RE-MARKINGS

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William Shakespeare

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Aristotle & Bharata

Jayadev & Edwin Arnold

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EDITORIAL

If one takes a tour of the realm of poetry and art guided by the comprehensive narrative map provided by Thomas Gray's "Progress of Poesy," then one is instantly transported back to those magic Greek mountains of inspiration where "Ev'ry shade and hallow'd Fountain/ Murmur'd deep a solemn sound." With the dawn of Greece's "evil hour," one departs from such fruitful creative pastures in the company of the Muses for the Latian plains. The long sojourn in the Latium kingdom, however, is brought to a close as the Muses find distasteful the "pomp of tyrant-Power, /And coward Vice, that revels in her chains." Finally, the Muses leave for the "sea-circled coast" of England where Shakespeare and Milton ensure, for the Muses, a permanent abode. Gray's poem decidedly celebrates the heights of greatness attained by English poetry under the British Empire where the Sun was never likely to set. But the Sun did set and the enveloping darkness cast its pale shadow on the British Empire, effecting not only its political supremacy but also what F.R. Leavis called the "Athenian function" of England.

The process of decolonization that began with America's *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and continued till the third quarter of the twentieth century brought in its wake far-reaching changes in the sphere of literature and art as erstwhile colonies began to realize the imperatives of creating an autonomous body of literature in English that would remain strongly rooted in their respective soils. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave the clarion call for such autonomy by reminding the American mind that "our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close." He chided the American Scholar for feeding "on the sere remains of foreign harvests" and exhorted him to seek his model in his "own" mind rather than blindly imitate the Doric or the Greek model. He stated in clear terms: "If the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also" ("Self-Reliance").

The need for autonomy in the sphere of art and letters was felt gradually by each nation as it sought to free itself from the fetters of colonial hangover that had hitherto urged many native writers writing in English to abandon their own cultural roots and tradition to “go whoring after English gods.” This making of an indigenous variety of literature may not have diminished, in any way, the power and glory of what was known as English literature but it has brought the significant fact to light that literatures in English have begun to make an indelible imprint on the literary map of an ever progressive world. It is quite customary now to see in numerous nations a huge corpus of English renderings/translations of even native and regional literatures.

In this era of globalization, it is certainly a unique phenomenon to observe an underlying unity running through the literary productions of diverse nations and cultures influenced by English cultural norms and at the same time to be aware that English was the language of the colonizer. This beautiful collage of diverse traditions and cultures -- that Claude Levi-Strauss calls the “bricolage,” – promises the emergence of a brave new world where writers and artists can literally wish away boundaries and barriers of space, culture and time.

The current issue of *Re-Markings* offers an instance of such a “bricolage” that indicates the limitless possibilities of a vastly diversified unity made possible by a common language. It is interesting indeed to see at a glance how Aristotle and Bharata, Shashi Deshpande and Ntozake Shange, Nissim Ezekiel, Jayanta Mahapatra and Keats, Guru Nanak and Bulhe Shah, Jayadev and Edwin Arnold, Somerset Maugham and R.K. Narayan, D.H. Lawrence and Denis Johnson, Shakespeare and Arthur Miller, display a unique commonality of concern that comes from knowing that love and joy, pain and pleasure, anger and compassion, poverty and affluence, life and art, evanescence and essence, margin and centre, harmoniously converge into a beautiful mosaic of multiculturalism that cuts across narrow walls of divisiveness to discover and embrace the quintessence of the truly human.

Nibir K. Ghosh

Chief Editor

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GREYHOUND SPACE IN DENIS JOHNSON'S *ANGELS*

James Giles

Denis Johnson's *Angels* opens with the female protagonist, Jamie Mays, boarding a Greyhound bus and thereby entering into a space that will define and severely prescribe her existence and her identity for the remainder of the novel. On the bus, she meets Bill Houston, the dark angel who becomes her companion on a journey that will take her across a continent and back and, more crucially, into a harrowing confrontation with her very soul. Violence becomes a third companion in her nightmarish quest for validation and stability. The debased and littered public space assigned to the economically disadvantaged, the spiritual dreams and visions of those condemned to economic and spiritual poverty, and a nightmarish third space that emerges from the violent merger of the first two constitute the dominant geography of Johnson's 1983 novel.[1] The novel's surrealistic feel is enhanced by the constant eliding of boundaries between the three spaces. In addition, the text's central characters sometimes trespass into a postmodern middle- and upper-class space, in one climactic instance with deadly results.

