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RE-MARKINGS

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Re-Markings, a biannual journal of English Letters aims at providing a healthy forum for scholarly and authoritative views on broad socio-political and cultural issues of human import as evidenced in literature, art, television, cinema and journalism with special emphasis on New Literatures in English including translations and creative excursions

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EDITORIAL

Caught in the whirlpool of monotonous routine, it is perhaps quite natural for the average man or woman to seek relief and respite in a dramatised world of transformed reality. Eliot was not far from the truth when he stated in "Burnt Norton" – though in a different context – "Humankind cannot bear very much reality." If amazing spectacles of gladiatorial combats and *venations* entertained and delighted spectators in the colosseums and amphitheaters of the civilized Roman Empire centuries ago, we in the twenty-first century have at our disposal the irresistible idiot box that doles out 24x7 encapsulated versions of fictionalized reality right inside our own habitats. As a matter of fact, Reality Television has contributed to our preoccupation with the lives of others to such an extent that we have little time to ponder over our own. Most of us might remember the Jade Goody-Shilpa Shetty face off on *Celebrity Big Brother* where Jade Goody hurled racist comments at Shilpa Shetty, an event that gave an imminent thrust to our patriotic fervour and brought millions of us together to condemn the racist affront with an enthusiasm that could only be matched perhaps by an earlier generation's spirited response to Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India movement.

Whether it is *Big Brother*, *Big Boss*, *KBC*, *Indian Idol* or *Chak Dhoom Dhoom* and the like, come primetime and we sit glued to our TV screens, mesmerised by the spectacle of illusions, cleverly simulated and stage-managed by considerations that are inherently commercial. Lured by the glitter and glamour of dramatised pageants, we remain captivated and hooked by the drama that unfolds on the screen quite unmindful of other pressing realities around us. According to David Shields, author of *Reality Hunger*, "The success of the genre reflects our lust for emotional meaning. We really do want to feel, even if that means indulging in someone else's joy or woe. We have a thirst for reality (other people's reality, edited) even as we suffer a surfeit of reality (our own – boring/painful)."

It is intriguing to see how, while the "reality" shows go on, millions of votes cast through SMS conveyor belts are transformed, with the speed of light, into unimaginable profits for the TV channels. It is common knowledge how *KBC* (Star Plus) and *Indian Idol* (Sony) have made history in terms of people's participation and generation of revenue. One may indeed be startled by the fact that in the year 2008, more votes were cast for *American Idol* than for Barack Obama for

President: 97 million for *American Idol* and, on Election Day, 70 million for Obama. Such is the power of glamorised illusions!

In sharp contrast to such a simulated world, it is gratifying indeed that we, lovers of literature, continue to believe that fancy, the deceiving elf, cannot cheat so well as to take us away to bask in the glorious sunshine of “faery lands forlorn.” Even a cursory glance at the contents of the current issue of *Re-Markings* reveals the interface of beauty and truth that characterises great works of art wherein we get the opportunity to reflect upon the quintessence of life.

If Lori Langer’s story in this volume tells us about the impermanence of life and the unreliability of desires, it also succeeds in making us aware of the significance of “touch and affection” in our lives. Similarly, we feel no less elevated to see spirited individuals, located on the margins of human society, wage relentless battles to contend with the dilemmas of democracies in terms of race, caste, gender or class. While the protagonists of Shashi Deshpande attempt to negotiate the trajectories of silence in their respective domestic fronts, we can see Hawthorne creating an exquisitely beautiful landscape with words and colours. We may be ridden by agony and anxiety to see Emperor Jahangir’s paradise on earth torn by terrorism, violence and conflict, but we do feel redeemed by the melodious renderings of Aga Shahid Ali’s ghazals that sing of the beauty, joy and peace that Kashmir once stood for. Likewise, the exclusive interview with Prof. Pirzada Qasim and other intellectual delicacies from the realm of lived experiences should decisively entertain and enrich our sensibilities.

Before closing this editorial note, I deem it a pleasure to warmly welcome the members of the *Re-Markings* fraternity to our new location in cyberspace: www.re-markings.com, an address that corresponds to the name of the journal. I deeply appreciate the proactive role of our Executive Editor, Mr. Sundeep Arora, not only in making this feat possible but also in providing constant updates on the aesthetic website. I also stand beholden to our contributors who have been displaying remarkable patience in waiting to see their scholarly imprints in *Re-Markings*.

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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SHORT STORY

THE WEEK I WAS RADIOACTIVE

Lori Langer de Ramirez

It started innocently enough – some hair falling out, some muscle weakness, and mild dizzy spells. I thought that these symptoms might have something to do with carrying around my chubby five month-old son. Caring for a baby, especially one's first, can be a stressful and exhausting task. Carrying an eighteen-pound ball of flesh around might just make one's muscles ache. I read that one's hair – full and luxurious during the pregnancy – tends to fall out once the mother stops breastfeeding. However, as the weeks went on and the symptoms got worse, I decided to consult my general practitioner.

"Hmmm," he said, "it sounds like thyroid trouble. I'll run some tests." I winced as he drew a few vials of blood and agreed to call him back the following week for results.

Back at home, my baby was ready for fun. He grabbed and pulled everything in sight. He started sitting up, rolling around and, to my dismay, climbing off the bed where, until now, I was able to leave him for a few much needed moments of rest. I had been spending marathon days caring for him at home. I was on maternity leave from my teaching job and was happy to be spending the time with baby, but the sleepless nights and daytime vigils were taking their toll. I secretly yearned for school – for the books and attendance sheets, the morning coffee, the contact with other adults and especially the thought of free periods. At home I had no free time and I was beginning to feel a bit resentful, and guilty for those feelings.

