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William Shakespeare

Toni Morrison

Edmund Wilson

Sri Aurobindo

Dom Moraes

Nissim Ezekiel

Chinua Achebe

Pratibha Ray

R.K. Narayan

Imtiaz Dharker

Shashi Deshpande

Amitav Ghosh

The Namesake

Sindhi Fiction

Post-Modernism

Indian Diaspora

Quixotic Encounters

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Chief Editor

Nibir K. Ghosh,
68 New Idgah Colony,
Agra-282001, U.P. (INDIA).
Telephone : +91 562 2420330, 2420116.
e-mail : ghoshnk@hotmail.com

Editor

A. Karunaker,
House No. 12-13-257,
Street No. 3, Brindavan Residency
Taranaka
Secunderabad-500017.
Tel: +91 40 27001349
e-mail : karunakeredrem@hotmail.com

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EDITORIAL

Whether one looks at the story of the “Genesis” in the *Old Testament* which shows the Lord God creating Eve out of the rib of Adam, or at the Laws of Manu, one cannot miss the emphasis on the derivative nature of a woman’s existence. Even in the democratic Athens of Socrates and Plato, man’s prerogative was seen in ‘commanding’ and a woman’s duty lay in obeying. Likewise in the medieval period the role of woman remained circumscribed by domestic trivialities, periodically interrupted by the birth of children. In our own time it is perhaps customary to accept Freud’s assumption of “Anatomy is Destiny” which affirms that inequality of the sexes is neither a biological nor a divine mandate, but a cultural construct devised by a male-dominated society.

From time to time the Minerva lying latent in every woman did endeavour to soar above the level plain of tradition and prejudice with help of strong wings to carve an identity of her own. But as the wings remained enmeshed in the complex web of interdependence that characterizes a man-woman relationship, the daring ones often had to return fluttering back to earth, bruised and exhausted.

More than a century ago, when Nora in Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* (1879) walked out on her husband and children after telling him – “Our house has never been anything but a play-room. I have been your doll wife, just as at home I was daddy’s doll child,” - she literally shocked the world out of its complacency by taking a drastic step ahead of her time. Her daring departure from the assumed security and comfort of her husband’s home, prompted by her urge to assert her own individuality, created a sensation when the play was first produced and many women refused to play the role of a woman who deserts her husband and children.

Two decades later, when Edna Pontellier the female protagonist in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899) awakens to her own sense of existence and refuses to be treated as the “property” of her husband, and decides to swim out far from the confines of domesticity imposed by her marriage, her rebellious act of asserting her own individuality is lightly seen as an incomprehensible action prompted by “some sort of notion in her head concerning the eternal rights of women.”

In our own times, when the Feminist Studies industry is expanding like the Reliance Group, there may be few takers of the stand espoused by Mahashweta Devi at the end of her story "Draupadi," where, unlike the legendary Draupadi in *Mahabharata* - who in her helplessness pleads to Lord Krishna to protect her from being ignominiously disrobed in public - Mahashweta's protagonist Dopdi subverts the accepted and acceptable notions of "female virtue and modesty" by boldly daring the exploiters of her modesty to touch her again:

What's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?...There isn't a man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do?

After such knowledge, what forgiveness! Against such perspectives, the Iris Murdoch quote, carried on the back cover of this issue of *Re-Markings*, perhaps best expresses the ambivalence of being a woman in an essentially male dominated universe and rightly gives rise to the debate that is so perceptively taken up in the present volume by extremely sensitive critiques of works by women writers like Shashi Deshpande, Toni Morrison, Pratibha Ray, Imtiaz Dharker and others who, having made good use of the room of their own, boldly question the status quo and refuse "to take second place all the same" for the mere privilege of being considered "important and nice."

Apart from these interesting discourses related to the most intricate area of human experience, this volume offers insightful forays into various dimensions of significant dislocations as well as location of cultural spaces that have significantly impacted paradigms of creativity in fiction, poetry and films. Perceptive essays on Edmund Wilson, Sri Aurobindo, R.K. Narayan, *Othello*, a post-modernist interrogation of reality and representation in Indian aesthetics and the review of Miguel de Cervantes' are bound to engage the attention of our readers.