The novel opens with these symbolic and vaguely ominous words, "in the Oakland Greyhound all the people were dwarfs…"(3). In the American mythos, it is the marginalized and the powerless who travel by bus; and, in the reality of the American socio-economic structure, such people are indeed diminished. Fleeing from existence in a trailer park and a marriage to an unfaithful husband, Jamie, along with her two young daughters, boards the bus in Oakland with no very definite destination in mind; she is vaguely in search of the something better that America promises. Instead, she finds herself trapped in an extended impoverished space.

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A VERY INDIAN ENGLISH POET
(NISSIM EZEKIEL, 1924–2004)

K. Narayana Chandran

> *Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.* — P. B. Shelley
> *Poets are the legislators of the unacknowledged world*. — George Oppen

Obituaries, due and dutiful, remembered the poet, the man, the friend, the teacher, and so on, but in the *Re-Markings* editorial somewhere I seemed to meet the Nissim Ezekiel I knew, a great lover of poetry he remembered. For much of what Ezekiel read, or was required to read (again, as a poet, man, friend, teacher…) was neither poetry nor anything he frankly loved to remember. "This stuff," tapping on wads of assorted typed material on his desk, Ezekiel once told me, "asks nothing of the reader but tolerance."

The poetry he loved, however, was another matter. He not only knew much of it by heart, but insisted that any line, quoted/remembered from the poets, be wholly accurate. Once, in the mid-70s, Ezekiel and I recalled nearly every line successfully, by turns, of Auden's famous elegy on Yeats. That was for me a great lesson in understanding him *and* the poetry. His memory was certainly superior to mine, although I would then reason to myself that Ezekiel's teaching job must have given him an edge in such matters. (Wasn't I a "poor" Course Assistant at IIT, on a monthly stipend of Rs. 450/-, itching to teach poetry to an admiring audience?). Who can forget the poem you teach year after year– the text, the commentary, and the exam questions? (But no; I have revised my opinion of such matters since then. Nearly thirty years later than those conversations with Ezekiel, I seem to know him better than I had. His memory of poetry,…

- **Dr. K. Narayana Chandran** is Professor of English at the University of Hyderabad where he has been teaching since 1986.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

Jaydeep Sarangi

Physicist and poet, Jayanta Mahapatra holds the distinction of being the first Indian poet in English to have received the Sahitya Akademi Award(1981) for Relationship. His other volumes include Close the Sky, Ten by Ten, Svayamvara & Other Poems, A Father's Hours, Temple, A Rain of Rites, Waiting, The False Start, Life Signs, Dispossessed Nests, A Whiteness of Bone, Burden of Waves and Fruit and Bare Face. His honours include the Jacob Glatstein Prize for Poetry. He writes in English and Oriya and edits a literary journal, Chandrabhaga. He has successfully steered away from fashionable labels like "post-modernist", "post-colonialist" and the like. According to Dilip Chitre, "Mahapatra is what the Indian poet writing in English is supposed to be; an interpreter of a unique, complex and exotic culture through its landscape and people. This is the kind of role Satyajit Ray's films have played internationally." In all humility Mahapatra remains totally detached from the pressures of the unholy market forces that seem to dominate today's world of creativity. Rooted in ancestral traditions, and yet not unaware of the face of a new changing reality, Mahapatra beautifully recreates in the reflective mode of his poetic speech the unique specificity of the landscape around him. He looks out onto the world but the poems that emerge are of the inner life: intense, compelling and contemplative. In his Sahitya Akademi Award 'acceptance note' he gratefully confesses his debt to Orissa, "to this land in which my roots lie and lies my past, and in which lies my beginning and my end, where the wind knees over the grief of the river…

- **Dr. Jaydeep Sarangi** teaches English at Seva-Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Kapgari, Midnapur, West Bengal.

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ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: ESSENCE AND EVANESCENCE

Shernavaz Buhariwala

Antony and Cleopatra is located in the latter part of Shakespeare's dark decade, which commenced with *Julius Caesar* and closed with *Coriolanus*. In this saga of war and romance, Shakespeare takes us on an exciting journey from evanescence to essence. T.S. Eliot has observed that "Time present and time past, are both perhaps present in time future, and time future contained in time past". If time is eternally present, it follows that time is irredeemable. And we who are bound on the wheel are inevitably beset with mirages. The embodied state, being prone to decadence or delusion, needs to detach itself from time's rotation in order to gain a view from the "still point of the turning world". The still point is neither static nor mobile but liberated from inner and outer compulsions. The worldly enticements cannot be discounted, for only through time can time be conquered. In projecting this pilgrimage, Eliot has made frequent use of the elements of earth, water, fire and air. These are rampant in the macrocosm, in various permutations and continue to exert a utilitarian spell on hapless humanity. However, when the Four Quartets (Quarters) achieve a circle, the same elements achieve another significance, to become the source and end of movement. Eliot's paradigm is useful to my thesis, if only to construct a tentative frame, to accommodate Shakespeare's plot of passion and purgation.