At the time, I was suffering from the intensity of the task of caring for a child and suffering even further from self-inflicted guilt about those negative feelings. I later discovered that this sort of thing is quite common in new mothers. Despite all I had learned from Buddhist teachings, I was unable to stop judging my feelings and punishing myself for them. I saw myself as a failed mother for having these issues with motherhood. I almost felt as if my aches and pains might be some sort of karmic punishment for my lack of maternal instinct. I called the doctor the following week to inquire about the results.

"You seem to have an autonomous thyroid, he reported. "I'm sending you to an endocrinologist." Autonomous? That sounded like a positive thing to me. Isn't it good to be autonomous? Self-sufficient? I asked

myself. Apparently not when it comes to one's thyroid. I made an appointment with the new doctor for the end of the week.

This new doctor examined my neck and took more blood. He explained that he might need to send me for more tests. The next test would involve taking a radioactive iodine pill that would highlight my thyroid and allow a technician to take some special photos.

"Once you take the pill," the doctor warned, "just don't spit on your baby." I thought that it was a funny thing to say. I assured the doctor that I wasn't accustomed to spitting on the baby and went to the nurse for the referral.

In between doctor appointments, I continued to stay home and care for the baby. While it was a mostly joyful experience, I was still feeling tired and sometimes trapped. I ached for some free time, just to surf the web, take a bath, or – dare I wish it? – meditate. I hadn't been able to return to my meditation practice since the baby was born – and it showed. I was feeling cranky, impatient and even a little depressed.

The afternoon I went to take the radioactive iodine pill I kissed my baby goodbye and left him in his father's capable hands. I was secretly ecstatic about leaving the house, albeit to go to a lab appointment. I felt as if I was being set free. When I got to the lab, a technician escorted me into an office and directed me to a chair in one corner of the room. He put on a glove and, standing behind a protective shield, he gingerly removed one capsule from a lead-lined jar and dropped it into my hand. I began to panic.

"Is this pill harmful at all?," I asked nervously. "I have a baby at home."

"Nah," the technician replied, not too convincingly. "I wouldn't kiss your baby tonight, though. And you might not want to get too close for a while." Despite great trepidation, I took the pill. The doctor would never steer me wrong... right?

When I got home, I didn't touch baby at all. In fact, I stayed away all night and slept in another bed. My husband was now responsible for all of the baby's needs. Even if I wanted to care for the baby, my fear of somehow transferring any amount of radiation – however small – kept me away. This new arrangement freed me for the night. Suddenly my wish for free time had come true. I read my email, took a long bath, and read a magazine. It was everything I had been missing – and it was heavenly! I began to remember what life had been like just only

five months before. I secretly wished that my temporary exile would last for just a little bit longer.

The next morning, I woke up later than I had in months. Despite the much-needed relaxation, I began to wonder just how long I should stay away from baby. I called the lab to double-check. When I explained my situation and the test I had had, the doctor on call at the lab blithely stated "Well, I figure a week to ten days. Then you should be OK."

I hung up in a panic. Ten days without touching my baby? It was my last two weeks of maternity leave before returning to school. I was going to miss the bulk of this precious time with my son. Suddenly all of my wishes for free time felt selfish. "Be careful what you wish for..." the saying goes. In this case, the wisdom of this statement was clear. I had wished for personal time – and got it. I was beside myself with anguish. I decided to call the endocrinologist for more information.

"Yes, well..." the nurse said nervously. "Calm down. Let me ask the doctor just how long you should avoid contact." While I was on hold listening to music that was meant to soothe the caller as she waited, I was growing more and more frantic. "I miss my baby, I miss my baby, I miss my baby," I repeated over and over as if some sort of mantra. I began to sob. The nurse finally picked up the phone, releasing me from my musak-filled hell and said, in a relieved tone, "I have good news. Ten days is way too long. If you want to be very safe, five days is more than enough." Good news? Five days? I hung up the phone in a state of deep sadness and mourning. I wanted free time. I got it.

My husband and I decided to make it seven days, rather than five, of no contact. As new parents, we wanted to be extra safe. We couldn't bear the thought of anything happening to the baby. After researching radioactive iodine on the web and talking to several doctors, we decided that I would sleep in another room, eat from separate plates and refrain from contact with both my son and husband. I wanted to be safe and not touch either one of them, but I quickly began to feel like the lepers of the Buddha's times. I couldn't believe how much I missed the touch of a human hand, a brief hug in the morning, or the feeling of my son's small hand wrapped around my index finger.

During the week I was radioactive, I learned a great deal about the impermanence of life and the unreliability of desires. When I left my home the day I ingested the iodine pill, I kissed both husband and son with a certain impatience. It never occurred to me that it might be the last kiss for a while. I was under the erroneous impression that my life

was predictable and that it followed set rules. I was used to being affectionate with baby and my husband and had grown accustomed to that physical contact. It was only after it was taken away from me with no warning that I realized the importance of touch and affection in my life.

I also learned a lot of about my tendency to wish away difficult or troublesome times and the desire to extend the happy times. I noticed how I am drawn towards all that I find beautiful, delicious and pleasant while trying to limit my contact with things that I find ugly, or distasteful, or unpleasant. I complained and mourned during the time I was caring for my son, but the minute the task was taken away from me, I wanted it back. How often did I do this sort of thing in my life, but on a less dramatic scale?

Seven full days after I had exposed myself to radiation, I was ready to hold my son again. I wasn't ready, however, for the emotions that this reunion would ignite in me. As I reached for him I began to cry. He looked at me quizzically and then smiled – a perfect smile of those who take one minute of life at a time. It was the smile of one who just lives for the moment and does not seek to rush the minutes or slow them down. It was the smile of the Buddha emanating from my five month-old son's face, and I was thankful for him, for the moment I was experiencing, and for the week I was radioactive.

- **Lori Langer de Ramirez** is an educator and a member of the Wat Buddha Thai Thavornvanaram in Elmhurst, Queens, U.S.A.