Before closing this editorial note, I deem it a pleasure to convey the heartfelt felicitations of the *Re-Markings* fraternity to Dr. Amritjit Singh, an esteemed member of our Advisory Board and Professor of English and African American Studies at Ohio University in Athens, U.S.A., who has recently been honoured with the 2007 *MELUS* Lifetime Achievement Award.

-Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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PASSAGE TO AMERICA: THE INDIAN MOVIE GOES GLOBAL

Jonah Raskin

For decades, the Indian cinema seemed inseparable from the Indian sub-continent. Directors like Satyajit Ray - though influenced by European and American filmmakers - set their pictures in India, with Indian characters, Indian themes, as well as the rhythms of Indian life, itself, from the nearly always punctual monsoon season to tardy arrivals and departures by railroad. Pictures like Ray's *Pather Panchai* (1955) *Aparajito* (1956) and *The World of Apu* (1959), defined for moviegoers the world over, the Indian experience in the mid-20th century, and announced to the world, that India had come of age as a nation of filmmakers. Then, young Indians began to make movies about Indians living and working all over the world, including the United States, and recreated the tradition of the Indian movie.

Among the younger directors who grew up in the shadow of Ray, perhaps none is more representative of her generation, or more talented, than Mira Nair. Born in India in 1957, and educated at Delhi University and Harvard, she began her career by making documentaries, then branched-out into feature films, and won acclaim with *Salaam Bombay* (1987), and then with *Mississippi Masala* (1991), which follows the fortunes of an Indian family living in the racially segregated American South. In *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), which is often described as her best-loved picture, as well as her biggest box office hit, she directed a romantic comedy about sex, love, and that much debated, and often maligned, Indian institution, the arranged marriage.

Now, in *The Namesake* (2006), - inspired by Jhumpa Lahiri's novel of the same name, and with a screenplay by Sooni Taraporevala - Nair goes over familiar ground, and recycles themes she has already explored. Here, she offers a family saga about three generations of Bengalis, living in both Calcutta and New York, as they strive to maintain traditions in a world in which families are driven to opposite ends of the world.

- **Dr. Jonah Raskin** is the author of six major books: At Sonoma State University he teaches journalism, media law and the theory of communication.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

INDIAN DIASPORA AND THE CONSTITUENCY OF DISSENT

Shanker Dutt

The Indian diaspora is “one of the most important demographic dislocations of modern times”¹ and is increasingly representative of a significant force in global culture. Such human dispersals involve the idea of a homeland, a location from which the displacement occurs and narratives of journeys undertaken on account of economic or political compulsions. It results in the location of a fluid space involving a complex set of negotiation and exchange between the nostalgia and desire for the homeland and the making of a new home, adapting to the power relationships between the majority and the minority, being spokespersons for minority rights and for their people back home and significantly transacting the “contact zone”² - a space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other with the possibility of multiple challenges. In the old classical sense, the term diaspora is used collectively for “the dispersed Jews after the Babylonian captivity, and also in the apostolic age for the Jews living outside of Palestine” (*Chamber’s Twentieth Century Dictionary*, 356). Etymologically, the term with its connotative political weight is drawn from Greek meaning to disperse and signifies a “voluntary or forcible movements of the peoples from their homelands into new regions.”³ William Safran suggests that the concept of the diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share some of the following characteristics: 1) they or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original ‘centre’ or two or more ‘peripheral’ or foreign regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland - its physical location, history and achievements; 3) they believe they are not - and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendents would (or should) eventually return - when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their...

- **Dr. Shanker Dutt** is Professor of English in Patna University.. He is currently the Chairman of Bihar Sangeet Natak Academy, Patna.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