I have noticed that here the pattern of characterization differs from that of the four great tragedies. The hero is free of a fatal flaw. An error in military strategy at the battle of Actium, cannot be construed as "Hamartia" in the Shakespearean sense. Nor is there a standard villain. For the shrewd and sterile Caesar cannot measure up to Machiavellian standards. Hence conflict is minimized. By conflict I understand an agonized debate stemming from a matured sensitivity.

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ARISTOTLE AND BHARATA : A CRITICAL STUDY IN PROTOTYPAL AFFINITIES

Gunjan Chaturvedi

More than a century back, in 1865, Matthew Arnold defined criticism as "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world". To get anywhere near the standard of the best and to establish a current of fresh and true ideas every critic, Arnold advised, "must dwell much on foreign thought…(and) must try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better". (Arnold: 162-164). In our own age T.S. Eliot asserted, "No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You can not value him alone; you must set him for contrast and comparison among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical criticism" (Eliot: 23). And in his *Theory of Literature* Renè Wellek attacked the falsity of the notion of a self-enclosed national literature. He opined that literature must be thought of as a totality and the growth and development of literature must be traced without regard to linguistic distinctions. "Literature", he asserted, "is one, as art and humanity are one; and in this conception lies the future of historical literary studies" (Wellek: 49-50). In the light of the sanctions given by these renowned critics a comparative study of the Eastern and the Western literary traditions can, in no way, be called a merely pedantic effort. It is the need of the hour to pair and compare the artists who are the able representatives of their respective traditions and who seem to have been endowed with like minds and like inclinations.

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TALKING TO DOLLS: NTOZAKE SHANGE'S *SASSAFRASS, CYPRESS AND INDIGO*

Ram Badode

Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo (1982) explores aspects of the African American woman's psyche against the trials of young womanhood of the three plants named sisters. Like in her first drama, *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide*, Shange explores the pangs and joys of African American women in this novel through a pastiche of prose, poetry, music, dance and recipes.

Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo is the story of three women who weave a colorful and complete pattern interlocking their lives, dreams, achievements. Working on an intimate feminist space Ntozake Shange traces the complex relationship of these three sisters who go their own way in the world to find their identity and realise that they cannot do so without getting back to each other. Using a vocabulary that is lyrical and deep, Shange charts the magical journey of each sister pursuing her own course to her dream. The story starts with, "Where there is a woman there is magic" (Shange 1). A magic only women would understand through their body and soul. Their names themselves bring forth originality and kindle our imagination. Where 'Liliane' could create music, Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo, through their names create bloom and life.

Jean Strandness argues that Shange creates a meaningful feminine world in *Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo*, by drawing from the so called trivial metaphors of woman's experience. Strandness says that dolls, flowers, stones, feathers, apples, the moon, the ocean, menstruation, dreams, spells, recipes, rituals for trance journeys, letters, journals, weaving, dancing and psychic healing help the three sisters to discover their personalities and to evoke a world of their own.

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POLYPHONY IN LAWRENCE'S *WOMEN IN LOVE*: A DIALOGIC READING

Prakash Chandra Pradhan

I

The Dialogic mode in fictional text brings out contradictory plural ideological positions into contact and conflict thereby lending the fictional text a dynamic, argumentative structure. A fictional text gives an interpretation of the world it represents. In the fictional world, the vehicle for ideology may either be the narrative voice or a character/characters. On the ideological level, "point of view" refers to the set of values or belief communicated by the language of a text. In a novel, "ideological point of view" refers to the system of beliefs, values and categories by which a character of a social structure comprehends the world. There might be either a single dominating world-view as in the case of monologic text or a plurality of ideological position as in the case of a polyphonic novel. However, Fowler's argument is quite right when he says that "Plural ideological structure is more interesting, and particularly when the different value systems articulated in the work are in some conflicting relationship" (1986:131). In relation to "dialogic structure" and "polyphonic voice" in Dostoevsky' s novels, Bakhtin too emphasizes the plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses in a polyphonic novel (1984:6). In such a novel, the narrator's voice may collide with the consciousness of the characters. The influence of one voice on another, the narrator's sense of consciousness of a character, is called "the dialogic structure". In such texts, the characters and the implied author represent independent and autonomous world-views. Many unmerged personalities join together to bring out unity as well as conflict among them. The narrator does not deliver a finalizing judgmental word on the debate of the protagonists/marginal characters. Such writing is based on "fluid, flexible point of view."

