



## EDITORIAL

Dear *JALDA* reader,

*The Earth, 2045. One year has passed since a deadly virus named COVID-44 invaded our planet. Millions of people have been affected, thousands have died and hundreds die every day. Heroic members of societies are struggling to fight the demonic enemy to save mankind from extinction.* Such a statement would be possibly read as the synopsis of a science-fiction novel that imaginatively foresees a rather dark future for mankind with glimpses of hope resulting from some heroic acts.

The genre usually revolves around the imaginative concepts of advanced science and technology in the hands of those whose follies, misunderstandings or miscalculations lead to fatal threats to the planet Earth and humanity by aliens or known elements turned unknown. The expectation is that more heroic individuals in love with humanity and the Earth would challenge the strangers to save the planet and its people.

Reading literature can be regarded as an outstanding realization of interpretation. Interpretation, in the sense of making sense of observations and of reaching the underlying meanings, is an essential human behaviour. People of different cultures and in different contexts would attribute different meanings to the phenomena they are involved with. Reactions to female drivers may differ from culture to culture as colours have different implications for people of different cultures. Accordingly, there are numerous stories of Covid-19 by people from different walks of society. Some of them seem to be the reflections of the darkest imaginations of a sci-fi novelist who writes for political purposes. There is a rumour in town that Covid-19 is a laboratory-made virus, the outcome of a consensus among the most powerful, to reduce the “overflowing” number of the world population. There are certainly many doubts about the truth-value of such a story, but an important point it might imply is the concept that we have started to account for our everyday life experiences from a science-fiction perspective. We have started to detect elements in our lives that tend to look like the conspiracies and/or miscalculations depicted in science-fiction works that have put humanity and the Earth in jeopardy. The Western literature and movie industry have numerous realizations of such concepts in appropriate generic forms and they sound indispensable part of life perhaps due to the fact that life on the Earth is now and more than ever intermingled with science. Life bereft of science is unimaginable now for our race. But the very popularity of sci-fi works reveals the concerns we have with scientific achievements and with our place in a very complicated world and our relations to it. The sci-fi genre has provided a fascinating ground to explore humanity identity in a world that does not lie far in the future anymore; it’s a world right here and now with elements from our lives! *The Matrix* (1999), the movie, is a depiction of how the real world can be taken over by the

virtual world we have created. It is a world affecting our lives and deaths. Sci-fi works tend to reveal to us that we no longer live in a real world that might be threatened by science-fiction elements lying in the future. There seems to be no future anymore in the Western sense of time; there is no distinction between present and future. The present life is under the impact of “future” and the futuristic elements. What matters then is right here and now and the threats overhead resulting from science and technology and the faulty attitude towards them that leaves no room to the distinction between the real world and the virtual world. We have come to the understanding that our inventions from language, the very ancient invention, to literacy as the technologization of language to science to the digital World Wide Web all create virtual worlds along and over the real world that existed millions of years before the emergence of man. What we might need, some would say, is to attempt to return to the real world. All our education, including language and literary studies, should be real-world-oriented in the sense that we might try to get to know the world existentially without inflicting any harm on it. So “Is there anybody out there” to help?

*JALDA* has been officially recognized as a Scientific Grade B Journal by Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology recently. A main interest of the Journal lies in the contextualized sense of science; the studies should take place in real world contexts and they should be intended to help solve everyday problems. The fields of applied linguistics and applied literature create the scope of the Journal for the purpose of coming into close encounter with the problems researchers may experience in their everyday lives both within and without school; they are encouraged to use their expertise, even in an interdisciplinary mode, to tackle issues that hinder their subjects and people on their way to success and improvement. From such a perspective, the decontextualized selection and reading of a literary text, for instance, may not be regarded as fruitful. There are stories by both teachers and researchers about how the “literary taste” of students at rural areas of our country differ radically from the taste of those from urbanized areas. Should the students be introduced to the same material in their English language and literature courses? *JALDA* prefers to consider the diversity in the world and it intends to publish the findings that help show how new ways are sought for tackling the issues in the fields. This results from a sense of protecting the world and its diversity we experience in our everyday lives while, thanks to access to the technology, complicated (conspiracy) theories spread faster than any biological virus could to keep us far from one another and from the real world.

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