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EDITORIAL

On 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of America and articulated the agony and the aspirations of the African American community in his "I have a Dream" speech. In this historic address he pointed out how, even one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, "the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination" and how "the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land." Rising above an imminent situation of despair Dr. King had envisaged in his dream that "one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal'" and that "one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."

Engaged and engrossed in the study of race-relationships in America for nearly three decades now, I had always wondered whether the day would ever dawn in the most powerful democracy in the world when the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the legendary hero of the Civil Rights Movement, would become a reality. During 2003-04, while working on my book of interviews at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA, I couldn't resist asking many writers and statesmen, with whom I had the opportunity to interact, about the remote possibility of White America ever transcending the American Dilemma to usher in a Black President in the White House.

On an average, while many writers on both sides of the color curtain were optimistic enough not to rule out such a possibility, a majority of them were nevertheless very skeptical about the illusion turning into reality. However, I would like to make a special mention of Charles Johnson, the winner of the prestigious National Book Award (USA), who cited the instance of his own rise to fame to support his innate belief that "In this country no individual or group, white or black, could tell me *not to dream*." Unruffled by current statistics that showed there were more Black Americans in jails than in schools and that racial prejudice continued to be unusually strong in American society, Johnson pointed out: "America is very much a pluralistic society...In other words, America really is the point where so many cultures are crossing. And so the large questions that will be carried into the 21st century will be questions of who are we as Americans. And who we

want to be as Americans. But it won't be a black/white dialogue in that respect anymore. This is a significant moment of cultural transition in the early part of the twenty-first century.”

Isn't it spectacular that in just four years time, while these ruminations were on, American history was being rewritten to register the grand story of color in black and white! Barack Obama's phenomenal triumph at the polls has not only convinced everyone that excellence is color-blind but has also brought to the fore Dr. King's faith in the dream he shared with fellow Americans nearly half a century ago. Though it may not yet be a common sight today to see the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners sitting in absolute harmony on the table of brotherhood, and though the irony of racial prejudice implicit in the statement by Frantz Fanon (quoted on the back cover of the current issue of *Re-Markings*) may still appear to be relevant, it must be acknowledged without any reservation that Obama's victory reveals how an extremely perceptive electorate judged its prospective First Citizen not by the color of his skin but by the content of his character.

For black people, the promise of Obama's becoming President is the 'impossible dream' their ancestors had nurtured since the era of slavery. Obama is, as he himself has said, a kind of blank slate onto which Americans have projected their deepest and most visceral social and cultural longings. His victory reaffirms the weight of what he told an audience of 200,000 in Germany. That he is an American who views himself as "a fellow citizen of the world." In a multicultural setting characteristic of a globalized world, it is quite significant that Barack Obama transcends the boundaries of race with his cosmopolitan, globe-spanning background and sensitivity that determined his victory. In a world beleaguered by violence, terrorism, economic recession, cultural conflict and the like, Obama's attributes of humanity, empathy, and compassion have much to offer in terms of light and hope.

With the current issue of *Re-Markings* we enter the eighth year of our glorious partnership with avid readers, contributors and well wishers who have continually strengthened our resolve to offer nothing but the very best as small recompense for their unstinted support and invaluable cooperation. Thank you, one and all!

Nibir K. Ghosh

Chief Editor

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‘HOME’ AND ‘IMAGINED COMMUNITY’ IN CANADIAN IMMIGRANT WRITING

S.S. Sharma

This paper stays within the parameters provided by recent theorising on ‘diaspora’, the nation and identity and focuses on writers of the South Asian diaspora (Sri Lankan and Indian) writing from within Canada. Notions like ‘global souls’ are also examined and so is the idea that migrancy is the essential condition of man. The works of two major post-colonial writers - V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie - serve as a constant non-Canadian reference point because Naipaul’s work has a lot of relevance to the notion of ‘imagined community’ and Rushdie has himself written about ‘imaginary homeland’ in his non-fictional prose. From within Canada, my focus will be on the work of the Sri Lanka born Michael Ondaatje and offering a foil to him will be the work of immigrant Canadian-Indian women poets like Uma Parmeswaran, Surjeet Kalsi and Himani Banerjee who all write as Canadians with Indian roots. The in-between space which they occupy gives to the work of writers like Parmeswaran a Trishanku complex as it did in the case of the great Indian expatriate English-language poet A.K. Ramanujan who had spent most of his life in Chicago but in whose work ‘home’ had a special resonance.

In Naipaul’s case his best novel *A House for Mr. Biswas* and his best India-related non-fictional prose book *India: A Wounded Civilization* offer a good launching pad for any discussion of the diaspora. His ancestors were Indian. He was born in Trinidad. Trinidad Hindus dominate his novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, and his feelings on a visit to the land of his ancestor dominate *India: A Wounded Civilization*. ‘Indias’ of the mind are something you cannot get away from even if physically your ‘home’ may be built in England (Naipaul’s remarkable novel *The Enigma of Arrival* is a profound depiction of how it feels to be a British citizen for a Trinidadian with Indian roots).

- **Late Dr. S.S. Sharma** was Professor in the Department of English at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi.

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**QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN
MARGARET ATWOOD'S *SURFACING* AND
SCOTT MOMADAY'S *THE HOUSE MADE OF DAWN***

A. Karunaker

*I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom
and Wilderness, as contrasted with a freedom and
culture merely civil—to regard man as an inhabitant, or
a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of
society. - Henry David Thoreau*

Wilderness plays an important role in Margaret Atwood's construction of Canadian identity. Wilderness has multiple functions: as a maker of geographical location, as a spatial metaphor, and as a popular cultural myth of Canada. Geographically, wilderness is defined as "wild uncultivated land." Wilderness is understood, within colonial discourse, as a space outside civilized social order and Christian moral laws, and also as the place of mysterious and threatening otherness. It is in this sense only that wilderness could be constructed as 'blank'. Inevitably such construction of wilderness produces contradictory responses: on the one hand it is constructed by most Europeans as a place where one can get lost or killed; while on the other, it can be seen as the space of freedom from social constraints.

Atwood seems to entertain both these possibilities while recognizing a third possibility of interpreting 'wilderness' from a native perspective. She reinvents the white English-Canadian construction of identity, charting a distinctive New World positioning in relation to history, geography and culture suggestive of continuity between immigration narratives and a contemporary awareness of psychic location. Wilderness occupies an important place in finding her identity. Atwood asserts: "You come out of something, and can then branch out in all kinds of different directions, but that doesn't mean cutting yourself off from your roots and from your earth" (*Conversations* 143). This organic image of a tree and the emphasis on location points directly to her construction of Canadian identity.