***THE TYRANNY OF THE TANGIBLE:
AN ANALYSIS OF OTHELLO***

Shernavaz Buhariwala

The debate between actuality and reality is fairly conclusive. Actuality is “all there,” to be readily grasped by the senses. Reality is complicated, often concealed and needs to be divined by the imagination. Of the tragedies of Shakespeare, *Othello* remains totally untouched by epiphany. Here reputation is based on performance, memories are of events, infidelity is confined to adultery and reality is tangible. Where in these corporeal confines can morality be found? Inevitably, the chieftain swears by the ethos of his tribe. King Lear made the mistake of seeing love in symbols - in this case, the publicly proclaimed word which he so flamboyantly elicited from Cordelia. But Lear had the excuse of senile age. When the storm of suffering purges him, he is able to see through rank and raiment to grasp the very end and aim of life. Hamlet’s soaring intellect speculates on the unseen and unknown, in a search for final solutions. Cleopatra sheds her baser elements to become “fire and air” - the very light whose smile kindles the universe. Othello alas, has none of the inner resources needed for a journey to enlightenment. His wondrous life is full of exciting episodes, where prime affections come enshrined in a relic, “a handkerchief, an antique token my father gave my mother.” Where are the mystic cords binding man to man or man to God? There is no affiliation and therefore no allegiance. He has no cross to carry and consequently no vision of Calvary. He is free, utterly free. But with advancing years, the migratory man needs a home. This home he sought in Venice when a beautiful lady fell in love with him. When arraigned before the Senate by an angry Brabantio for kidnapping his daughter, he admits: “That I have taken away this old man’s daughter/ It is most true; true, I have married her...” (Act I, Scene 3).

His intentions were undoubtedly respectable, but he could not have had it any other way. For respect implies acceptance. Marriage being a time-honoured institution, approved by society, and blessed by the Church, is the most valid certificate of acceptance. But marriage is more than settlement or cohabitation.

- **Dr. (Ms.) Shernavaz Buhariwala** retired as Reader from the Department of English, Nagpur University, Nagpur.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

THIS VIOLET AND THAT VIOLET: FROM FRAGMENTATION TO WHOLENESS IN *JAZZ*

Soophia Ahmad

Jazz traces the development of the unique sensibility of Violet Trace - a fifty-year-old African American woman whose husband falls for a younger, lighter skinned girl called Dorcas, and murders her because she goes to a dance with someone else. Violet proceeds to the funeral with a knife and tries to disfigure the face of the dead girl lying in the coffin. She does not succeed, but the townspeople begin calling her Violent after this incident, start viewing her as insane and demented, and generally try to steer clear of her. Violet, however, emerges a fighter, and refuses to be vanquished by the harsh realities of her existence even though she comes very close to losing her mental balance at times. In spite of the fact that her life is marked by pain, poverty and hopelessness at every step, she fights relentlessly to regain the lost love of her husband and put the fragmented pieces of her life back together again. Violet's story is a story of the renewal of hope, and a reaffirmation of life through continuing faith in the self. This paper classifies Violet's journey toward wholeness into four stages, and traces her development from a scared, deprived, uncertain teenager to a confident middle aged woman who finally decides to take full responsibility for and control of her hitherto shattered life. In keeping with Toni Morrison's comment that "for some black people jazz meant claiming their own bodies," (Schappell and Lacour 113) the paper also contends that the subtle metaphor of jazz music as a way of life for African Americans runs throughout the text in both form and content.

Discussing the form of the novel with Elissa Schappell and Claudia Brodsky Lacour, Morrison explains that "Jazz was very complicated because I wanted to re-represent two contradictory things - artifice and improvisation, where you have an artwork, planned, thought through, but at the same time appears invented, like jazz...I wanted to tell a very simple story about people who do not know that they are living in the jazz age, and to never use the word" (Schappell and Lacour 116-117).

- **Dr. Soophia Ahmad** teaches in the Department of English at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

INDIAN THINKING: POST-MODERNISM AND BEYOND

Sunita Mishra & C. Muralikrishna

In the West, the beginnings of what has generally been called post-modernism ushered in an era of questioning and interrogation. It marked a significant shift in the thinking from the structured, organized, patterned world-view to one that believed in the impossibility of a predictable, patterned organization of phenomena. This shift affected a major change in the perception of 'reality' and the nature of 'truth.' It questioned the world of homogeneous, harmonious ideologies and representations. This spirit manifested in art, architecture, literature and criticism and expressed itself in the form of a general distrust of grand theories and overarching ideologies.