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QUEST FOR SELF-REALIZATION AND LIBERATION IN AMBAI'S "A KITCHEN IN THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE"

C. Sharada

G. S. Lakshmi writes in Tamil under the pseudonym Ambai. Her first collection of short stories *Shattered Wings* was published in 1976. She published a critical work in English, *The Face Behind The Mask*, a study of the images of women in modern Tamil fiction by women writers. Ambai's second collection of stories *A Kitchen in the Corner of the House* was originally written in Tamil and translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrome, a well-known translator and editor, who succeeds in retaining the original tautness of technicality and effervescent essence of the original. Her works mostly focus on gender discrimination, gender oppression and gender construction in our society, but there are some works of science fiction and some with other important themes. In most of her stories we find women not as victims but as human beings who rise against all odds to cope with life in the face of gender discrimination.

Her short story "A Kitchen in the Corner of the House"[1] is a narrative seen through the eyes of Minakshi, the daughter-in-law of the house, who refuses to forego little pleasures like watching the full view of mountains through the window of the kitchen, or having an extension of the wash area outside the kitchen at the cost of being labeled as a rebel. Minakshi has her own vision of freedom and liberation. Ambai employs symbolic motifs of freedom like birds, mountains, lakes and sea, and of keys and kitchen which represent confinement.

Minakshi begins her story with a vivid description of the dark, dingy kitchen thrown carelessly at the end of the big house. The women of the house seem to have been wedded to the pots and pans, their lives woven around the concept of kitchen.

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A CRY FOR SELF-ASSERTION AND SELF-EXPRESSION IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THAT LONG SILENCE*

Anuradha Gaur

Shashi Deshpande is a well-known figure in contemporary Indian English fiction. She is a highly woman-conscious writer who has presented, through her literary ventures, a very authentic picture of the Indian woman placed in the male-dominated society. She has explored and analyzed the emotional world of women with great insight and intelligence. She admits that she is able to empathize better with women and hence her protagonists are necessarily women:

> As writing is born out of my personal experience, the fact that I am a woman is bound to surface. Besides, only a woman would write my books - they are written from the inside, as it were.1

She provides a peep into the inner world of women and focuses on the innermost feelings and intricate complexities of women's heart and mind. In almost all her novels, she lays bare the wounded psyche of women. In a hostile and chauvinistic society, a woman is not allowed to live according to her own choice. She has to live according to the norms and traditions of the society which views her as a daughter, sister, wife and mother but certainly not as a human being. Shashi Deshpande's chief concern is to present a woman's struggle in desiring to be a whole human being, regardless of differences in sex in the context of Indian society. In her Sahitya Akademi award winning novel *That Long Silence* Deshpande narrates the story of an Indian housewife who maintained her silence throughout her life but ultimately breaks it softly in order to survive. The present paper is an attempt to study the quest for self-assertion and self-expression in this significant work. It is significant in the sense that with this novel Shashi Deshpande breaks her own silence.

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THE IMPACT OF THE EAST AND THE WEST ON SOMERSET MAUGHAM

V.K. Singhal

Maugham and the East

Maugham was an international traveller. He visited most of the Eastern and Western countries with a view to exploring new realm and collecting material for his creative outpourings. These travels gave him new and suitable settings to his stories, novels and dramas. They also widened his approach to life. Maugham was keenly interested in the Orient and the world of the South Sea Islands. Actually, his first interest in the East was aroused by the works of Melville and Pierreloti. The East for him became a symbol of joy, liberation, natural beauty and spiritual solace. It could provide a relief to the modern man who was lost in the mirage of life. Maugham himself intended "to escape to far-away countries, where life and its struggle with primitive nature still requires courage and a sense of adventure."[1]

The East provided him with passion, inspiration and fascination. It also taught him a lot about human nature. A large portion of Maugham's work has for its unique setting the Far East. Four novels: *The Moon and Six Pence, The Painted Veil, The Narrow Corner* and *The Razor's Edge,* two travel books, *A Chinese Screen and The Gentleman in the Parlour*, two plays, *East of Suez* and *The Letter* and many of his stories like "Rain", "Home" and "The Pool" etc. have used the Eastern setting in a special way. Eastern references directly or indirectly are found in almost all his works. His long travels to the Orient provided him not only with a deep study of human nature but also with new, charming and radiant settings.