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**FROM ACTIVISM TO NATION-BUILDING:
SAROJINI NAIDU, KAMALA DEVI
CHATTOPADHYAYA AND ARUNA ASIF ALI**

Mini Nanda

From the turn of the nineteenth century women were treated as pawns at home and in the nationalistic discourse. In the Indian context traditionally, femininity was associated with excessive ritualism. Whether it was Arya Samaj or Brahma Samaj in Bengal or elsewhere the *antahpur* or *Zenana* defined or confined women's existence. Many worked out a meaningful role for themselves; they wrote, read, thought and communicated. Some blossomed through education, while others participated in the national movement. They traveled and interacted with other cultures, exchanged ideas and represented their people to the western world. Through self-education, they gave expression to their feeling of self and that of a nation, its culture and ethos, using indigenous knowledge systems; they shaped their identity and constructed a new nation.

It is a fact that women who participated in the national movement were not always empowered by the struggle. The challenge was of an immense magnitude to negotiate between the invisibility and silence, and to face the public domain - male and colonial. In the late nineteenth century Pandita Ramabai along with Cornelia Sorabji convened a conference for the enactment of the Age of Consent Bill which was passed in 1891. They were pragmatic and worked towards their own regeneration. Their goal for child widows was not remarriage, but training for self-reliance.

Gandhi threw a challenge to the rigid patriarchal system when he emphasized self-reliance for the woman, family and nation through the *Charkha*. Spinning touched the sphere of domesticity and femininity by using the feminine traits to define his most important principle - passive resistance. By giving it a high moral quality that emphasised the virtues of female perseverance, he was able to turn the perception of the traditionally weak into a strong moral force.

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FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM: THREE PROTAGONISTS OF KHALID HOSSEINI

Neera Singh

Afghanistan is the backdrop against which Khalid Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner*¹ and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*², are set. These two multilayered novels chronicle with great insight thirty years of Afghan history and portray the wounded country in a heart-wrenching manner. In both the novels, the characters are caught in a crossfire (both literal and metaphorical) and are completely overwhelmed by external forces. Their lives are influenced not only by a brutal outside world over which they have no control (war and oppression) but their decisions are also influenced a great deal by their own internal emotions like jealousy and anger. In spite of all this the characters find the strength to transcend their limitations—to accept their vulnerabilities and perform acts of self-sacrifice—however devastating they may be.

Hosseini's novels can be studied as psychological case histories of their respective protagonists who are caught in a trap of certain societal values and their own limitations that prevent them from coming to terms with their lives.

According to Erich Fromm³, humans desire natural roots, they want to be an integral part of the world, to feel that they belong. As children, they are rooted to their parents, but if for some reasons, this parent-child relationship fails, it constitutes a serious threat to a meaningful human existence. And if this is still left unresolved, it may grow out of normal proportion and become dangerous to human happiness and survival.

My aim through this paper is to reveal how this parent-child theme, with all its complexities and contradictions, forms the basis of later adult anxieties, insecurities and fears. I intend to do this through a close study of the three main protagonists of Hosseini: Amir from *The Kite Runner* and Mariam and Laila from *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Both novels are multigenerational and the child-parent theme runs prominently through both the novels: the father-son story in *The Kite Runner* told from a male perspective and two mother-daughter...

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REWRITING HISTORY FOR POLITICS: GIRISH KARNAD'S TUGHLAQ AND TIPU SULTAN

Alpana Saini

Girish Karnad is probably the most versatile and perceptive dramatist among contemporary Indian dramatists. Karnad addresses the problematic of Indian subjectivity by employing the devices of myth and history. He uses these devices not to merely visit the past but to look at the present and to anticipate the future. His *Tughlaq* and *Tipu Sultan*, thus, are not just men from history but our contemporary figures. Their predicament is the predicament of our times, rooted in the political and cultural situation in which we find ourselves.

In *Tughlaq*, Karnad has depicted the predicament of Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq, the fourteenth century monarch of Delhi. The idealism of Tughlaq and the subsequent political disillusionment of that period is often compared to that of the similar era of Nehru. Karnad himself suggests this parallel in an interview: "And I felt in the early sixties India had also come very far in the same direction – the twenty-year period seemed to me very much a striking parallel."

Jawaharlal Nehru indeed shared with Tughlaq an over-ambitious dream to build a secular India. Tughlaq forsook his rest and sleep to fulfill his dream but his idealism and vision were ahead of his times and his subjects could not fit into his scheme of things, resulting into complete chaos and upheaval and making Tughlaq desperate. He paradoxically resorted to violence and cruelty for the implementation of his idealistic plans meant for public welfare. Aparna Dharwadker considers this phase resembling the rule of Indira Gandhi in contrast to the earlier phase that resembled Nehru era: "The analogies with Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru thus foreground the more or less well-intentioned idealism of Tughlaq-Barani in the play's first half and suppress the cruelty, repressiveness and cunning of Tughlaq-Aziz in the second..."

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HOMING IN: THE HOUSE IN AMIT CHAUDHURI'S NOVELS

Somdatta Bhattacharya

In this paper, I set out to read Amit Chaudhuri's four novels, namely *A Strange and Sublime Address* (1991), *Afternoon Raag* (1993), *Freedom Song* (1998) and *A New World* (2000), with the focus being on Chaudhuri's use of space. Theories and concepts from human geography form the framework of my analysis. Mainly my readings are informed by what Henri Lefebvre has to say in his book, *The Production of Space* (1991). Lefebvre envisages "social space" as "produced" by social structures and relations, and divides "social space" into its three components: spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. Also in this analysis of the private space of "home," in Chaudhuri's longer fiction, I have also used concepts of both Gaston Bachelard and Malcolm Andrews. Bachelard, in his book *The Poetics of Space* (1958), discusses the space of the house at length. He conceives of the house as a vital space, where the dwellers "take root day after day"(4). Whenever a human being has found even the merest of shelters, his imagination "build[s] walls of improbable shadows, comfort[s] itself with the illusion of protection—or, just the contrary, tremble[s] behind thick walls, mistrust[s] the staunchest ramparts"(Bachelard 5). Malcolm Andrews, on the other hand, does not use the concept of "locus amoenus" with reference to the "house." I have adapted this concept of his and used it here in relation to the "house." Andrews defines "locus amoenus" as a "pleasant place," where the word "amoenus" is a Latin adjective meaning "pleasant." This phrase was used in "classical and Renaissance times to designate distinctively beautiful rural or garden retreats"(Andrews 53). He lists the characteristics of such a place, which has to have a "therapeutic power," has to be "safe," a domesticated environment "insulated from the world of public affairs"(Andrews 53). Adapting concepts of these theorists, I attempt to analyse the space of the "house" in Chaudhuri's novels, to come to definite conclusions about Chaudhuri's insights into the variables of "home," "family," "security," and "transgression."