In the field of criticism, post-modernism emerged as an extension and critique of structuralism, primarily in the French intellectual life in the later 1960s and the early 1970s. Here it found varied expression in different fields: Deconstruction of Jacques Derrida, the Psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and Julia Kristeva, and the Historical critique of Michael Foucault. In different ways, all these philosophers questioned the "given," "natural" version of reality or meaning, put it under introspection, only to discover the multiple dimensions, the contradictory facets of any given phenomenon. For the Western thought that has largely favored logocentric representations and perceptions, this was a kind of revolution, a breaking away from the illusion of homogeneous unity.¹ This kind of indeterministic pluralism, however, has always been a familiar and very acceptable facet of the ancient and modern Indian systems of thought and philosophy. Indianism has always harbored multiple cultural, intellectual and religious patterns that co-exist in contradiction as well as cooperation and indeterministic pluralism has always formed an important part of Indian religious and philosophical thinking. Within Hinduism itself, there is the simultaneous existence of monotheism, polytheism and even atheism that rests on varied and mutually contradictory philosophical positions.

- **Dr. Sunita Mishra** teaches English at University of Hyderabad. **Dr. C. Muralikrishna** is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND EDMUND WILSON

V. Premlata

Historical Criticism as a method for studying literature has traversed a long way since the time of Aristotle. The relation between literature and history is not new as history has always been a part of literary study. Literature is mainly concerned with vividly presenting the human experience and “there is no act or fact of human experience which does not have history.”¹ History, the socio-cultural environment of man and a record of past events, becomes more than a record when it enters into literature as “it deals with the materials of literature” and is not written “in any idiom but that of literature.”² It imprints both the content and the style. Historical study of literature flourished into a complete and a systematic theory in the hands of Hippolyte Adolph Taine (1828-93). Later in the twentieth century critics like Rene Wellek, Northrop Frye, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson et al. realized that the humanistic power and emotional sensibility of literature when integrated with the learning capabilities of history, psychology, sociology and other disciplines not only produces good results but also gives birth to radically new methods for better understanding of literature.

Edmund Wilson (1895-1972), one of the most prolific historical critics, presented an integrated historical approach for the study of literature. Through his criticism he brought traditionalists and modernists into a fruitful dialogue. His major critical works which reflect his historical stance are *Axel's Castle* (1931), *The Triple Thinkers* (1938, revised in 1948), *The Wound and the Bow* (1941) and *Patriotic Gore* (1962). *Axel's Castle* established him as a literary critic where for the first time he explored the relation between history and literary criticism and gave his definition of criticism that it “ought to be a history of man’s ideas and imaginings in the setting of the conditions which have shaped them.”³ Wilson’s historical point of view, which was then in its budding stage, blossomed into a systematic theory in his second major work *The Triple Thinkers*, a collection of twelve essays ranging from light autobiography and reminiscence to serious critical reflections of Wilson.

Dr. V. Premlata teaches English at D.E.I. (Deemed University), Dayalbagh, Agra.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

SRI AUROBINDO'S CRITICISM: AN EVALUATION

Pramendra Kumar Pandey

Sri Aurobindo was a great soul, yogi philosopher, politician and critic of life and literature. Besides poems and plays, he published his thirty-two articles under the rubric *The Future Poetry* from 15-12-1897 to 15-07-1920 in his epoch making monthly, *Arya*. The articles were revised by his close disciple, K.D. Sethna, and were republished in 1985. Sri Aurobindo was not a professional critic. He never was a follower of any western school of criticism. He accepted noble thoughts from all sides and became the 'Inaugurator' of modern Indian criticism.

Sri Aurobindo's contribution to poetic criticism is multi-dimensional and *The Future Poetry* is a unique literary history that combines aesthetic criticism and appreciation of individual English poets. Sri Aurobindo has assessed literary writing at global level from earliest to his own day and formulated a theory of poetry that looks forward to its future evolution. Sri Aurobindo's critical writing is categorized under two heads: (a) Theoretical criticism dealing with the principles of poetry and (b) Descriptive or practical criticism dealing with the works of individual writers.

Poetry to Sri Aurobindo is not the "imitation" of imitation nor is it "the selection of the best words in the best order," nor "emotions recollected in tranquility" or conscious labored-effort of the classicists, but the sacred wood to burn the dross and evil in man and purify him from baser instincts. It is an utterance "The Mantra of the real." The purpose of the mantra is to seek a union with the Almighty and concentrate upon the divine. Mantra has a heart-transforming and soul-elevating quality. It is endowed with the melody of soul, the sweetness and enchantment of the heavenly and the capacity of realising infinity in a palm of words. The poet is, thus, no more a warbler of words and a juggler of phrases, but a *Vates*, a creator and seeker of Truth, Beauty, Joy and Good. The poet incorporates within himself the power of seeing and realising *Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundaram*.

