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Studies



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*Essence & Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies* is an open access, peer-reviewed, academic e-journal aiming to publish original and international research articles that bring solutions to issues and examines scientific issues and problems in all subfields of literatures, theatre, drama and performance studies, and cultural studies. Each submitted article is evaluated by at least two referees of the field expert and the final result is reported to the authors within three months. The journal is published twice a year in June and December.

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## Table of Contents

ÖNDER ÇAKIRTAŞ

Editor's Note \_\_\_\_\_ II

PAUL INNES

Introduction \_\_\_\_\_ III

### RESEARCH ARTICLES \_\_\_\_\_

ERIC STERLING

Racial Discrimination, Exploitation, and Singing the Blues in August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* \_\_\_\_\_ I

JAY MALARCHER

The Metaphysics of Pronoun Confusion in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* \_\_\_\_\_ 17

ASHLEY LIZA FERNANDO

Violence as Resistance in N.K. Jemisin's *Broken Earth* Trilogy \_\_\_\_\_ 32

J. CHRISTOPHER O'BRIEN

Breaking the Cycle: The Forgiving Blues in August Wilson's *King Hedley II* \_\_\_\_\_ 52

NEHA SOMAN & BALASUBRAMANIAM PADMANABHAN

Limits to the Self: Revisiting the Jewish Wandering Syndrome in Eshkol Nevo's *Neuland* \_\_\_\_\_ 69

ELVAN KARAMAN

Class Conflict with its Causes & Effects in *The Kitchen* by Arnold Wesker \_\_\_\_\_ 87

PHILLIP ZAPKIN

Performing Democratic Protest: Gary Owen's *Iphigenia in Splott* and David Greig's *The Suppliant Women* \_\_\_\_\_ 110

EVA OPPERMAN

Travelogues as Memorized Experiences: From Boswell to Boorman/McGregor \_\_\_\_\_ 129

AYUSMAN CHAKRABORTY

*Awkward one-armed babas: Ūrdhvaḅāhu* Hindu Ascetics in Western Imagination \_\_\_\_\_ 150

### BOOK REVIEWS \_\_\_\_\_

MARIETTA KOSMA

*Sensory experiments; Psychophysics, Race, and the Aesthetics of feeling*, by Erica Fretwell. \_\_\_\_\_ 170

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Welcome to the Inaugural Issue

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**Dr. Önder Çakırtaş**  
Founding Editor-in-Chief

On behalf of our authors, reviewers, editorial board, and editorial team– I warmly welcome you to the inaugural issue of *Essence & Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies*.

I am proud to present the first issue of *Essence & Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies*. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the editorial board and the refereeing committee, especially the issue writers, for their help in delivering the first issue of this journal. I am equally grateful for the many authors who offered candidate contributions to this first issue – and for the many more colleagues around the globe who consistently provided critical but supportive reviews. Many of these reviewers were drawn from our Editorial Board, whose broader support has likewise been essential.

*Essence & Critique*, like many scientific and academic journals that have pioneered literature and drama studies, aims to host self-sacrificing and qualified works that have not had the chance to be published but must be delivered to readers and literature/drama experts. Each work that is filtered from the theoretical and practical knowledge of the authors and passed through the filter of field expert referees and editors will be included in the scope of this journal, which aims to close a gap in the world of literature and drama studies. I wish *Essence & Critique* to be beneficial to the academic world, and I wish it to guide our dear readers, field experts, professionals, undergraduate and graduate students in literature, cultural studies and the arts of stage, performance, theatre and drama.

Last, but certainly not least, my profound thanks go to our associate editor, Professor Paul Innes, for promoting the first issue. We welcome new writers to join us with their groundbreaking academic studies on literature, cultural studies along with performance, theatre and drama studies.



## Introduction

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\* **Prof. Paul Innes**  
Associate Editor

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Essence & Critique*, a journal of Literature and Drama Studies. The appearance of a new journal should be celebrated, especially in the difficult and challenging circumstances that constantly seem to be arising at this cultural moment. The title of the journal gestures towards a felt necessity for interdisciplinary engagement and we wish to provide a place for work on any aspect of literary and/or dramatic study.

It is difficult to overestimate the continuing importance of interdisciplinary work, not just in generic terms but also as a productive site of cross-disciplinary practice within the area conventionally as critical theory - as if that is somehow separate from creative production. We therefore invite critically aware articles, especially those that challenge existing preconceptions. A prime consideration for the journal is constantly to move beyond what could be called the Anglosphere in cultural and critical enquiry.

As you will see from the articles in this premier issue, the range of material is extraordinary. We find that the negotiation of identity remains fraught, especially in the relationship between the Israeli context and its long prehistory of Jewish wandering in Eshkol Neva's *Neuland* – a timely intervention in the current debates about identity politics which Neha Soman and Balasubramaniam Padmanabhan underline in their article. Such enquiry is addressed directly in the literature of travel itself with Eva Opperman's article, as she moves from Boswell to Boorman and McGregor. This often-overlooked genre foregrounds the difficult question of the status of the observing figure, something that surely must be a major concern for any theorised position. To some extent Ayusman Chakraborty reverses the polarity by examining the Western cultural reception of Hindu *ūrdhva* ascetics, asking suggestive and apposite questions about a process of cultural exchange that never seems to be neutral.



## Introduction

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The writing set in Britain inevitably includes an emphasis on class politics within an overarching context of exploitation, as Elvan Karaman gives us a timely reminder of the continuing importance of British political drama with a focus on Arnold Wesker's *The Kitchen*. We see a productive relationship between Greek drama and contemporary British cultural politics in Philip Zapkin's article about the performance of democratic protest. Here, the multi-cultural and/or post-colonial considerations that lie behind the productive recreation of classic texts are shown to inflect the politics of gendered positions.

Christopher O'Brien further extends our geographical range by providing a welcome investigation of the resonances of inner-city African American life, in August Wilson's *King Hedley II*. O'Brien here draws attention to the conflicted terrain of class and postcolonial structures of power. Eric Sterling does something similar with another of August Wilson's works, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* as he interrogates what we now call by that anodyne phrase 'white privilege', as if giving a mediocre name to something so fundamental is adequate to the reality. Within the American context, Jay Malarcher's article on the linguistic interplay that lies behind the paradoxical conception of the American Dream takes on the iconic importance of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Intriguingly, this issue also breaks boundaries with an example of writing about speculative fiction as Ashley Fernando analyses the representations of power in N.K. Jemisin's *Broken Earth Trilogy*. Not only does this recall the old adage that provocative science fiction is really about our own societies, it also helps to redress the old critical imbalance that relegated genre fiction to the sidelines, an operation of the kind of marginalisation this journal seeks to address directly.

In this journal we seek to address crucial areas of liminal practice – not understood as a relatively marginalised position, but instead as open to multiplicity and plurality.