Maugham was highly fascinated with the life and work of the French impressionist painter, Paul Gauguin, which provided him with the motivation for his trip to the South Sea during World War I and a visit to Tahiti.

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PLENTITUDE IN THE VOID: KEATS'S "TO AUTUMN"

S.S. Sharma

The moment one mentions the fact that "To Autumn" is as close to perfection as any shorter poem in the English language, one is guilty of cliche. Harold Bloom then comes to one's help. His view is that this is a 'cliche' that cannot be demonstrated too often and that it is more frequently asserted than evidenced. Bloom adds that in approaching "To Autumn" we need as many angles as we can get because the poem is "a round solidity casting shadows on the flat surfaces of our criticism."[1]

What is it that makes "To Autumn" so special within the 1819 formidable body of poetry represented by the Odes. Briefly, the features that set the poem apart are: the time of its composition, the degree of its immersion in the actual, the Negative Capability or a Zen-like empty plenitude embodied in it, its extraordinary concretion, its Englishness, the stilling and the toning down of intensity that is at work, its grasp of process and stasis, the rich consolatory farewell it spells out and the impersonality or the deselving that it achieves. The poem is a supreme triumph in the matter of management of tone and of offering an opening-at-the-end poetic structure that so many modernist texts (poems and novels alike) reached after. "To Autumn" is also remarkable for the influence (Eliotic as well as Bloomian and acknowledged as well as hotly denied) that it has exercised on modern poets right from Wallace Stevens and T.S. Eliot to Robert Lowell of *Day by Day.* The fact that "To Autumn" was written in the wake of the abandonment of the second "Hyperion" has something to do with the Zen-like, spiritually full stillness that is at the heart of the poem. A key line in both the "Hyperions" is: "But where the dead leaf fall there did it rest." The process that "To Autumn" actualises at the level of handling time is one of 'deathwards progressing to no death.'

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NARRATIVE STRATEGY IN R.K. NARAYAN'S *GRANDMOTHER'S TALE*

Nityananda Pattanayak

R.K. Narayan's *Grandmother's Tale*,[1] the last of his corpus, invites a closer study for the classical narrative strategies adopted in it. The work, in keeping with the rich story-telling tradition of India, relives an oral tale that has passed down the years. As the writer declares in the beginning, the work is neither a full volume biography nor a fiction:

> *The borderline between fact and fiction, between biography and tale wears thin and ultimately vanishes in the following chronicle. Readers are bound to question how much it is history and how much is fiction. I do not know the answer myself (GT "Explanation").*

In just seventy-one pages, a little more than fifteen thousand words, Narayan succeeds in achieving his object of mythicising one of his progenitors. Within a limited length the story encompasses four generations and allows the author to codify the oral heroic tale of his great grandmother and sprinkle on her the colour of a mythical figure, that of Savitri, who retrieves her husband Satyavan from the clutches of death and succeeds in being blessed with a boon of begetting one hundred children. Narayan's delineation of his great grandmother Bala, with her patience, perseverance and determination, in the mould of Savitri, is fascinating: "She grows in the novel from an innocent schoolgirl to a firm, determined, aggressive, young woman and finally to a quiet, docile, orthodox, hindu wife" (GT postscript). The epic dimension given to Bala is not an isolated instance; it is the very edifice of Narayan's art of characterisation since in *Gods, Demons and Others* Narayan says: "The characters in the epic are prototypes and moulds in which humanity is cast, and remain valid for all time."[2]

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REFLECTIONS ON JAYADEV'S *GEET GOVIND* IN THE LIGHT OF EDWIN ARNOLD'S "THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS"

Hemlata Srivastava

Geet Govind by the famous twelfth century Sanskrit poet Jayadev ranks among the few classic epics in Sanskrit that claim to be indelible golden sparks in the horizon of world literature. This magnificent, lyrical and devotional Sanskrit idyll has been the centre of attention, not only for the Hindu world but also for the entire literary European world. The Sanskrit scholar A.B. Keith has compared this work with that of ancient Greek scholars viz. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Modern English scholars like Sir Edwin Arnold and George Keyt were attracted by this pastoral drama to the extent that they translated it into English so as to make it comprehensible to the western world. This paper is an attempt to view the translation of *Geet Govind* by Edwin Arnold in the light of Jayadev's immortal classic.