- **Dr. Pramendra Kumar Pandey** teaches English at B.B.S. College of Engineering & Technology, Allahabad where he has established a digital language laboratory

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

PARTITION IN SINDHI FICTION

Neena Arora

The Partition of India was one of the greatest cataclysmic events in the history of South Asia. The joys of freedom were overshadowed by its aftermath. The uncontrollable communal riots and the brutal massacre were unprecedented. The traumatic impact of this catastrophe has lingered in the popular consciousness and initiated a huge corpus of partition literature written in English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjab, Bengali & Sindhi. The works of Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Sadat Hasan Manto, Amrita Pritam, Bhisham Sahni, to name a few, are well known for capturing the immediacy and horrors of the ghastly event. The works written in Sindhi by writers from both sides of the border, however, offer a different view of the event.

Sindh presents a unique phenomenon in the entire South Asian sub-continent: a populace with Muslim majority, living in perfect harmony with the Hindu minority. The first and foremost social value Sindh inherited was something much greater than mere tolerance. Commenting on Sindhi society, Fahmida Riaz writes that it was an age-old tradition of Sufistic thought and behaviour, which had moulded life in Sindh that kept the Sindhis from fanning communal feelings.¹ Unlike West Punjab, where no non-Muslim remained after Partition, in Sindh a good sprinkling of Hindus chose to stay there because of the non-hostile relationship between the two communities. There were practically no communal riots between Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims. However, the refugees from India tried to spark off disturbances wherever they settled, which was mainly in large cities and towns. In contrast, in the interior of Sindh, peace continued to prevail and thousands of Hindu families remained unaffected by violence and the migration was comparatively peaceful. Sindh, therefore, represented an island of peace in the all-enveloping sea of communal frenzy and violence during the Partition. But if Sindh was not thrown into the vortex of bloodshed and remained relatively calmer, Sindhi Hindus suffered in a different way.

- **Dr. Neena Arora** is Reader in the Department of English at H.P. University Centre for Evening Studies, Shimla.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

**LOCATING CULTURAL SPACE:
DOM MORAES’S “JOHN NOBODY” AND
NISSIM EZEKIEL’S “BACKGROUND, CASUALLY”**

Sandeep Kumar Yadav

Home or not-Home is a major postcolonial anxiety and the writers, Gentile or Jew, invariably try to come to terms with their dilemmas. Nissim Ezekiel and Dom Moraes are significant contemporary Indian poets whose central creative impulse is location of culture. Moraes confesses at several places in his autobiography (*MSF* 87,225) that he learnt immensely from Ezekiel’s advice in his formative years. Even when one is not driven by anxiety of influence, it is possible to identify their common areas of approach and perception. On the Indian sub-continent the situation of artists from minority communities is somewhat different from that of those from mainstream Hindu ethos and, more often than not, they are engaged in uneasy dialogues with realities around themselves. Ezekiel’s “Background, Casually” (*ECP* 179-181) and Moraes’s “John Nobody” (*CP* 99-102) are among their well-known longer poems which were published in 1965. Since both the poems are rooted in the question of identity, they have several points of resemblance as well as contrast. The present paper intends to analyse these pieces as attempts at locating the cultural space inhabited by their creators.

That Nissim Ezekiel and Dom Moraes were intimate friends and the latter was deeply influenced by the senior poet’s personality is a commonplace of contemporary criticism. In his autobiography *My Son’s Father*, Moraes refers quite frequently to this intimacy (*MSF* 87-88) which eventually shaped the poet in him. Both of them belong to minority communities but their resemblances extend even beyond that. Both went to United Kingdom for higher studies at Oxford, Moraes in Jesus College and Ezekiel at Birbeck College. A perceptive investigation demonstrates that the titles of these poems are innocently deceptive: “Background, Casually” is ‘Background, Cautiously’ and “John Nobody” is ‘Dom Somebody.’