**GIVE TO THE WORLD THE BEST YOU HAVE:
CONVERSATION WITH
PIRZADA QASIM RAZA SIDDIQUI**

Sunita Rani & Nibir K. Ghosh

When Chitranshi, the famed literary and cultural organization of Agra, decided to confer the prestigious "Chitranshi Firaq International Award" for the year 2009 on Dr. Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui in view of his exemplary contribution to Urdu shayari and international understanding, it was bound to be a welcome decision. The literary sphere in this historic city was excited at the idea of getting to see an international celebrity from an 'enemy' region, the Vice Chancellor of Karachi University, a widely acclaimed shayar and an eminent neuroscientist. The big event was marked for March 13, 2010 at Sursadan in Agra. At the behest of the organizers, Professor Pirzada Qasim graciously accepted the invitation to visit our home and join us for dinner on March 12, 2010. In a pre-dinner conversation, Professor Pirzada gave free vent to his heart and mind and shared with us his thoughts and ideas that have gone into the making of a scientist, an administrator and a shayar.

Interviewers: First of all we deem it a pleasure to welcome you profusely to our humble abode in the city of the Taj. We are honoured by your gracious presence here in Agra.

Pirzada: Thank you very much for welcoming me so warmly to Agra. I am delighted to be here this evening. Agra is a very unique city not only because there is Taj Mahal but because this part of the subcontinent has given the world one of the greatest poets of all times, Nazir Akbarabadi. He was a giant and still I do not see any Urdu poet in history who could take the place of Nazir Akbarabadi.

Interviewers: Why is Nazir so very important in your estimate?

Pirzada: The importance of Nazir Akbarabadi was that he brought the thoughts and interaction of the common people to poetry.

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NEW MEDIA AND WRITING: SOME ISSUES

Dharamjeet Singh

Driven by advanced technology, the new media has emerged in recent years as a considerable force affecting our everyday socio-cultural practices. It has captured the imagination of writers, artists and theorists across different disciplines. Marked by the shift from analog to digital, it encompasses the digitization of our communication channels, computerization of work and networking of the whole world. It is primarily new on account of the central role it gives to information, its digital and computational nature, its networking abilities and its interactive and simulative character. The rate at which digitized data can be stored, retrieved, shared, transferred and updated has largely expedited the processes of communication. In the midst of all these cultural and social transformations facilitated by the technological advances in computer-aided networked communications, writing has also not remained untouched. New forms of writing, hitherto scarcely imaginable, are challenging our conventional ideas of literature, the literary and the institution of literature. We not only need to question the nature of such writing with reference to its similarities and dissimilarities with writing in the print medium but we also need to examine its function in the emerging formations of culture, including the 'literary' culture.

The new media has immense implications for culture, which we have just begun to understand systematically. In this direction, Lev Manovich's *The Language of New Media* has been a path-breaking and comprehensive study. He lists five characteristics that define the new media: modularity, automation, variability, numerical representation and transcoding. Explaining the cultural implications of the new media, he states that its most important characteristic, from the point of view of culture, is "transcoding," the way culture and computers interact with each other and the way culture, in particular, gets transformed under the impact of computer and communication technologies. New media art-objects, like web pages, are "simultaneously computer code, cultural representations, material objects for consumption and the outcome of skilled labour" (Gauntlett 31).

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ORWELL'S TREATMENT OF IMPERIALISM IN *BURMESE DAYS*

Jawed S. Ahmad

Of the major works of Orwell, *Down & Out in Paris and London* and *Burmese Days* are fictionalized autobiographies in as much as he has drawn heavily upon personal experience in these works. *Burmese Days*, Orwell's second published novel, is based on his experience which he gathered in Burma as a police officer.

This novel deals with the decline of British Imperialism which is due to the inhuman treatment meted out to the non-Britishers. The subject of this book is not something which Orwell alone took up. There are many writers who directly or indirectly deal with the issues arising out of British Imperialism. Sometimes writers not even identified with Imperialism in any sense of the word are found out, on closer scrutiny, to perpetuate the ideology of Imperialism in some form in their work. In his famous book entitled *Culture and Imperialism* Edward Said talks about many such writers, Jane Austen and Bronte sisters included, whose work is linked to the British Empire in some way. According to Said the writers in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were provided a structure of attitude and feeling by the Empire. Often they write without any consciousness of the Empire but the Empire was there anyway as a solid presence. The twentieth century writers differ from them in the sense of dealing with Imperialism in a more direct manner. Among them Rudyard Kipling was the first English writer to deal seriously and comprehensively with the British Colonies. But he wrote as an advocate of the white man and his work may be described as the official literature of Imperialism. Orwell, unlike him, has examined Imperialism strictly from an ethical point of view. He attacks the evils of Imperialism and satirizes the faults of both the conquerors and the conquered. There is a fundamental difference between Kipling and Orwell. Kipling glorifies the moral greatness of British Imperialism while Orwell spotlights the moral bankruptcy of the British Empire. Thus the 'white man's burden' is changed into black man's burden and "the road to Wigan Pier" is the very antithesis of "Road to Mandalay."

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GLORIA NAYLOR'S *MAMA DAY*: A CULTURAL STUDY

Anurag Kumar & Nagendra Kumar

The present paper presents a cultural study of Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* (1988). Gloria Naylor is an African American writer who looks at the act of writing as a process of cultural re-visioning. Her novel, *Mama Day*, provides us an opportunity to look through the neglected African culture and heritage on the one hand and encourages us to find the evidences of survival of African Americans in a capitalist American society, on the other. The novel could be viewed as a resistance against the authoritarian, male-centered, cosmopolitan worldview and the people, who always try to capture and define the world of African American people. The locus of resistance in the text lies in the island inhabitants' retention and transmission of African derived traditions and values, such as orally conveyed folklores, quilting, herbs and root works. Naylor also intends here to familiarize the reader with the cultural practices of this community as an artifact of resistance to colonial practices.