Geet Govind presents the love story of Lord Krishna and Radha. This narrative is depicted in terms of songs which are called 'Ashthapadis'. These songs are divided into twelve cantos consisting of twenty four song-sets in twelve classical *ragas* and five *taalas*. At the centre of Jayadev's attention seems to be Lord Krishna who he feels should be worshiped as an *Avtar* (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. He composed this poem so that the wise people may enjoy this poetic form to reflect on Vishnu: "Whatever is of the Condition of Love's discernment shown with / Beauty in poetic form, and all skill in the / Art of Heaven's musicians, and all of the reflection on Vishnu/ All such you may joyfully see, wise people/ In this song of the Lord of the Herds, /made by the poet devoted to him, wise Jayadeva (Canto 12 George Keyt). Jayadev wanted that Lord Krishna, who is full of compassion, should place his heart in the words of his song and thus redeem this "Sinful age of its fever/ Recalling the feet of Hari"…/O people, place Hari forever in your….

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'DEATH IS DEAD, NOT HE': A TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR MILLER

Nibir K. Ghosh

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods there be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

--A.C. Swinburne

It is perhaps a strange coincidence that Arthur Miller died on February 10, 2005, exactly 56 years to the day that his immortal classic *Death of a Salesman* began its life on Broadway. *Death of a Salesman* brought Miller not only the Pulitzer Prize but also international acclaim. Set against the backdrop of a nation emerging out of the great depression of the 1930s and the Second World War, the catastrophe of the tragic hero, Willy Loman, reflected the catastrophe of an average American caught in the nightmare of the American Dream. The play brought to the forefront the inhuman dimensions of capitalism where a salesman approaching 60 who has served his employer faithfully for more than half his life is thrown away, as he says, like a piece of orange peel. Weaving together, with exquisite skill, realism and memory, Miller brought broad societal themes within the ambit of the ordinary lives of his characters. And yet the play refuses to be circumscribed as a period piece because it foregrounds Willy not as a mere victim of inhuman forces that control the economic and social environment but of his own delusions.

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BULHE SHAH'S MYSTIC VERSES

Translated from the Punjabi by
N.S. Tasneem

Bulhe Shah (1680-1758) was a mystic poet who firmly established the Sufi tradition in Punjab. In his poetic creations the seeker of truth is a female who aspires for union with the Lord.

BULHA KEE JANAAN MAIN KAUN

Neither am I a Momin[1] in the mosque
Nor a believer in pagan rituals
Neither am I a puritan among sinners
Nor am I Moses or a heathen ruler
Bulha! What do I know who I am ?

Neither am I a learned scholar
Nor am I addicted to narcotics
Neither am I seeking sensual pleasures
Nor am I awake or asleep
Bulha! What do I know who I am ?

Neither am I joyous or sorrowful
Nor am I a sinner-saint
Neither am I water or of earth
Nor am I fire or air
Bulha! What do I know who I am ?

Neither am I of Arabia or Lahore
Nor am I a Hindi[2] of Nagaur city
Neither am I a Hindu or a Turk in Peshawar
Nor am I a resident of Nadaun[3]
Bulha! What do I know who I am ?

Neither am I conversant with theology
Nor am I the offspring of Adam and Eve
Neither am I known by any appellation

Nor am I a sitter or a roamer
Bulha! What do I know who I am ?

I am the beginning I am the end
I know not the other self
No one is wiser (they say) than me
Who is over there, Bulha Shauh?
Bulha! What do I know who I am ?

[1]a devout muslim; [2]Resident of Hindustan (India); [3]a city.

RANJHA RANJHA KARDI NEE MAIN

By repeating Ranjha[1] Ranjha
I myself have become Ranjha
You call me Dheedo Ranjha
Heer I am no more

Ranjha is in me, I am in Ranjha
Nothing else crosses my mind
It's not in me but in himself
He seeks fun and frolic

By repeating Ranjha Ranjha
I myself have become Ranjha
You call me Dheedo Ranjha
Heer I am no more

In my hands a long stick and a begging bowl
On my shoulder rests the brown rug
Bulha! Just see the transcending state
Heer Saleti has attained

By repeating Ranjha Ranjha
I myself have become Ranjha
You call me Dheedo Ranjha
Heer I am no more

[1]The legendary lover Ranjha and his beloved Heer have been immortalized in epical creations by Punjabi poets, especially Waris Shah.