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**FROM NARRATIVE TO DIALOGICAL:
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' "THE MALEDICTION"
AND *THE STRANGEST KIND OF ROMANCE***

Prakash Joshi

The career of Tennessee Williams as an author has two distinct strata to it. Even as he comes to be celebrated as a major Broadway dramatist, he remains a short fiction writer behind the curtain, consistently and constantly borrowing and remodelling his short fiction plots for plays. His short stories have much more to them than simple fiction: "They are the true memoir of Tennessee Williams. Whatever happened to him, real or imagined, is here"(Vidal xx). Like any other autobiographical writer he very often delves into his own life, his own 'memoir', his own short stories for the basic material for plays. He draws on the short stories so often and so frequently that they get regarded and discussed as "the preliminary sketches for (his) plays" (Vidal xxi).

As Tennessee Williams commutes between the two genres of fiction and drama, he uses two alternative modes of language. In the realm of fiction, he uses an irresistibly compelling narrative mode. He works here with absolute ease enjoying his triple role of observer, narrator and commentator. As a narrator he positions himself in such strategic proximity of the characters that they never ever grow and move out of their author's control. The requirements and conditions of play writing are at variance with those of fiction writing. Generally a play is an exercise in the conversational mode of language; and Tennessee Williams makes it a wonderful exercise. In his plays, the characters generally come out of the narrative control of their author and grow and develop on their native strengths. A representative case in the context of language in two modes is that of the dramatization in *The Strangest Kind of Romance* (One Act play) of the fiction plot of "The Malediction"(Story). The story in question paints the physical deprivation and psycho-spiritual desolation of Lucio, the protagonist.

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Voicing for Space: Contemporary INDIAN WOMEN POETRY IN ENGLISH

Sudhir K. Arora

Gone are the days when a woman was typed as *abla*. In the post-Independence era, her new image branded as *sabla* has emerged. As she has become conscious of her role and contribution in running the family and the society, she redefines her 'Self' while exploring her female space encroached by the male counterpart. Now, she has become aware of the male conspiracy of marginalizing women. Indian women poets like Kamala Das, Mamta Kalia, Melanie Silgado, Eunice De Souza, Imtiaz Dharker, Smita Agarwal, Sujata Bhatt, Charmayne D' Souza, Tara Patel, Meena Alexander, Monika Varma, Gauri Deshpande, Margaret Chatterjee, Lakshmi Kanan, Sunita Jain, Vimla Rao, Lila Ray, Anna Sujatha Madayil, Suniti Namjoshi, Rukmani Nair and many others have given articulations to the feminine sensibility expressing their desire for equal footing with the male counterparts with parameters of their own. From 'Possession' to 'Person' is the graph of a woman's journey that has given her experiences and with these experiences she explores the future possibilities for her fruitful contribution in the era of globalization. To a large extent, she has succeeded in establishing her own identity in the male-oriented world. Like Wordsworth's skylark, she endeavours to keep her balance between Home and Heaven. She always remembers that she is an Indian woman who has her own traditions, ceremonies and codes of conduct but never forgets to make her male counterpart realize her presence and, hence, relocates the female space through her identity.

In the post-Independence scenario, women poets have an environment that is quite suitable for exposing and asserting their identity that was not earlier available to them. Now, Indian women poets in English are voicing the female Self and Sensibility. They aim at exploring the female psyche boldly by countering male chauvinism with the assertion of their authority and identity. They have succeeded in carving out an independent share for themselves in multitudinous spheres in the present setup.

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FEMALE MIGRANTS IN DIVAKARUNI'S *ARRANGED MARRIAGE*

Smriti Singh

In her book *En-gendering India* Sangeeta Ray talks about a semi-official function held at the residence of the Indian ambassador to the United States in 1996 where he draws attention to the “daughters of India” (Ray 5) all dressed in saris or salwaar-kameezes. She arrives at two inferences from this - one, that the Indian male has co-opted as he has to move in the public world and secondly, that women can be counted on to affirm the continuity of tradition. The use of Indian clothes by the women minimizes the fear of Indian culture and tradition being contaminated.

This idea is not something new. Since time immemorial, women have been looked upon as preservers of culture in India. During the nationalist struggle the idea of the nation was a powerful vehicle for harnessing anti-colonial energies and the nation itself was gendered. The term ‘woman’ was appropriated and used as a metonym for nation. According to Susheila Natsa, “in the iconographies of nationalism, images of mothers have conventionally invited symbols suggestive of primal origins – birth, hearth, home, roots, the umbilical cord of being...” (in Ray 129).

We see the trope of woman as nation in Bankim Chandra's *Anandmath* and later in Tagore's sociological novel *The Home and the World* wherein the heroine, Bimla wants Indian men to “realize the country's goddess in its womanhood.” This image of the nation as a woman evoked a sense of female power as well as female helplessness. The nation as mother protected her son from the attack of the colonizers but ravaged by colonialism, she needed the protection of her sons. Apart from this women are brought up on the myths of Sita, Savitri and others and are conditioned to think that they are the cultural guardians of the nation.

This is one side of the coin which has been focused upon in most studies on female migrants. Even in the ‘new’ land, they are seen just as ‘migrant wives’ who have no identity of their own and seem to carry the ‘cultural baggage’ of the homeland.

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GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

Anupama Tewari

In this complex pantheon of diversities the Indian woman remains the point of unity unveiling through each single experience a collective consciousness prized by society that is locked in mortal combat with the power and weakness of age and time. She remains the still centre, like the centre in a potter's wheel, circling to create new forms. -- Anees Jung

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* signals a major breakthrough in Indian Fiction in English. It unfurls a plethora of details related to the changing political scene in Kerala and the problems that women face in India's most literate province. *The God of Small Things* is preeminently a novel by a woman seen through the eyes of a woman. While the texture of the novel is suffused with feminine sensibility, the structure of the novel is also by and large feminine.