Naylor's *Mama Day* is a successful attempt to trace out the African American past and traditions expressed through narratives and how they come to rescue the African American community in the face of continued pressure to surrender before the existing modernism. A conflict facing many black Americans today is the loss of African roots and heritage in a modern society that does not encourage cultural identity but stifles it instead. Naylor's novel is a document of the survival strategies by which black Americans as an ethnic group came to be conscious of their rich cultural heritage and have celebrated their quest for personal and social freedom. This has been realized through the construction of an island community of women that preserves the cultural memory through the repetition of material practices that include cooking and weaving, and through the transmission of personal and communal stories. Naylor here makes clear that the possibility of an African American identity is rooted in a communal identity.

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**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF VIOLENCE IN
SHAKESPEARE'S *KING LEAR* AND
EDWARD BOND'S *LEAR***

Manju Rani

Change is the eternal faculty of nature and literature, as is always derived from society, is also the object of change. When a story is retold in different ages, various changes are observed as the story is affected with the practices of the society. In the context of such changes, the present paper is a study of violence in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Edward Bond's *Lear*.

King Lear is the most tragic and profound play. Even the other three famous tragedies like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* could not express such melancholic aspect of human situation as this play portrayed. Shakespeare displayed two plots in the play, the main and the subplot. King Lear and his three daughters Goneril, Regan and Cordelia are there in the main plot and Gloucester and his two sons Edger and Edmund are there in the subplot. The story of *King Lear* was depicted in both *Holinshed's Chronicles* and *Historia Britonum*. Cordelia and her husband rescue Leir and give him his kingdom where he ruled till his death. After his death Cordelia became the queen and reigned for five years. Her nephew, who rebelled against her, imprisoned her. Cordelia committed suicide when it became too miserable for her to tolerate. When Lear divided his kingdom, all the three sisters were unmarried. In *Holinshed's Chronicles*, Gonerila is married to Henninus, the duke of Cornwall and Regan is married to Maglances, the Duke of Albania. The prince of Gallia is the man who is asked for the marriage to Cordelia through a letter.

Shakespeare has differentiated many things from the above story; Goneril and Regan are already married in *King Lear*. In *The Mirror for Magistrates* the king of Gallia is found as the king of France. Higgins is replaced by Albany in *King Lear*. Lear gives his entire kingdom to both of his elder daughters, Goneril and Regan. Shakespeare would be obliged to the old play *King Lear and his Three Daughters* as there is an ogreish courtier named Scalliger in this play. He is a friend and adviser of Goneril.

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ORIENTAL CONTENT AND CONTEXT IN LORD TENNYSON'S *THE FALL OF JERUSALEM*

Syed Faiz Zaidi

The Fall of Jerusalem was published in 1827. Lord Byron's *On the Day of Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus* gave Tennyson the subject and theme of his poem. W.D. Paden points out that the historical details in the poem are drawn from Rollin's *Ancient History*.

Tennyson through his wide-ranging scholarship traces the history of Jerusalem, the holiest city of Palestine; its peace and harmony was disturbed repeatedly by the invasions of Assyrians, Philistines, Arabs, Syrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persian, Romans and finally by Muslims. Thus the city was ruined and rebuilt many times. Tennyson laments the plight of its inhabitants.

The city of Jerusalem was at first a small village known as 'Salem' or 'Ursalim', inhabited by Canaanites, ancestors of Palestinians. Melchizedek, the great Canaanite king turned the village 'Salem' into the city of Jerusalem. In 10th century B.C., Solomon, the able and just king, built a Jewish temple on the site of the earlier Canaanite shrine built by Melchizedek. After Solomon's death the capital of the kingdom Judah, Jerusalem, as proclaimed by King David, was periodically besieged and taken by Assyrians, Philistines, Arabs, Syrians and Egyptians. In 587 B.C., the kingdom went under Babylonian suzerainty. The city was destroyed and the temple built by King Solomon was burned and ruined by the Babylonians. In 538 B.C., Cyrus, the Persian Emperor defeated the Babylonians and took control of the kingdom. Jews prospered in his regime. Later on, the rule of the kingdom was passed on to Alexander the Great. In 332 B.C., Jews organized a vigorous revolt and recovered Jerusalem from the hands of the Greek. About a hundred years later, the Jewish rule was seized by Titus, son of Emperor Vespasian. Thus Romans ruled the kingdom of Judah, until Prophet Mohammed started preaching Islam in early seventh century.

Thus the kingdom and the city of Jerusalem were repeatedly invaded by foreigners and recovered by Jews. Tennyson's sympathy for the city prompts him to glorify it in the poem.

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HERMAN MELVILLE'S MYTHOPOEIA

Divyajyoti Singh

Herman Melville (1819-91) in his novel *Moby-Dick* weaves a story about the captain of a whaling schooner and a whale. But his narrative is lifted above the genre of a sea-yarn and his story straddles to the world of myths. Melville was a sailor philosopher who had idiosyncracies that he wanted to give shape to. Therefore, he embarked on a project to create a myth to carry the weight of his philosophical meditations. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville creates this private myth by giving supernatural dimensions to the protagonist of his narrative, Ahab and casts an air of mystery around Ahab's antagonist, the great white whale, Moby-Dick.

The present study is an attempt to discern the impact of mythical allusions in *Moby-Dick* and to assess the share of Hindu myths and thought on Melville's oeuvre. An exposure to nineteenth century Transcendentalism creates a reasonable apprehension that Melville's philosophy was influenced by *Vedas* and his mythopoeia by *Puranas*. The present critique is conducted with a realization, however, that even if Melville the author was indebted to Hindu philosophy or myths, the text can be thought of having transcended particular influences: Orient or Occident.

