities, Paul Martorelli's paper "Identity and Difference: Understanding Subjectivity through Wittgenstein's Family Resemblances" contextualizes the perspectives on identity formation by questioning the notion of a 'particular identity' which resists containment in any category, especially in the case of a homosexual subject who is argued as a product of shared as well as exclusive orientations. All the papers in this section question the very attempt of constituting the Subject in closed brackets of identity by highlighting the nature of the Subject as fundamentally open-ended. The 'Subject' in these papers is attributed with a certain fluidity rather than limited to being a precipitate of social and cultural collectivity.

In the Special Submissions section, Rawad Alhashmi's paper "Image and Truth: Paradigms of Modern Translation Theory" develops a nuanced comparative reading of Ezra Pound's and Walter Benjamin's theory and practice of translation. The contrasting theories on fidelity and creation of an autonomous piece of art shapes their respective take on the role of the translator. Pooja Sancheti's paper entitled "Written and Overwritten: Investigating Metafictional Strategies in Janet Frame's *The Carpathians*" deals with metafictional technique in post-modern fiction which lends various authorial levels to the text. It studies the implications of the same on structure and interpretation of the text when the authorial control, as the anchor of the text, is put in tension with layers of narrative voice.

This is LLIDS's second collaboration with the Oceanvale Workshop organized by Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi. Conceived under the theme 'Exploring Subjectivity: Mind, Body, and Action,' the papers in the Oceanvale section are connected with the thematic thread

of discussion on 'subjectivity.' The Subject is both the agent and receiver of experience, and the multidimensional understanding of the notion of the Subject poses a challenge to the idea of a 'unified' subjectivity. This collective attempt at engaging with subjectivity is reflected in each paper of the workshop. Within this section, Ananta Ahuja's paper "Image, Language, and Subjectivity in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*" discusses the Beckettian subject, constructed through language and image. Patterns of continuity out of the moments in time configure and reconfigure the subjectivity of the evasive Subject. Nikita Pinto's paper "'There's a Special Kind of Monster that is a Woman': Locating Female Subjectivity in the Narrative of the Monstrous Murderess in Netflix's *Alias Grace*" explores the cultural conceptions of female subjectivity. Transgressive women overturning the narratives of repression through agentive action forms the focal point of the study. The paper concerns itself with the existence of internally liberated women who pose an eternal threat to the narrow confinements of the social and moral order. Siddhanta Datta's paper "Shame and Failure of Recognition in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*" is an enquiry on shame as an internalized emotion that disrupts the neocolonial project. It investigates the problem of identification within a culture that results in a sense of social fragmentation but can potentially lead to a sense of selfhood by creating a reflective Subject. Anoushka's paper entitled "Resistance as Embodied Experience: A study of Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" and "Behind the Bodice"" studies the idea of subjectivity as experienced through the 'body' which functions as the site of both oppression and resistance to the dominant socio-political power structures. It concentrates on the figure of female subaltern in both the works as victim as well as transcendent of the oppression induced by such power structures. Suchandra Bose's paper entitled "Exploring the Anxiety of Action in *Call Me by Your Name*" studies the idea of subjectivity as instated through the body and how it is derived and projected through the subjective meaning in language. The paper attempts to study the physical and emotional space of queer desire, and the anxiety it creates in the Subject when strained against the limits imposed by social and cultural milieu, amidst the fear of being relegated as the 'other.' The Oceanvale section offers different perspectives on subjectivity taking up varied points of access such as sexuality, social restrictions, cultural connotations, etc. The thematic concern of this entire Issue is the exploration of the conditions of thinking about the 'Subject.' The idea behind the multitudinous dimensions of locating subjectivity engendered through alternate discourses is to foreground 'suspicion' towards unitary subjecthood.

This Issue marks the beginning of the Third Volume of LLIDS which will be exploring similar themes to sincerely attempt a contribution to

the prevalent discourse on Subject and the conditions and implications of its effacement. We owe gratitude to the Oceanvale team, its director, Dr. Sunjay Sharma, mentors: Dr. Baidik Bhattacharya, Professor Udaya Kumar, Professor V. Sanil, and scholars for their continued collaboration and tireless efforts towards publishing rigorous research papers. We wish all the readers an enriching reading experience.