- **Sandeep Kumar Yadav** is Research Scholar in the Department of English at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

CHINUA ACHEBE AND THE AFRICAN ORAL TRADITION

Ranjana Mehrotra

African writing has found a truly indigenous source in Africa's rich oral cultures and traditions. Oral traditions are deeply embedded in sounds and rhythms of particular cultures and languages. If for the African writer it is an advantage to possess such a rich oral tradition, he feels constrained by the technical aspect of writing especially in English, as it puts him in a global perspective. Interpreting oral traditions for people not familiar with the culture is quite a formidable task. In the process, many features are lost but the process of transcription is made by the writer. This is very much similar to oral traditions in India and that is the precise reason why the Indian reader finds it easier to come to terms with the writings of African writers. The African novel is an outgrowth of a society in which oral traditions still form a living reality i.e. they still live in the hearts and minds of the people. Where the environment is wholly literate and technical, folklore is a dead trait but it is a living trait in many places where it is adopted as a part of culture, living and literature. According to Emmanuel Obiechina, "oral tradition has survived in West Africa in spite of the introduction of western writing and the foreign tradition which it bears" (Obiechina 26).

The action and behaviour of the people is governed by oral forms such as stories, proverbs, dances, songs etc. Reality is seen through these traditional rituals and ceremonies practiced by the people. In Nigeria, the Nigerian people and their sensibilities are greatly influenced by these traditional forms and this includes the majority of people and the educated group alike. Therefore, modern Nigerian writers use folklore not just as an aesthetic device but also as a way to bring to the purview of the whole world an entirely different value system and world view. In this context the words of Kofi Awoonor are very pertinent: "In my language there is a lot of poetry, there is a lot of music and there is a lot of literary art even though not written and so I take my cue from the old tradition and begin to break it into English to give it a new dimension as it were" (Awoonor 30).

- **Dr. Ranjana Mehrotra** is Reader in the Department of English & Research Studies, B.D.K. College, Agra.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

**BETWEEN SITA AND DRAUPADI:
SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN PRATIBHA RAY'S
YAJNASENI: THE STORY OF DRAUPADI**

Saroj Thakur & Aushima Thakur

Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi* is a re-writing of the events of the *Mahabharata* related to Draupadi's life as narrated by her at the time of her death. The narrative highlights the sorry state of her life as a woman where at every step she was used by men to suit their own designs. Her unparalleled beauty and intelligence become the cause of her misery but when she wants to protest against such a treatment, she is labeled an avenger. This sad story of an epic heroine whose predicament finds semblance with the modern woman generates abiding interest among contemporary women. Born of sacrificial fire, true to her appellation, Yajnaseni throughout her life burns in the fire of men's lust and her actions and reactions cause burning in others. In this sense, she is responsible for the war of *Mahabharata* as it was her disrobing in the open assembly that provoked retaliatory oaths and vows. Though some situations of the original epic have been transformed in this re-writing to suit the changed contexts, the fact is that Draupadi remains alone till her last. This paper critiques the rewriting of the *Mahabharata* by Pratibha Ray from the point of view of the chief female protagonist in *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi*.

As the image of woman in Indian literature is characterized by two contradictory images, one of the conventional woman, and the other of the protesting woman, it has posited the problem of identification for the modern woman. The new woman in search of her identity vacillates between the Sita and the Draupadi archetypes. Draupadi and Sita, the two archetypal women, are correlated in the novel. Sita is introduced in the novel through the consciousness of Yajnaseni. Pratibha Ray reflects on the universal and timeless tradition of woman's sufferings and tribulations and her earthlike patience and strength to bear them.

- **Dr. Saroj Thakur** teaches Communication Skills at National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh. **Ms. Aushima Thakur** works as Online Language Specialist Trainer for Google India at Hyderabad.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

POLYPHONY IN R.K. NARAYAN'S *THE WORLD OF NAGARAJ*

Nityananda Pattanayak

R K. Narayan's *The World of Nagaraj*¹ has received little critical attention though many of his novels have generated much interest among scholars. Perhaps, the novel under discussion transgresses a little more the aesthetics of a conventional novel and hence does not fit with what Bakhtin says in the context of Dostoevsky's novels, "any of the pre-conceived frameworks or historico-literary schemes that we usually apply to various species of the European novel."²

Bakhtin largely ignores the usual devices such as retardation, defamiliarization, etc. used by the Russian Formalists while scanning a piece of literary work. Instead, he focuses completely on human consciousness. Stringing of events and architectonic build-up by an author in a literary text are not his area of scrutiny, his is the "degree of consciousness" in the aesthetic realm. For Bakhtin, the novels where incidents and events are given more attention are linear in pattern evolving a time scheme. Characters in such novels become "fixed elements in the author's design; such links bind and combine finalised images of people in the unity of a monologically perceived and understood world and there is no resumption of a plurality of equally valid consciousness, each with its own world."³