The novel presents three generations of women: Baby Kochamma, Mammachi, Ammu and Rahel, all unhappy in their own ways. This reminds us of the famous opening sentence in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*: "All happy families are alike but an unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion." The Novel begins with the pathetic plight of Ammu, a woman divorced by her husband, neglected by her family, badly insulted by police and deserted and rendered helpless by her brother. Ammu yearns for pleasures and happiness and a life free from shackles and constraints. The writer portrays a detailed picture of a lady's movement from childhood to adolescence, from the experience of marriage to the position of a sympathetic and affectionate mother, and as a rebel wife who challenges the age-old hypocritical moral stand of patriarchal family. The tragic tale of Ammu begins with her very childhood. In Roy's terminology, she is like a Mombatti (candle) in a big house unable to face the surge of wind.

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**REDISCOVERING SELF:
A STUDY OF MA JOAD'S CHARACTER IN
JOHN STEINBECK'S *THE GRAPES OF WRATH***

Ajay Kant Sharma & G.A. Ghanshyam

Women's social roles in western culture are central concerns in contemporary feminist criticism. The discourse focuses on the idea that our society is organized around male dominated sex-gender systems that admit two genders, that privilege heterosexual relationships, and that embrace a sexual division of labour of which wife and mother are the primary functions of women.¹ But, in spite of prevailing social dogma to the contrary, the biological functions of childbearing and lactation (motherhood), and the cultural one of nurturing (mothering) are divisible. Whereas one is restricted to women, the other need not be. Parenting, in place of mothering, is not biologically determined, and there is no proof that men are less capable of nurturing children than women, or that children would suffer adverse effects if women were not their primary caretakers. However, female oppression under patriarchy dictates an institution in which the heterosexual family is at the center of the social system; woman, wife, motherhood, and mothering are synonymous; and sex-role stereotyping separates the social expectations of women from those of men.

The image of woman/wife/mother with children as the "core of domestic organization is implicit in patriarchal sex-gender systems."² Traditionally, men perform in the public sphere, while women's place is in the home, where they loom large and powerful, although, in the larger world, they remain under the control of husbands and fathers. Nor are women innocent in the development of these systems. This arrangement frees men from domestic responsibilities and permits them to focus their lives primarily in the public sphere: "the masculine world of social and political control that determines the lives of men and women.

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**CULTURAL AND EMOTIONAL METEMPSYCHOSIS:
A STUDY OF CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S
*THE UNKNOWN ERRORS OF OUR LIVES***

Anupreet Kular

A close reading of the Diaspora writings in English reflects an intense search for the roots, and at the same time an intense longing to get rooted in the new culture, city and world not only at the physical plane but also on the emotional plane. The search, assimilation and metempsychosis of cultural and emotional souls of immigrants are the highlights of the fictional arena of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Whether it is her short stories in the *Arranged Marriage* or *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*, Divakaruni weaves a beautiful tapestry of experiences that characters, who are either the first or second-generation immigrants, undergo.

In a conversation with Neela Banerjee, Divakaruni said, "I started writing more about what it was like for me living here, being a woman of color here." "Here" is Divakaruni's adopted home, America. She was born in India, lived in India till the age of 19 and then in 1976, left for United States in search of her dreams. She completed her higher education, and finally earned a doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley. To fund her studies, she held many odd jobs, which also earned her experience and taught her to tackle challenges of life. Presently, she serves through many social welfare organizations like MAITRI and Pratham.

The present paper is an attempt to delve into the psychology of Divakaruni's characters who stretch themselves between the Indian and American world and thus present a metempsychosis or transmigration of their souls from one culture to another and one emotion to another. These characters move from birth to re-birth, from self-analysis to self-discovery, from umbra to penumbra. Divakaruni has crafted extraordinary stories in content that have been intelligently conceived and passionately written.

- **Ms. Anupreet Kular** is Lecturer in English at Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana.

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**JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS:
A FEMINISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

Ashish Gupta & Ravikant Malviya

Jane Austen is a product of the transitional period which figures between the 18th and 19th centuries. On the whole, she belongs more to the 19th than to the 18th. The 18th century traits are to be marked in only one or two points in her works. First, one is struck by her indifference to nature. There is little of descriptive background in Austen's novels. Like Pope she writes in the belief that the "proper study of mankind is man" though she is interested only in so far as they are objects of interest to women. Another 18th century feature in her novels is the absence of characters drawn from humble life. She completely leaves out the poor and confines herself exclusively to country gentry and upper middle class people.

As a writer of the 'Pure Novel', Jane Austen is supreme in the art of delineation of human nature. Her work remains ever fresh and enchanting even across the span of centuries. There is a sparkle of youth and ebullience about her novels. She largely concentrates on female characters, as hers is a woman's world. Both in her letters and novels, she describes more women than men. Her characters often speak confidently about women alone. Her heroines possess single-mindedness. This imparts to them a peculiar intensity and uniqueness. Their language is intelligible, their motives clear. They try to grapple with the present. The past is important for them in as much as it has a bearing on the present. Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is primarily a comic version of the Gothic romance and is thus to be classed with the great burlesques *Don Quixote* and *Joseph Andrews*. The heroine Catherine Morland has nothing heroic about her. When her imagination is sufficiently excited by the dreadful situations and horrid scenes of romance, she receives an invitation to pass some time at Northanger Abbey in Gloucestershire. Loveless marriages are despised in *Northanger Abbey*. Catherine Morland prefers marriage for love to one of money. She tells Mr. John Thorpe: "to marry for money I think is the wickedest thing in existence."

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POETRY

Three Poems

Gemma Mathewson

ABOVE KIBBER

The path curving through
the village is unpaved and
runs out upslope beside a cairn
heaped with yak horns
in bubbly rust colored loops.

No tree line obscures our view
of a cluster of white houses
their windows rimmed in black trapezoids
to absorb sunlight, their flat roofs
overlapped at the edge with dried brush
that wicks off snow to prevent roof collapse.

I don't know how much snow, exactly,
it being mid-July
but I'm told the road is closed
October through May and tongues of
two glaciers lap the switch back approach.