A myth, according to *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*, involves "supernatural beings," "concerned with creation," and "explains how something came to exist." Myths are "primitive explanations of the natural order or cosmic forces" (525-526). *Moby-Dick* replays the perennial quest to find meaning of life and Moby-Dick, the Whale, is emblematic of this search for meaning. Melville's myth is an innovative frame of reference to rationalize what he intuitively felt and perceived. Embedded within a sacred mythic texture derived from *Matsya Purana*, the sea narrative of Melville gets great mileage. Melville, at the outset, evokes the Puranic episode:

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AGHA SHAHID ALI: POET OF HUMANISM

Sadaf Shah

Humanism is a philosophical and literary movement in which man and his capabilities are of central concern. The term was originally restricted to a point of view prevalent among thinkers during the Renaissance. The distinctive characteristics of Renaissance humanism were its emphasis on classical studies, or the humanities, and a conscious return to classical ideals and forms. The modern usage of the term has had diverse meanings but some contemporary emphases are on lasting human values, cultivation of the classics, and respect for scientific knowledge.

Humanism is a broad category of ethical philosophies that affirm the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appealing to universal human qualities, particularly rationality. It is a component of a variety of more specific philosophical systems and is incorporated into several religious schools of thought. Humanism can be considered the process by which truth and morality are sought through human investigation. In focusing on the capacity for self-determination, humanism rejects the validity of transcendental justifications, such as dependence on belief without reason, the supernatural, or texts of allegedly divine origin. Humanists endorse universal morality based on the commonality of the human condition, suggesting that solutions to human, social and cultural problems cannot be parochial. Humanism in more recent times has been manifested in a number of different movements. In addition to "secular humanism" in the United States, existentialism has been trumpeted as a form of humanist philosophy in as much as it holds that individual human freedom constitutes the source of all authentic human values.

The modern world is beset with two enemies, fear and hatred. It is a place divided by religious fanaticism, egotistical nationalism and racial superiority. It is humanism alone which can free this world from these evils.

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**BALRAM HALWAI: A RE-CREATION OF
MULK RAJ ANAND'S BAKHA AND
ARUNDHATI ROY'S VELUTHA**

Binod Mishra

History and literature complement each other in myriad ways. If history repeats itself, literature records the lived and unlived experiences to serve mankind a reminder of their lapses and advances. Literature, in this respect, awakens us by delineating human actions that could have been avoided in order to root out certain fallacies. Litterateurs, historians and philosophers world over keep reiterating ornate theories yet the human mind cannot shed the anomalies embedded within. Living amid discrimination has become a part of our lives. Discrimination of any kind cannot fade away unless we overcome the classification of human beings on the stratagems of work-based identity. This, in turn, generates a feeling of alienation and displacement.

The present paper is an attempt to show that Adiga's Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger* is a re-creation of Anand's Bakha and Arundhati Roy's Velutha. The paper unveils the roots of malaise that germinated in Bakha, aggravated in Velutha and recreated in Balram Halwai. It is undeniable that Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy and of late Aravind Adiga make their characters recalcitrant in one way or the other. In fact, Bakha, the hero of Anand's *Untouchable* realizes for the first time that he was the victim of a privileged class that expected low caste servants to bring cheers to their masters despite the former remaining drenched in despair. Velutha, the protagonist of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, paves the way for the battle, which Balram Halwai, the one man army, fights in the most organized manner and succeeds, though in an illegal way, providing solace to Bakha, Velutha and their likes. History, thus, not only repeats itself but also re-creates.

Bakha is the victim of caste and class nexus. His stout physical features empower him to take cudgels against a system where he has a much degraded status. His manhood gets serious jolts when he has to announce his arrival lest an upper class be touched.

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**ARTICULATING SILENCE: SHASHI DESHPANDE’S
*THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS AND
THAT LONG SILENCE***

Gunbir Kaur

Silence is a prominent and insistent symbol in most of the fiction of Shashi Deshpande. It is a motif of central importance for Deshpande as it motivates much of the action in her novels, revealing details about the central characters and about their reaction to the characters who cluster around them. The protagonists in all her novels are engulfed very frequently in a kind of silence which makes them communicate with the other characters non-verbally. The silence normally begins in the opening scene and the reader becomes aware of the fact that something is wrong in the relationship between the protagonist and the other characters. It is noteworthy that the protagonists never oppose or argue with their husbands and are quite inhibited when conversing with them. It is, however, their very avoidance of speech, which contributes the most to the complexities and misunderstandings in their relationship with their husbands and sometime with the other characters in most of the novels. Nevertheless, this passivity and silence of the protagonists towards their men can be taken not necessarily as a commentary on the supposed weakness of the women, but as a criticism of the manipulative and abusive power of the men around them, who disregard and take advantage of their frailties for their own profit, in the guise of conventions and traditions, inviting unintentionally a few catastrophes for them and their spouses.

All the novels of Deshpande are women-centered and Deshpande definitely makes this feature of revealing the complexity of relationships through the silence of women as her special strength. Being a woman, she knowingly or unknowingly reveals her natural concern towards the problems faced by women, especially the problems of contemporary urban women and their search for identity. Deshpande also identifies the problems of Indian women who have to bear the great burden of upholding family values and sustaining relationships at all costs, maintaining silence most of the time as they find fulfillment and self-realization in the process of fostering and cultivating bonds with everyone.

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LIMBALE'S *THE OUTCASTE*: A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

M. S. Wankhede

The Outcaste (Akkarmashi) is the firsthand experience of Sharankumar Limbale, a well-known Dalit activist, author, editor, and critic. Currently the Regional Director (Pune Division) of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nasik, Limbale has tried his hand successfully at several literary genres and has to his credit more than twenty-four books. Sharankumar, who was once engaged in seeking in vain visibility in Indian society and culture, shot into international prominence with his emotionally violent and noisy autobiography, *The Outcaste*, after its publication in translation in English. In the acknowledgements to the contemporary classic, Limbale asserts: "My history is my mother's life, at the most my grandmother's. My ancestry doesn't go back any further" (ix). This suggests that due to his being "half-caste growing up in the Mahar community," he limits himself to the ancestry of his mother and grandmother.