Authorial knowledge reigns supreme in such novels where plot takes precedence over character and where the scope for the author-hero-reader sharing experience diminishes. It is what Bakhtin calls a monologic writing. But in a dialogic novel the author does not behave like a superior being speaking from the top to the audience standing below; rather he invites all parties to talk back where experiences of all get enriched and the work remains open-ended. In structuring the work in a dialogic way the writer keeps the scope open for discussion about unanswerable questions and allows maximum freedom to all parties. In such novels the protagonist does not become a slave to certain incidents devised and structured by the author and does not become an executor of some pre-planned actions.

- **Dr. Nityananda Pattanayak** teaches English at A.D.P. College, Nagaon (Assam). His area of specialization is Narratology.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

INSIDE AND BEYOND THE VEIL: THE POETRY OF IMTIAZ DHARKER

R.K. Bhushan

I'm letting all the bad things

fall away. I'm no one

but myself,

no one possesses me. – Imtiaz Dharker

Imtiaz Dharker (1954-) lives with the passion of an undaunted rebel, not to retreat and not to fail. The intensity and eloquence of her life and poetic accomplishment have dumbfounded male chauvinists and have left her female counterparts in soaring spirits not only inside the Islamic social, cultural and religious setup but also outside it. That is why her life and poetry make a fascinating study in the crushing indictment of suppressive prescriptions against the freedom, dignity and respectful living of women, especially in the Muslim society. Imtiaz confirms our convictions that socio-cultural and socio-religious restrictions on women have robbed them of all their potentialities leaving them not only physically and mentally handicapped but also psychological wrecks age after age. The lived experiences of Imtiaz have been honestly expressed in her poetry with courage and conviction. Her humanistic and feministic concerns with her anguish and agony, sympathy and protest, give the message silently, though its deafening explosion has been felt everywhere. The substance, spirit and style of her daily living hold everyone to sway.

Imtiaz Dharker belongs to that generation of post-independence women poets who have given a convincing assurance that Indian English Poetry matches the best anywhere. Among these poets, we may include Kamala Das, Melanie Silgado, Sujata Bhatt, Eunice de Souza, Mamta Kalia, Tara Patel et al. They have not only broadened the thematic concerns of Indian English Poetry but also shown how words and images - simple, suggestive and highly evocative - can recite the music of their anguish and agony, their irritations and humour, their observations and reflections.

- **Prof. RaghuKul Bhushan** retired as Head, Department of English, Lajpat Rai D.A.V. College, Jagraon (Ludhiana).

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

**RECLAIMING THE SELF THROUGH CREATIVE
WRITING: A STUDY OF SHASHI DESHPANDE'S
*THAT LONG SILENCE***

Sunita Goel

*Write yourself, your body must make itself heard.
Then the huge resources of the unconscious will
burst out. – Helene Cixous*

Helene Cixous in her collaborative text with Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, calls upon women to reclaim a positive relationship with their selves and their bodies through the creative potential and visceral practice of writing (Simons 121). Shashi Deshpande too gives importance to the creativity in women. For her, writing is a means of self-expression. She has written nine novels so far. Two are crime novels; in six out of the remaining seven novels, either her female protagonist or some other female character is a creative writer. Deshpande has always been interested in the woman artist, the woman creator. Indu is a journalist in *Roots and Shadows* (1983), Jaya in *That Long Silence* (1989) is a creative writer, Mira is a poet in *That Binding Vine* (1992), Sumi attempts writing plays in *A Matter of Time* (1996), Madhu in *Small Remedies* (2000) works first as a journalist and later on writes the biographies of Hamidbhai, her uncle's friend, and Savitribai Indorekar, the great musician of Gwalior Gharana, and Vasu in Shashi Deshpande's latest novel *Moving On* (2004) writes stories for women's magazines.

These female characters feel themselves crushed between the traditional stereotypical role assigned to women in a patriarchal society and their own aspiration to have an independent identity and existence. They try their level best to be ideal daughters, mothers and wives but a stage comes in their life when they feel they cannot cope, cannot move on. Then they take stock of their life, lay bare their conflicts, tensions, dilemmas and doubts, undergo self-analysis and finally become bold enough to meet the demands of their self besides fulfilling their familial responsibilities.