Below a family in a terraced field,
the wife and three children stoop
behind the farmer, who guides
his yoked yaks beside him.
Only now, plowing and sowing.

I begin to connect a distant singing voice
to the farmer by the coincidence of his notes
with the movement of the beasts.
Forward, backward, pause, turn.

The voice is not commanding -
it is a love song. Pure, ringing into the wind,
it reminds me of my favorite sound
in all the world, Ben Franklin's glass harmonica.
Crystalline vibration in rare atmosphere.
And listening acutely,
not an echo, but an antiphon
in folds of the valley obscured
more voices elevate in resonance
with spring planting and snow capped peaks.

KEY

Step - sweep - tap,
Step - sweep - tap,
the monk advances.
His garnet robe
grazes the floor.

As still as the Himalayas
that rise above his gampa
he stood while we viewed
ancient tonka paintings.

Why now this curious dance?
I let the protective silk veil settle
back over the delicate pigments
and turn to watch the ritual
that now engages him.

Catching sparkles
from devotional oil lamps,
motes of dust billow from his toes
like the stylized oyster clouds
above the painted Buddhas.

Before his foot,
a large moth flees
buttery and translucent
in the flickering light.

Advance matches retreat until,
the moth senses the threshold
of the courtyard
flusters his wings, holds fast.

An impasse.
Toes curl in thought,
the veins of his temple
thrum beneath a crescent scar,
the monk reaches for an offering bowl,
redistributes the water
among the rest
and scoops the moth inside.

Above a row of sandals
and hiking boots
the monk uncups his palm
from the brass bowl.
The moth, denied a nest
of precious kangyur scrolls,
samples the wisdom of the wind.

AVALOKITESHWARA

(Of Taos and Tabo)

She introduced herself as "Sunflower"
nicknamed for her favorite childhood blooms -
It was a year and two continents ago
in her Taos Pueblo workshop.
I see again sprigs of steel gray hair
twang out from the sides
of thick rimmed, square framed glasses.
Her eyes behold her retirement.
"I will go to Texas with my granddaughters,
first I will soak in the oversized hotel tub,
filled with floating magnolia blossoms."

As she speaks, one fist rotates inside the pot,
while the other flicks the tip of a brush,
a deft, swift lizard tongue, across the rim.
"Then I will bring my granddaughters
to the coca-cola memorabilia museum,

right near the bottling plant.”
For theatrical emphasis she takes
a long swig from the bottle nearby.

This place reminds me of Taos.
Stupas shaped like baking ovens,
Arid smoke scented wind in the courtyard,
Heaped whitewashed cubes, adobe like.
These structures too hold artistic wonders.
Not pueblo pots, here in Tabo,
but Tibetan murals from the 10th century.

By archaeological estimation,
Taos dates from the same era,
though sacred oral history
is not shared with outsiders.

The young monk assigned as our guide
is a student of the ancient art
of tonka painting, a tradition depicting
Buddhas and mandalas on silk.
“The Dalai Lama has announced
he will retire here” he confides modestly.

Now I see two pair of glasses,
rimless and thick rimmed,
peer down from mountain ranges -
foothills of the Himalayas or the Rockies -
They frame two pair of eyes
contemplating contentment.

As I depart, I spin the eighty-eight prayer wheels -
for hers, and his, and for my own dreams.

- ***Gemma Mathewson*** is based at North Branford, Connecticut, USA, where she has been the director of an early childhood learning center for the past eighteen years. These poems are an outcome of her visit to Himachal Pradesh during July-August 2007.



The Whole of Human Life Laughs

R. C. Shukla

How long can a consuming fire burn?
How long can the dry wood work?
Even the most obnoxious one
After consuming the body is extinguished and
The same bone under the ash
Enlightens us more than our books.

Similarly even a very docile patience
Is tired and the maddening desire, after a passage of time,
Loses its zeal.
You must know
It is encouragement, ratification,
That keeps a thing alive.

The whole humiliated life laughs
When nothing happens.
Most naturally the defeated man
Runs to mountains, rivers and other undesirable places
In the hope that his restlessness, the battle within,
The very futile race he has run shall come to an end.

After all, everything dies.
Even my stupidity that I can, with my allegiance,
Convert indifference into love.
Nothing lasts for ever
Except the feature of time that with its resolution
Vanquishes all your pride and my greed.

- *Dr. R.C. Shukla* retired as Head, Department of English, K.G.K. College, Moradabad. He is the author of several poetry collections like *A Belated Appearance*, *Depth and Despair*, and *The Parrot Shrieks*.



Two Poems

Alvia Abedin

KOSI

Seemingly sudden and unexpected,
she spills wildly across her dark banks
only to conquer and spoil the sleeping hutments
of peasant dwellers whose surprised faces become rushing rivers
of anguished tears.

The drums hurriedly beat
and the conch shells breathlessly blow.
An urgent meeting is summoned in the *akhara*
by Barahil Darshan
who thunders in his village headman voice,
“God punishes us!”

Morning marches rapidly
on bedraggled saris and dhotis worn in gloom
by skeletal figures quaking with fear of the Unknown;
their harvests of paddy plants and maize crops now destroyed
and submerged.

“Hail Mother Kosi!
We cannot deny your power
but mother be kind to us, your children!”
The womenfolk’s anguished screams tear into the daylight
of raging waters.

Panic reigns supreme
when chocolaty eddies swirl around carcasses
of goats, pigs, cows - their livelihood rudely sucked
into the current of nature’s wrath and they chant mantras
to appease Mother Kosi!

There are no boats
to ferry them on the road to the *akhara*;
there is no assembly to plan for contingencies for the living
because crows-plucked corpses assemble and bob, cold and bereft,
in the watery wilderness.

Should they’ve foreknown
that the melting of snowy Himalayan caps
and the heavy downpour in the upper catchment area

would make Kosi heave and swell to mammoth proportions?
God alone knows!

AN ALBUM OF IMAGES

In the far reaches
of my mind,
sits an album
full of Technicolor images
caught in their present moments
of yesterdays.
It's like the pages of a history book
but without the writing.
The movements of the images give tongue
to their own stories.

An undershot of the *Golmohar* tree
on the 1970 calendar
of a pharmaceutical company
slides into the deep crevices
of my mental album
and the floral red looks stunningly triumphant
against the blue canopy
of a cloudless sky.