NEE MAIN KAMLI HAAN

Hajj pilgrims go to Mecca, my Ranjha is my Mecca
Indeed I am insane

I am engaged to Ranjha, my father coerces me in vain
Indeed I am insane

Hajj pilgrims go to Mecca, countless Meccas my house embodies
Indeed I am insane
Herein reside Hajis and crusaders and many more
Indeed I am insane

Hajj pilgrims go to Mecca, I am bound for Takhat Hazare[1]
Indeed I am insane

Mecca is there where my lover resides, you may consult scriptures
Indeed I am insane

[1]*The village of the legendary lover Ranjha.*

- ***Prof. N.S. Tasneem*** *is the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award (1999) and Shiromani Sahitkar Puraskar (1995). A former Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, he has published novels, essays, literary criticism in Punjabi, Urdu and English. His essays "Modern Indian Literature" and "Masterpieces of Literature"* have appeared in *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature published by National Book Trust and Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.*

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Two Poems

O.P. Arora

THE BARBARIANS

Thriving on others' toil
for ages immemorial
Vainglorious, idle drones
cleverly manipulating the riches
coining slogans and phrases
presiding over the empire
of starving, slumbering slaves
sustained by lies, lure and lire…

A maniac hurls a pebble
it knocks down a label
The empire shakes
Impertinence of the knaves…
Tremors, panic, nerves
vows to blow out the barbarians…

Fear stalks the heart and the desert.

They come with bombs and fire
spewing the ire
raining the fire…
Mounds of corpses
cities in ruins
countries crash

civilizations perish…

They all kneel, hands raised
prayers on their parched lips
but the fangs become fiercer with the tips.

A group of children
playing with their balls
around a sandcastle
On their sight
they all melt away
One child turns
Throws his ball, and runs
Big Bang
whang, whang, whang

Everything comes tumbling down
down
down…

THE DEATH OF AN ARTIST

My Everestian thoughts
rising to the starry boughs
bewildering heights, bewitching glories
unfurling the flag of grandeur
great, glittering, dazzling deeds
The indomitable spirit, The Promethean struggle,
the dogged determination
In abundance the preparation
Everything I ventured
trivialities, petty and mean
consumed my purest passions
sacred goals strayed into frivolousness…
Enmeshed in the lackluster, long winding paths
every time I prepared for the final plunge
criss-cross of the barbed wire sentimentalities
rainbow talents squandered on the superficialities
dissipated and blighted
soulless skeleton, once a proud pathfinder
holding their fingers, in crossing the stream of life
drowned midstream, the whirlpool of sordid strife.

- ***Dr. O.P. Arora*** *is Reader in English at Shyam Lal College, University of Delhi, Delhi. He has to his credit two volumes of poetry in English.*

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ALCATRAZ AROUND

V.V.B. Rama Rao

Souls are on sale here
To be bought dirt cheap, dime a hundred
Now more than ever N, E, W, S.
Pre-term polls to perpetrate misrule
Faustus was better off
His doom self-chosen, not His doing.

Here the pre-doomed lament and languish
'This is Alcatraz – nor are we out of it'
He is sent up to rule down
And rules he forever.
Laws no longer many-made
For his is the kingdom
His kingdoms come!
Dictatorship has many faces
White, brown, whitish and black
Blatant ones fare better
Cringing citizenry thrive
The speckled Hitler wears a kid mask
Slogans blare, deafening, denuding
The darkling helpless cannot wriggle out
Swimming, gasping, in ice-cold saline waters
Dark, shining, Alcatraz is real: all else a promise.

- ***Dr V.V.B. Rama Rao**, a retired ELT professional, is a creative writer and translator*

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Two Poems

Tejinder Kaur

SOUNDS

Wonderful is the
Unfathomable
World of sounds
Each particle
Animate, inanimate
Emanating
Peculiar sound
Harsh, pleasing
Mute, soft & loud
Revealing individual identity
Evincing
Creator's skill, fecundity.
World originated
From the 'Word'
Releasing plethora of sounds
Ever growing.

WILL YOU COME BACK?

O Son of God
You promised
To come back
Second time
To redeem the fallen ones
Show us the right path.
You seem to have forgotten
To come or perhaps you
Are busy somewhere else?
It's getting late
Make it soon
Or you may regret
When this earth
Remains
Without humans.

