



EDITORIAL

Dear *JALDA* reader,

Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature in the sense that we would like to use them should result in academic activities that are social in their orientation. Academics are not isolated individuals equipped with scientific tools and working within laboratory like situations. Their close encounter with the real world situations is a fundamental necessity. Reading theories and literary texts in the library is not undertaken for the sake of creating mentalities to judge what lies outside our reading and library. There should, instead, be an interactional process between what we read and what we experience in the world out there that seems to be unruly and messy in nature. This attitude seems to have consequences for us in our academic behaviour. One of them, for instance, should be our attempts to look for non-traditional forms and formations of research and practice. Employing mere quantitative research methods, what we have inherited in the name of ‘science’ from the past, we may end up in failures. ‘Science’ is no longer a sacred institution whose colossal columns are untouchable, especially for us in developing countries that seem to be lagging behind the fast moving states and institutions forming categories of insiders and outsiders for themselves, for instance. There have been so many glossy theories of language and literature that are regarded either as totally obsolete or impractical for many reasons today.

‘To be in the world’ demands prolific readers. The phrase should not imply at all that the act of ‘reading’ is obsolete. On the contrary, reading theories and texts should happen in abundance but without their mythologization; we have a herculean task of knowing what others have to say, but we should beware of being quixotic. Language, as it is stated by philosophers, has the power to cut the world into categories and present them to us as reality, while they are little more than useful fictions. But language itself is a reality in itself amidst the massive reality of the world out there and absorption in it can lead to Quixote like characters. Therefore, a balance, so to speak, should be established between ‘reading’ and the observation of the world. Any kind of ‘alienation’ should be avoided. And for this, we should find the proper methods.

We have learned in the academic context that methods come under the last fancy word in the hierarchy of ontology, epistemology and methodology. It is the preceding fancy word that determines the nature of the following fancy word. Then if, according to our ontology, there *is* a real world out there that is important to us, our methods should be the appropriate ones to lead us to a better understanding of that world. Many methods would be unimaginable on our way to our goal, the real world. One of them is suggested in this edition of our journal: the introduction of an association entitled the Iranian Association of Applied Linguistics and Applied

Literature to the academic scene in Iran. The justification for such an association lies in our ontological orientation: the real world is our priority. The Association can be a means to bring the researchers together so that they can share their findings and experiences in an existentialist sense with one another. Is there a need for it? Publishing scientific articles in journals should suffice, one might say. One of the cultural characteristics usually attributed to us Iranians is that we are not so successful in team work. If it is true, which, I think, is, something should be done in this regard. Scholars and researchers brought together can learn gradually how to communicate to and work with one another. Another advantage of the Association can be its role in bringing us to better understanding of the researched at least within the geographical and cultural framework of the land of Iranians. Do I really know how language might be learned by language learners in, say, Sistan and Baluchestan, Kurdistan, Bushehr and Kerman provinces? Do we know how they read and understand literature? Do we really have an understanding of one another? Or are we so absorbed in theories, texts and virtual ‘realities’ that we have no sense of ‘reality’ anymore? Such an attitude may lead us to come into direct encounter with the world so that we can have a better understanding of it and take longer steps to solve problems.

Both language learning and studying literature can be used as opportunities to come into direct contact with the complexities of the real world to find tangible solutions to our problems, but they can be approached in a way that the language learner and the reader may lose sight of the ‘right’ path in the world. Our intention is moving in the former direction.

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