It had been presented
to my doctor-father
whose busy practice
never allowed him time for us,
his children three.
'Minting machine' we called him
half joking, half serious
because he always footed the bills.

He lived far away –
physically and emotionally –
and my indifferent mother,
in the winters of her dispassionate marriage,
would knit her uninterested time
into cardigans and jumpers
that seldom kept me warm.

So, I'd sit alone in the shady warmth
of the real, vibrant *Golmohar* tree -
all aglow in its fiery crimson of summer -

at the bottom of our garden,
and weave green dreams
of filial togetherness
that branched skywards with the same intense colours of
red and blue in the 1970 calendar.

But once, my mother,
had casually and thoughtlessly snapped off an interfering branch,
very low and slender, during a friendly game of badminton
with neighbours, very big and tall,
and my juvenile heart bled
to see it so jagged and splintered
and bleeding out its wasted sap.
“Grow up,” my parents –
both united in their apathy –
later told me disinterestedly
when I cried piteously
over the needless fracture
of the tender branch
of my *Golmohar* tree.
Biologically, I did so
but from the ugly, wooden scar,
out grew a stump
all knotted, gnarled
and stunted.

- *Alvia Abedin* lives in London and is a TESOL lecturer, a writer and a poet.



Three Poems

NARENDRA MOHAN

Translated from the Hindi by C. Gaius Bhatkul

BEFORE THE COLOURS GOT SCATTERED ON THE CANVAS

How that dream
must have been splintered in your eyes –
myriads of dream worlds
must have fallen down silently

like meteors –

How those golden whits
must have streamed out from the finger tips—
How the river must have slipped away
under the bottom of the feet—
How the blood rivulets must have flowed
like streamlets of snow on the mountain slopes
How bridge after bridge must have collapsed—
What a crash it must have been
of the rocks of vicious colours
on the nimble dancing feet—
How the colour lines
got consolidated into a flood
after destroying the images—
How in a blink of an eye
our homeland has become alien to us.

Even if you prefer not to talk about it
something did happen
before the colours got scattered on the canvas.

BEWILDERED IMAGES

Nowhere there is
any glowing bright colour

Is it fog or snow
or fog imagined in snowing
or bewildered colour-images
embracing each other

Colours have congregated into lines
and there is a rustling sound from the lines.

TWO PAIRS OF LIPS

In the boundless vastness
of colours—
as natural as breathing—
two pairs of lips
partially opened, partially closed
all alone
passionately engaged
in seeking delights of beauty
least aware of the deepening cipher.

- **Dr. Narendra Mohan** is a noted poet, critic and playwright based in Delhi. He has to his credit collections of Poems, Plays and Critical Writings in both Hindi and Punjabi. He is the recipient of Punjab Shiromani Sahityakar award, Haryana Sahitya Academy award, Uttar Pradesh Sahitya Bhushan award etc.
- **Dr. C. Gaius Bhatkul** is a poet, critic, and translator. He retired as Head, Department of English, S.B. Arts & Commerce College, Aurangabad. He is the author of the collection of poems entitled *Unswept House* (1987).



Two Poems

Krishna Bose

ORCHARD

We all love
an orchard
unskirted
under an opaque sky

The saplings festoon around
the tapestries
untie miseries
choked in the throat.

A ballet in the breeze
sinks low
the chain of bloodbath
basking in a disputed land.

Eyes feel loose
on the sprawling freshness
battling out
the city's bad breath.

Everywhere a bugle
uncannily repeats
cuddles up

a puddle of desires.

KITE FLYING

Freedom glides unbridled

unabated

into spaces untorn by a cyclone

You sip every nip

blowing over your mind's eye

leaving you saturated

pulling you out of shape

Under the knotted bunches of rain

you severe thoughts

old, orthodox

Hop off insults, mockery, lies

cold bitterness, jagged restlessness

Rope into an island
barefooted, celebrant

Luck tilts intangibly
in the capers of the billowing wind
Sulks, whines, smiles
at your crazy twists and turns
You are left simmering
like the migratory birds
trapped in the midnight blues.

- *Dr. Krishna Bose* retired as Reader in English from F.M. College, Balasore (Orissa) and now lives in Kolkata. She is the recipient of the Michael Madhusudan Academy award (1999) for her poetry collection *Eternal Moments*.



THREE POEMS

Ram Sharma

AFTER SHOWERS

A short while ago
There was the jingling of showers
Water was everywhere

Now the pouring of rain has stopped
The sun has come out
From the dark tunnel of clouds
Drops are dancing wayward
Children are full of rendezvous frenzy
It looks silent and serene
After dark tension and lightning.

CREEPING SAPLINGS

In our orchards
Childhood creeps.
We burden them
With our ambitions
We expect too much;
Our cruelties increase day by day and
Childhood disappears.
Save childhood!

DISASTER

In the selfish ambrosia
Man has forgotten man
Like Dushyanta forgot Shakuntala.
Humanity has been crucified
Love has been buried
Every man is worshipping Mammon
In his coalmine.
We need love divine
To lead a life fine.

- **Dr. Ram Sharma** is Senior Lecturer in English at Janta Vedic College, Baraut in Uttar Pradesh.



BOOK REVIEW

***The Salad Bowl - Essays on American Literature* by Dr. S. Ramaswamy. Bangalore: Shrikashi Sesha Shastri Trust, 2008. xxviii+364 Pages. Rs. 400.**

Quite frankly, amongst the multitudinous endeavours that humankind takes upon itself to view, analyze, and treat events, reporting on the quality of a fellow human's literary output in the guise of a review or a critique is one, in my opinion, fraught with danger or to put it crudely 'a mug's game'. It is at best a reflection of his personal bias and viewpoint. Somehow one gets the sneaky feeling that given a pen and asked to review a book or a play for a newspaper or a periodical, the critic invariably and subconsciously seems to wear the mantle of a superior person. He feels that it is necessary to fill his virtual pen with vitriolic ink and pick faults, suggest improvements or even be quite harsh to the author in the name of criticism. He seems to get some sort of power that can be wielded to satisfy his own inherent ego. This has been going on for a long time and quite obviously it is something the general people lap up with gusto and glee. So it is the done thing. It is expected. It is one of those necessary evils we encounter in life.

Writing reviews in a proper sense and intelligently is always difficult. To transpose and paraphrase a well-known proverb one man's poison is the other man's Smörgåsbord so to speak.