Sharankumar, the protagonist of the novel, is born to an untouchable mother and a high-caste father, the caste which is one of the privileged classes of India. Limbale brings forth this rift between the two castes at the very outset: "My mother lives in a hut, father in a mansion. Father is a landlord; mother landless....My father had privileges by virtue of his birth granted to him by the caste system" (ix). These experiences of the protagonist show that the hegemonic dominance is still widespread in Indian society. Limbale expresses his anguish against all the repression prevalent in Indian society. Projecting his mother as the victim of the social and economic system, he questions: "Had she (Limbale's mother) been born into the high caste or were she rich, would she have submitted to his (Limbale's father) appropriation of her?" (ix).

An acknowledged masterpiece, *The Outcaste* is written in the dialect of Mahar community of Maharashtra. It is a first-person narrative that gives the numbing account of the humiliation of the community at the hands of an unthinking privileged class.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN UTTAR PRADESH

Mohini Agarwal & Praveen Sood

Women at present contribute in the promotion of economic development of a country in various capacities. They perform not only non-market activities through which they produce 'human' goods having greater 'values' but also various market activities in fields, farming and elsewhere outside the limited confines of their homes. The dual role of women as a contributor to production in a country and as a reproducer of human race have been emphasized in our literature. This article attempts to discuss a few aspects of women's role in economic parlance through rural development.

The need for building up women power is being more strongly felt today than ever before. But government agendas for women upliftment are bound to remain inadequate unless women themselves become more aware of their rights and corresponding responsibilities. Despite their numerical strength, women occupy a marginalized position in society and their role is restricted to the periphery of the political process. Education is the key to the development of self-awareness. Education can play a decisive role in empowering women by making them aware of their aspirations, their real potential and their rights. It is one of the most vital factors in promoting women's full participation in political, economic and cultural life.

However, the obstacles to the empowerment of women are many. As regards the question of economic empowerment of women, strategies are varied and refer to paradigms that enable women to realize their full potential, be self dependent, and exercise their decision-making power. They consist of greater access to knowledge, greater ability to plan their lives, greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives, and finally, factors which would free them from the shackles of customs, beliefs and practices.

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**ECOCRITICAL READING OF ARUN JOSHI'S
*THE STRANGE CASE OF BILLY BISWAS***

S.D. Palwekar

The present paper is an attempt to explore modern man's predicament triggered by excessive development in the field of science, technology and material production. Despite all material comforts, man finds himself everywhere in chains that make him think of going back to Nature. In the novel the protagonist, Billy Biswas, fed up with material world, takes refuge in the lap of nature among the primitive people in the forest of Maikhala Hills where he identifies himself with the tribals, and where he feels that he really belongs.

Ecocriticism is, in fact, a recent coinage. It is defined as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Barry 248). It encompasses the study of nature, science and technology in literature and their relationship with mankind. It also includes concepts such as sustainable and unsustainable uses of energy, balance and imbalance, symbiosis and mutuality. It does not remain confined to natural environment alone. Richard Kerridge in his essay, "Environmentalism and Ecocriticism," explains that "Ecocritics analyse the history of concepts such as 'nature' in an attempt to understand the cultural developments that have led to the present global ecological crisis. Direct representation of environmental damage or political struggle are of obvious interest to Ecocritics, but so is the whole array of cultural and daily life for what it reveals about implicit attitudes that have environmental consequences" (Kerridge 531).

Arun Joshi in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* explores contemporary man's inner crisis. He champions the cause for the renunciation of shallow civilization and adaptation of primitive world in search for the truth. The novel explores the significant primitive life as much better and healthier alternative to our so-called civilized society. In *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* the conflict is between more basic and greater forces i.e. civilization and primitive life or between nature and art. The experiences of Billy (Bimal) Biswas, the protagonist of the novel, are mainly intellectual and psychic.

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TONI MORRISON'S *PARADISE*: A TRAUMA NARRATIVE

Lata Mishra

Trauma narratives came into vogue in the 1980s and 1990s with the development of trauma studies as an authentic disciplinary field of academic study. The trauma studies helped in better contextualization of the social, political, and economic issues. This triggered the incipience of the traumatic experience in fields ranging from psychology to literature. The study of trauma has a long and chaotic history. The term "trauma" derives from the Greek word *titrosko* which signifies "to bruise" and its use was confined to medical fields only. Recently, this term is being used in various branches of knowledge ranging from psychology to literature. Cathy Caruth explains: "The phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all-inclusive, but it has done so precisely because it brings us to the limits of our understanding: if psychoanalysis, psychiatry, sociology, and even literature are beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma, it is because they are listening through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience" (Caruth 4).

One of the most prolific and powerful writers of contemporary fiction is Toni Morrison. Her body of work spans three decades and is characterized by an evolving concern with the study of women's inner lives. Morrison is interested in studying women that are real and not just contrived to live in a world without racism, sexism, and a society that does not uphold white ideals over blacks. Instead of creating women that fit into an ideal, she gives us realistic women who believe in particular ideals that are unrealistic. From a young age many of Morrison's women, particularly African-American women, are led to self-destruction by their belief in master narratives that bring about their self-destruction. The term "self-destruction" does not always mean simply to commit suicide, but instead to destroy oneself emotionally, and sometimes physically, to the point where he/she cannot continue to function for him/herself.

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A FANONIAN READING OF CHETAN BHAGAT'S *THE THREE MISTAKES OF MY LIFE*

Sunita Jakhar

In placing the novel in the postcolonial context, it is essential to keep in mind Frantz Fanon's "three stages" (as enunciated in *The Wretched of the Earth*) which the literature of the colonized passes through: First is a stage of assimilation, when the colonised, bewitched by the colonizer's claim to cultural superiority, imitate their literature and grovel for acceptance as cultural equals. Second is the stage when, disenchanted with integration into culture of their contemptuous colonizers, they return to their old cultural roots. In the third stage they fashion a new and genuinely national culture, shaped loyalty to their rediscovered national identity (Fanon 1990).