- **Sunita Goel** is Lecturer in English at Government P.G. College, Nalagarh, Solan (Himachal Pradesh).

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

DISPLACEMENT IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE CIRCLE OF REASON*

Nagini Ram

Though born in Kolkata, Amitav Ghosh, spent his growing years in East Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Iran. He has settled down in New York, where he teaches at the New York University. He has recently acquired a house in Goa and hopes to divide his time equally between the two continents. In an interview in *The Times of India* he says: "I have never thought of myself as having left India - I've always spent a lot of time here and it has always been home."¹ Such an approach amply qualifies Amitav Ghosh to be seen as a unique writer of displacement.

In Amitav Ghosh's extraordinary first novel *The Circle of Reason* we follow the fortunes of Alu as he tries to flee from his relentless pursuer, police inspector Jyoti Das. Alu is one of the most innocuous heroes any author has sketched. He is swept along by the vagaries of fate and events beyond his control. But he does not fight against the changes they throw in his life. Instead he displays immense patience and accepts them wholeheartedly. With the death of his parents he is sent to his uncle, Balaram Bose in Lalpukur, a slightly eccentric person who dabbled in Phrenology, the study of skulls. But, like all children, Alu is quick to adjust and adapt. Like all refugees he learns to be quiet and unobtrusive, taking care not to disrupt the life of his aunt and uncle. Aware of the fact that the skill of speaking the language of the place or country one has (voluntarily or involuntarily) been displaced to is a skill which is essential for survival, Alu begins to learn Bengali and Hindi that give him a sense of "belonging." This point is emphasized when Alu is rescued from the debris of the hotel "Star." The people gather around him to hear him speak "not in one language but in three, four, god knows how many, a khichri of words; rice, dhal and onions, all stirred up together, stamped and boiled, Arabic with Hindi, Hindi swallowing Bengali, English doing a dance; tongues unraveled and woven together - nonsense, you say, tongues unraveled are nothing but nonsense - but there again you have a mystery, for everyone understood him, perfectly, like their mother's lullabies."²

- **Ms. Nagini Ram** is Lecturer in English at National Institute of Social Work & Social Sciences (NISWASS), Bhubaneswar.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

BOOK REVIEW

Christopher Rollason

Quixotic Encounters: Indian Responses to the Knight from Spain.
Ed. Shyama Prasad Ganguly. New Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2006.
xv+162 pages. Price: Rs. 450 (Hard Cover).

Don Quijote, Miguel de Cervantes' masterpiece considered by many to be not only the first but still the best novel ever written in the Western world, is also a book that wears its own intertextuality and translatability on its sleeve, calling out from its pages to other cultures and other texts. Thus, in the sixth chapter of Part I (published in 1605), we find the censorious barber and priest picking up (and preserving) a volume by none other than Miguel de Cervantes; in the third chapter of Part II (1615), Don Quijote takes into his hands a copy of the first part of Cervantes' very novel featuring himself; and from the ninth chapter of Part I on, Cervantes officially ascribes the book to an imaginary Arab writer, Cide Hamete Benengeli, thus making it appear to be a mere translation, done into Spanish from the Arabic by an anonymous Moorish scribe in Toledo and relayed to the world by Miguel de Cervantes. A book which purports in this way to be a translation of a text from another culture, however bizarre and arbitrary that claim may seem, has certainly positioned itself from the beginning in the front line of a potential intercultural dialogue through translation and localisation.

In this connection, the story of the reception, translation and appropriation of the *Quijote* in a culture as huge as is India must surely appear of enormous interest, especially as we are dealing with a country where English is widely read, English-language books are readily available, and Cervantes' novel has long been in circulation, if not in the original in a country where few know Spanish, nonetheless and certainly in the various standard translations into English.

- **Dr. Christopher Rollason** is an independent scholar living in France. He has lectured and published widely on Indian Writing in English. He has been a Visiting Lecturer at Kakatiya University, Warangal and CIEFL Hyderabad (2002) and a Visiting Professor at JNU Delhi (2006).

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Being
a woman
is like being
Irish.
Everyone says
you're important
and nice
but you take
second place
all the same.

Iris Murdoch

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