Professor S. Ramaswamy is an authority on American Literature and is a great admirer of theatre in general and American ones in particular. There are twenty-one essays on a wide swath of literary genius represented by a wide spectrum of American dramatists and essayists. All of them are eminently readable and give a concise but distilled glimpse into the minds of the playwrights and why their works have been celebrated through generations of admiring readers and stage performers.

There is something intentional it seems in Prof. Ramaswamy restricting his essays to a total of 21 which is considered as a mystic and sacred number for Vedantic Scholars of which he is one. Being an Indologist and a Vedantic Scholar, and a teacher of English to boot, Prof. Ramaswamy brings with him a vast experience of decades of teaching English Literature in my many universities all over the world. This makes him eminently worthy to write critical essays on American Literature.

As a staunch vegetarian he has titled his volume "The Salad Bowl" which evokes the sight of various vegetables and greens trimly cut and doused with a proper dressing and placed neatly in a bowl. But for a more liberal person who has no compunction in savouring all types of food, this volume is a veritable delight of meaty morsels of exquisite taste and aroma.

This reviewer (if you can call him that, tongue in cheek) is of the opinion, therefore, that this volume resembles more a Scandinavian Smörgåsbord which classically can be defined as "An assortment of foods starting with herring or smoked eel or salmon etc. with bread and butter; then cheeses and eggs and pickled vegetables and aspics; finally hot foods; served as a buffet meal."

As you walk along the long well laid table, you see and pick out the various little pieces of goodies and savour them and move on to the next morsel. Each morsel is in itself a delightful experience and by the time you reach the end of the long table you would have seen all that has been laid out on the table and enjoyed them. To a discerning reader this imagery is perhaps quite in order.

So do take your time and pick and choose any essay and savour it. The great advantage of a book of this sort is that you can open it at any page and read what is on it. This freedom is a great boon and relief to readers who are sometimes loathe reading a book from beginning to end.

O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Wilder and all other greats are covered in this volume with a special leaning towards Williams who, perhaps, demands and commands more from Prof. Ramaswamy. Being an actor and intensely interested in theatre Prof. Ramaswamy uses his keen insight in pointing out the wonderful nuances of the playwrights' intentions and what they had in mind when they wrote their plays/essays.

Like a father who takes his little son on a walking tour holding his hand and showing him the various aspects of the beautiful nature around him, Prof. Ramaswamy too takes us with loving care and gently points out the delightful passages and why it has been written the way it has.

This volume is a veritable store house for literary students who want to know more about American Theatre and Essays. It would be foolish on my part to explicate further on the *actual* contents of the volume. Read on and get a little more educated is what I say.

A critic or a reviewer is also expected to point out shortcomings. Personally these should be overlooked. But if at all there is a fly in the ointment, I would comment on the production aspect of the book, a technicality that comes more under the category of a “fly hovering over an ointment.”

-U.K. Jaydev

- **U.K. Jaydev** is a widely-travelled versatile polyglot actor-director who has produced the plays of dramatists like John Osborne, Peter Shaffer and Harold Pinter for Bangalore Little Theatre. He was connected with the publishing firm, Orient Longmans.



Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe by Ian Watt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xvi+293 Pages. \$ 12.95.

Will your own will and it gives power which is better than liberty. - Turgenev

Michel Tournier, the contemporary French novelist who adapted the myth of Robinson Crusoe in his novel *Friday* defined myth as the story “we all know.” What he meant was that myths are inscribed in our consciousness, and in our everyday life we make sense of the world in their terms. The fact that we give mythical names to people implies the pervasiveness of myth in all cultures. Ian Watt is not concerned with myths as sacred narratives beyond time in the way in which Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell, Victor Turner or Ernest Cassirer are. He is concerned with literary myths that became frames of reference for and mirrors of the evolution of European culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Watt regards myth as a “traditional story that is exceptionally widely known throughout the culture and credited with a quasi-historical belief,” and that symbolises the governing values of a society. In this sense his treatment of myth is secular and formal, and is free from normative value judgments implicit in the sacralisation of religious interpreters.

How literary myths structure and mirror our thinking can be illustrated in the following two instances. Just recall the scene in the 1965 Merchant-Ivory film, *Shakespearewallah*, in which the protagonist Manjula (memorably played by Madhur Jaffrey) confronts her lover's English paramour while the production of *Othello* is on. Manjula suppresses her own desire to strangle her while on stage the strangling scene from the play is taking place. The Othello-Desdemona story has given meaning to Manjula's rage as well as interpreted it for the viewers familiar with the Shakespeare text.

The second instance is from the American poet Karl Shapiro's poem, "The Progress of Faust": "Backward, tolerant, Faustus was expelled/ From the Third Reich in nineteen thirty nine. /His exit caused the breaching of the Rhine...Five years unknown to enemy and friend /He hid, appearing on the sixth to pose.../ Where, at his back, a dome of atoms rose." The poem is a testimony to the need to attribute a new invention (the atom bomb) to an established mythical name of the past. It uses an old story to tell a new one, even as it regards Hitler as the culmination of the Faustian spirit in the manner of Oswald Spengler.

The late Ian Watt was a respected scholar whose first major work *The Rise of the Novel* still remains a groundbreaking study of the sociology of English fiction. By his own admission he worked on this, his last work, for four decades. His erudition, as that of others of his kind (a dwindling breed now!), derives from a rare blend of deep thinking and sustained reading. These qualities are not much in evidence in the new class of finger-on-the keyboard scholars spawned by the Internet, whose instant 'downloads' and tin-eared argot are fast replacing the humane professionalism of genuine committed scholars. Hence two cheers for the likes of Watt!

In this book Watt has chosen the central myths of the European imagination to explain and interpret some well-known classic works of literature. The myths of Faust, Quixote, Don Juan and Crusoe are widely disseminated in European writing. They have been assimilated into the languages and behavioural patterns of Europe and denote ambition (Faust), adventure (Crusoe), sexual libertinage (Don Juan) and fantasising (Quixote). For Watt these myths represent the transition from a life of hide-bound conformism typical of the middle Ages, to one of individual assertion characteristic of the modern bourgeois phase of nascent capitalism.

Watt himself explains the scope of this study: "My four myths are not 'sacred' exactly, but they do derive from the transition from Middle Ages...to the system dominated by the modern individualist thought, and this transition has itself been marked by the remarkable development from the original Renaissance meanings to their present Romantic meanings." What Watt does not explicitly mention here but amply reveals in his discussion of literary texts is the transformations these myths undergo in various epochs of social evolution. It is here that Watt's study scores over other studies of this kind. For one thing Watt sees the utility of myths as cultural symbols in binding popular beliefs and attitudes.