- ***Dr. Tejinder Kaur*** *is Professor of English in the Department of Correspondence Courses, Punjabi University, Patiala. She has published a critical work titled R.S. Crane : A Study in Critical Theory, and three collections of poetry: Reflections, Images & Expressions.*

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Review Essay

THE (B) REACH OF GURU NANAK DEV'S MISSION

Amritjit Singh

Roopinder Singh, who is a journalist based in Chandigarh and comes from a family of scholars, has written this most readable and beautifully illustrated introduction to the life and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism. Sikhism counts today among the half-dozen major faiths, with over 25 million adherents spread all over the globe. Despite tons of research by scholars of various backgrounds, the life of Guru Nanak remains a difficult subject to write about[1]. The author strikes a welcome balance between the 17th and 18th century hagiographic versions of Guru Nanak's life enshrined in at least three manuscripts known collectively as the *Janamsakhis* (in fact, the most charming of the book's over 50 illustrations come from a 1724 version and have been reproduced here for the first time) and the reconstructed accounts of 19th- and 20th-century historians. This balance combined with the book's simple (but not simplistic) rendition of the Guru's message makes the book timely and suitable for both Sikh and non-Sikh readers. Surely, the reach of Guru Nanak's message would today include a wide variety of audiences, well beyond the global readership of Sikhs, who may experience in Roopinder Singh's articulation of the Guru's life a sense of breach in their own lives and/or the need for their support to get the Guru's message across to non-Sikh readers.

Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469 in Talwandi, some 65 kilometers west of Lahore and known today as Nankana Sahib. He lived for the last two decades of his life as a farmer in Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) on the banks of river Ravi and passed away there in 1539 after installing Guru

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Roopinder Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2004. Illustrations and Maps. 86pp. Price: Rs. 295.

Angad Dev as his immediate successor. As a child, he studied with both Muslim and Hindu teachers, and his poetry reflects a considerable command of Arabic, Persian, Braj Bhasha, Hindi, Punjabi, and other languages. Traditional accounts--including those from the *Janamsakhis* (lit., "birth stories")—have tended to underplay Guru Nanak's learning, possibly to bolster the belief, as British historian Macauliffe puts it, "that the acquirements and utterances of the religious teachers may be attributed solely to divine inspiration." (M. A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Volume I, 9-10, Oxford, 1909). Although historians are not agreed on all details, it is well-established that around 1499, Nanak had a revelation, often epitomized by his cryptic but contemporaneously meaningful comment, "There is no Hindu, no Mussalman." For the following 20 years, roughly until 1520, when he finally settled to farming life in Kartarpur, Guru Nanak traveled widely throughout South and West Asia to spread his message, in four journeys away from home and hearth known as the *udasis*. He often traveled on foot with Mardana, a Muslim disciple from his village who would play the *rebab* (a small string instrument) whenever the Guru burst into song with his poetic utterances.

Amritjit Singh**,** *Professor of English at Rhode Island College, has authored or edited over a dozen books on American and Indian literatures.*

Note: For complete review contact remarkings@hotmail.com

AN INDIAN RESPONSE TO *CLEVELAND ANONYMOUS*

Anand B. Patil

Keith Gandal's *Cleveland Anonymous: a novel* (2002) is his first novel which defies the generic signifiers of the 'well made novel'. Perhaps this is one of the reasons to add a tag to the title itself. It demands greater literary skill to interpret it in the first reading. Only such readers who are acquainted with the fiction of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Günter Grass and Salman Rushdie can reconstruct the plot through the fragments of narratives embroidered with the events in the past and present. It is one more sample of what Linda

Hutcheon describes as "postmodern historiographic metafiction."

The novel has a backdrop of the cultural history of America in the late '60s. There are glimpses of pieces of parodies from contemporary world history. Throughout the narrative there is a strong undercurrent of subtle ironic use of historical intertextuality. The novel opens with the dramatization of the loss of virginity of Sam Franklin and his foster sister Mary Jane on the banks of the Cuyahoga the day the river caught fire: "We lost our virginity on the banks of the Cuyahoga the day the driver caught fire. As far as I knew, it was the first river to catch fire in the history of the planet. What you might call a major ecological event. It was the earth's virgin aquatic blaze. The ancient elements of Fire and Water impossibly mixing in Cleveland in the summer of 1969" (1). The supernatural fire on the river becomes the …

REFERENCE

Keith Gandal. *Cleveland Anonymous: a novel*. Berkeley: Frog.Ltd, 2002. pp. 305. Price: $14.95 (paperback).

- ***Prof. Anand B. Patil*** *retired as Professor and Head, S.R.T.M. University, Nanded (Maharashtra).*

Note: For complete review contact remarkings@hotmail.com

RE-MARKINGS

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Is it so bad, then,
to be misunderstood?
Pythagorus
was misunderstood,
and Socrates, and Jesus,
and Luther, and Copernicus,
and Galileo, and Newton,
and every pure & wise spirit
that ever took flesh.
To be great is
to be misunderstood.

Ralph Waldo Emerson,
"Self-Reliance"

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