In this context, it may be appropriate to infer that Bhagat has written *The Three Mistakes of my Life* from nationalistic motives. He has raised certain national issues like communal riots, religious bias, patriotism, and misguiding the youth by politicians. In the novel, Ali is made symbolic of Nationalism. Ali's patriotism comes to light in his preference for India even at the temptation of comforts and luxuries in Australia. During the conversation with Mr. Cutler, Ali asks, "If I make it to the team, who will I play for?" (177). The spirit of India lives in the boy. He is patriotic to the core: "I don't want to be Australian in my next life. Even if I have a hundred next lives, I want to be Indian in all of them" (179).

Postcolonialism can also be understood through power relations between the native people and the whites. In Bhagat's novel, the whites i.e., the Australian team, steal the limelight wherever they go. They not only dominate the cricket scene but also have an aura around them as shown in the novel; at several places they are even treated as superior by Indians. The three friends sneak into the stadium and notice how the security guard relaxes on seeing them with someone white. The three friends have more faith in the Australian team. They trust the Australian team more for testing the talent of Ali.

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POLITICAL ISSUES IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S *SUCH A LONG JOURNEY AND A FINE BALANCE*

T. Sasikanth Reddy

The impact of political events on contemporary Indian literature has re-established politics as legitimate subject matter for literature. Rohinton Mistry is one such writer whose writings bear a strong political fragrance. Mistry was born in 1952. In 1975, at the age of twenty-three, during the period of emergency in India, he migrated to Canada. In 1983, he started writing short stories and it wasn't long before he began to receive a great deal of literary attention with works that include three novels, *Such A Long Journey*, *A Fine Balance*, *Family Matters* and a short story collection, *Tales From Firozsha Baag*. Though he lives in Toronto, he sets his novels primarily in his native Bombay, combining a natural, direct style with simple description, to present an honest and loving image of India. The present paper aims at exploring the political canvas painted by Rohinton Mistry in his novels *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*.

Such a Long Journey is at once a more narrowly focused fiction and, in its depiction of life in modern India, more wide-ranging. This interesting novel tackles several long journeys – India's transformation from the Raj to a brawling, corrupt, mismanaged, constantly at-war democracy under Indira Gandhi. The novel is set in 1971, during the time of Pakistan's brutal but unsuccessful attempt to suppress the uprising in its Eastern wing, the future Bangladesh, and against the backdrop of India's 1965 war with Pakistan over Kashmir and the 1962 defeat inflicted by the Chinese army. The text engages itself with increasing criminalization of politics in India and the rise of Mrs. Gandhi's brand of real politics that literally spelt the end of value-based practices in public life.

In *Such A Long Journey* Mistry hints at the highest level of political games played in postcolonial India. Indira Gandhi is the true villain in *Such A Long Journey*. Through the conversation of the characters that sometimes sounds like history lessons, we are made aware of bits and pieces about Indian politics. Among other details, we are told how Jawaharlal Nehru ensured that his daughter would become would become Prime Ministry after him.

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REALISTIC AND EXPRESSIONISTIC TECHNIQUES IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*

Shishu Paul

Arthur Asher Miller's *Death of a Salesman* won both the Pulitzer and the New York Drama Critics Circle awards. Initially entitled *The Inside of his Head*, the play was conceived as a psychomachia drama in which scenes of domestic realism are interrupted by the hero's frequent mental leaps into the past. Miller designed this play as the tragedy of the common man, with an obvious pun on the name of the hero, Willy Loman (i.e. low man). But this play with its skeletal setting, non-realistic lighting, musical leitmotifs, and free movement in time and space, suggests expressionism rather than realism though these elements involve no distortion of reality.

Death of a Salesman has been welcomed as a great technical triumph, regardless of what one may think of this play as a tragedy of Willy Loman. This technical triumph is due largely to Miller's judicious fusion of realistic and expressionistic techniques. Dramatic techniques are used in multiple ways by playwrights to convey different angles of the story while lighting patterns follow the dialogue or music to show the play's mood.

Given the nature of the theme of the play, which can be called "Illusion versus Reality," the realistic technique is necessary to make the action and the characters real and individual. But as a considerable part of the action of the play takes place inside the mind of the protagonist, the expressionistic technique becomes very important to fish out a kind of psychological element or idea that is being enacted in the hero's mind. The main principle involved is that "expression determines form, and therefore imagery, punctuation, syntax, and so forth. Indeed, any of the formal rules and elements of writing can be bent or disjointed to suit the purpose" (Cuddon 297). In an expressionistic play the action moves freely in space and time and in harmony with the thought processes of the characters concerned. In a way, what the stream-of-consciousness is to fiction, expressionism is to drama.

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POETRY

TIGER, TIGER...

Ashok Tiwari

God's mighty act of your creation
Filled Blake's mind with fascination!
You are our national animal.
No other animal is your equal.
You are Goddess Durga's mount.
All this does no longer count.
Tiger, Tiger, burning bright!
Dreadful is your present plight!

In deep forests you are no longer found.
Your roars there no longer resound.
Now your body is your enemy!
It is seen in terms of money.
Alive, some admirers you may please,
Dead, you're worth lakhs of rupees!
The money is such a temptation,
In hunting you there's no hesitation.
Hunting you is no great art –
A steel trap, a bullet through the heart!

Your skin ladies wear for vanity.
An act devoid of all sanity!
It adorns a drawing-room wall,
Or the floor of some palace hall.
In China, your genitals, ground to powder
Restore old men's sexual drive and power.
Your flesh and fat cure rheumatism.
Your bones are used in medicines.
Your skull is transformed into a trophy,
Your teeth hang in charms and jewellery.
Tiger, Tiger, bright as flame!
Your extinction would be our shame!

In jungles may you thrive again.
May this wish not be in vain!
Lord of beasts, long be your reign.
Your blood jungle trails never stain.
May plans of poachers fail.

May they spend their lives in jail.
May posterity get to see
Your beauty, power and majesty.
Tiger, Tiger, bright as flame!
Your extinction would be our shame!

- *Dr. Ashok Tiwari* retired as Professor of English,
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.



THREE POEMS

Shobha Diwaker

HEARTBEATS

It floated inside her womb
Breathing and kicking
Making its presence felt.
As it swam, tied to the lifeboat,
The umbilical cord
Held it securely to its mother.
Sprouting and swelling
Day by day
Drawing oxygen and food
From its mother
Growing bigger and bigger.
She bears the weight
And can hardly walk about
Or move in bed.
Must lie straight
Not to hurt it.
The day draws nearer
But she must carry it full term
Dragging herself.
Her body, an undisguised
Distorted shape and size.
The beauty of giving birth to life
Drowns all her cries.

INNOCENCE BETRAYED

She lay panting
Beneath the covers.
He hungrily stroked and caressed

Her budding youth, tender and warm.
Her mystified eyes
Looked up through the veils
Of her eyelashes...frightened.
As she blinked and shuddered
Beside his heaving chest,
What lay beyond
She remained unaware,
Innocence shrouding her coyness.
Silently he ravished her
And flung aside the barrier
That divided them.
And there she lay
Marooned and rudderless
On a deserted island.

WE, THE LIVING

The earth has become
a graveyard for the living.
There, in the grave,
lie the dead, living in peace,
unaware of earth's mounting pressures
and demands of Man
defiling the purity of Nature.
The dead lying mute
have quietly breathed their last,
leaving this earth for the living dead.

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BOOK REVIEW

***Perspectives on Legends of American Theatre.* Eds. Nibir K. Ghosh, T.S. Anand, A. Karunaker. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2009. 305 pages. Price: Rs. 600.**

Some years ago Pankaj Mishra's book *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana* became a focal text for Cultural Studies in India because it scripted the growing confidence of non-metropolitan India and its ability to voice its aspirations, mobility and success. The publication of *Perspectives on Legends of American Theatre* edited by Nibir K. Ghosh, T.S. Anand and A. Karunaker is a wonderful celebration of that very theme in an academic and intellectual context.

In a rendezvous of scholars from India, South Asia and the United States, theatre legends of America such as Eugene O' Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Edward Albee, Amiri Baraka, August Wilson, Ed Bullins, Lorraine Hansberry and Ntozake Shange have been critiqued in order to discuss and consolidate a precious social and aesthetic legacy. The editorial preface entitled "Setting the Scene" written with imaginative élan typical of Nibir Ghosh is prefixed with a Rushdie epigraph. It is about the setting of a stage when the autocratic gods stop meddling in human affairs and leave us in an anthropocentric wilderness to which we humans ascribe meaning if we can. It is typically Rushdie of course. In his Commencement Address for Bard College NY, Rushdie had said "...as myths tell us, it is by defying the gods that human beings have best expressed their humanity." And so Ghosh speaks of the heroism of Prometheus who stole fire from the gods, of Sisyphus's scornful defiance and Satan as the manifestation of the defiant spirit of man in the renaissance. From those times through existential predicaments of alienation and despair, nihilism and symbolic death, playwrights have created their significant works interrogating life; its received authenticities and transience, crafting subjectivities sometimes as architects of their destinies and occasionally as victims of it.

The inclusion of Black American playwrights in the form of August Wilson, Amiri Baraka, Ntozake Shange, Lorraine Hansberry (who unfortunately died very young) and Ed Bullins, each of whom has enlarged what the mind can explore and speak, recast the possibility of their people's participation in civic life and explore their aspirations with self-determination and self-respect. It has been tracked in the ghettoisation and in the discriminatory Afro-American experience in Ed

Bullin's Black Theatre by T. S. Anand. The themes of prejudice, segregation and aspirations of emancipation and agency are particularly significant in an Indian context. This context has been explored by juxtaposing August Wilson's *Fences* and the polemic mobility of Datta Bhagat's *Routes and Escape Routes* in Sunita Rani Ghosh's essay. Another interesting essay stressing the emotional need for Afro-Americans to return to a natural, spontaneous living away from the institutional demands of any religion reminiscent of Ayaan Hirsi Ali from a different culture is Anju Bala Agarwal's "Search for Black Female Identity in the Drama of Ntozake Shange." Born Paulette L. Williams, she changed her name to Ntozake meaning "she who comes with her own things" and Shange meaning "she who walks with lions," after a difficult period of emotional dislocation, depression and an attempted suicide. The biographical perhaps acts as a foundational impulse toward an attempt to forge a female solidarity as an emotional renewal through shared suffering in *For Colored Girls*.

The essay that offers the panorama for this volume is the one by Jonah Raskin that reveals his love of the theatre through his very readable comments of his experience of it in America. The other essays are on individual dramatists such as Eugene O' Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, David Mamet, Sam Shepard and Edward Albee and critiques of individual plays whose inclusion in the curriculum in most Indian universities makes this book very valuable for academic reference. There are six essays on Eugene O'Neill, four on Tennessee Williams, eight on Arthur Miller, three on Sam Shepard and two each on David Mamet and Edward Albee. Each of these essays has been selected with discriminating editorial skill and scholarship and promises to offer stimulating reading for profit and pleasure.

- **Shanker A. Dutt**

- **Dr. Shanker A. Dutt** is Professor of English, Patna University, Patna & Chairman, Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi, Patna.



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People think
it must be fun
to be
a super genius
but they
don't realize
how hard it is
to put up with
all the
idiots
in the world

*- William B. Watterson II,
American Cartoonist*

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