Each myth in this book illustrates a single aspect of the relationship between the individual and the society in which he/she is placed. The Faust myth, as Goethe was to interpret it later, is the quintessential articulation of the individualist effort to grasp reality and mould it to human desire for perfection. But in medieval literature and in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* it remains an image of the unaccommodated human ambition out to defy prohibitions and restraints of religion.

Marlowe's hero is a Renaissance man, not a magician as depicted in the medieval folklore. He is ambitious in a way in which most of us are not: he seeks knowledge and power, indeed, as Foucault would put it, knowledge as power. His pact with the devil is the first modern contractual relationship that will mark out the capitalist enterprise in which all traditional relationships, all obligations are negated.

A relationship shorn of pietistic and sentimental uncertainties, Faustus's contract is, nonetheless, a transgression of man's place in the medieval cosmology. His punishment, therefore, is justified within the terms of that cosmology. The pathos of the last scene wherein Faustus hesitates to hand over his soul to the devil is human, all too human. "Resolve me of all ambiguities," he commands the devil in the beginning, but the devil has the last laugh. He can not allow this request, because he cannot postpone death, a fact neither Marlowe, nor Goethe, nor Thomas Mann in *Dr. Faustus* (1949) glosses over in their versions.

Goethe's Faust is the modern capitalist-reformer using his power to bring benefits to mankind and, in a marked difference from Marlowe's hero, goes to heaven instead of hell. In Part II, Goethe's hero has none of the sensualities besetting Marlowe's hero. He is very much a modern planner, reformer and benefactor. In this sense he reflects his period's emphasis on the social and political primacy of the individual.

In Thomas Mann's novel, even though the punitive element of Zeitblom's pact with the devil (his Muse) is present in the hero's fatal disease (a theme also underlying *Death in Venice*), the whole German culture is implicated in Faustus's fate. In Mann, unlike in Marlowe and Goethe, Zeitblom-Faust's fate signals the demise of European culture as centuries of European humanism had envisaged it. The passage of Faust reaches a dead-end in the barbarity of Nazism, so Mann believes. In Istvan Szabo's film *Mephisto* (not discussed in Watt) the myth becomes overtly political.

Like Marlowe's hero, Cervantes's Quixote and Defoe's Robinson Crusoe are folk heroes embedded in the popular culture of seventeenth century Spain and eighteenth century England. *Don Quixote* is the first 'modern' novel, if modernity is understood as the self-searching, self-questioning attitude using as subject matter its own doubt and belief in the value of its message. *Robinson Crusoe* can claim another kind of priority: it is 'modern' insofar as it expresses the tendencies of the mercantile middle classes emerging from the English Revolution.

Crusoe and Quixote arrive on the European scene to coincide with the social and religious aberrations and Cromwell's bourgeois revolution. Both are facets of the emerging individualism. Both symbolise the anomalies that beset the transition from one social and political epoch to another. In Cervantes's novel the conflict between fantasy and reality, between Quixote and Sancho Panza, is the degraded form of the secular version of the conflict between sanctioned order and its defiance. In Crusoe that conflict is resolved in the hero's will to fashion his own order out of nothing. And yet, as Watt shows, the punitive element is not altogether absent: it has only been brought in conformity with the emerging secular ideas. At the end Quixote accepts his dream fantasy as irrelevant and Crusoe returns to his shores cured of his obsession with himself. This is not the same thing as being condemned to hell but it is a comeuppance all right. Hell returns later in the Don Juan myth.

In the original Spanish version by El Burlador the statue of the dead Commander he had earlier killed attacks Don Juan. This is his punishment for flouting the codes of sexual moderation enjoined by the very ethics of Puritanism that the bourgeois revolution represents. Part of this punitive sense is carried over in Bernard's Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*, but Byron in the nineteenth century provides this archetypal philanderer a cynical justification for his deceits and betrayals. He is apathetic and passive; he does not battle to survive. His passage

“leaves behind/as many doubts as any other doctrine/has ever puzzled faith withal, or yoked her in” (Byron: *Don Juan*).

Robinson Crusoe experiences the difficult transition from solitude to society very slowly, because Defoe fills his narrative with minute details of daily life and introduces Friday's footprints rather late in his tale. By inventing Man Friday he allows Crusoe to save himself from the weight of his obsessive individualism. Incidentally those who admired Crusoe, men like Rousseau and Marx (both products of the new age) ignored Defoe's chastening of his hero; and Coetzee's *Foe* has different dimensions altogether.

Don Quixote's advent reveals the omnipotence of desire (a point regrettably underplayed by Watt). This leads him to disown all kinship and to claim for himself an autonomous status. It is only through Sancho, his horse Rocinante and to some extent his niece, that he realises the need for human contact. An embodiment of pure imagination, Don Quixote becomes human only after he re-establishes contact with the quotidian world. In terms of Watt's argument, Quixote's individualism of unaccommodated fantasy is ameliorated within the demands of a secular idea.

Watt has a two-fold purpose in analysing these myths as they appear in his chosen novels. One is to reassert the fact that these myths now become 'extraordinary commonplaces' and bear the stamp of a particular consciousness that was to express itself in certain recurring attitudes towards what has been called the European Enlightenment. Individualism, secularism, scepticism are different forms of that consciousness. In this way Watt draws a field map of how these myths spread out to provide a certain pattern to European culture. That western culture by and large still exhibits these traits speaks for the persistence of the mythical presence in various historical periods.

The second purpose, existing as a submerged hope in his account, is to reiterate the values of moderation in our own age of excess and extremity. Watt does not make an explicit statement that would draw our attention to his judgment on these myths. But there definitely is a judgmental gesture in his account. This reminds us of Ortega Y Gasset (himself a wise but cautious admirer of Don Quixote), in who's *Revolt of the Masses* we can trace Watt's plea for moderation: "Restrictions, standards, reason," argues Ortega, "they are all summed up in the word civilisation...A man is uncivilised, barbarian in the degree in which he does not take others into account." This judgment, not exactly a judgment but a perception, is what seems to me to make

Watt's recall of the founding myths of European culture relevant to us as a cautionary tale.

-M.L. Raina

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Collected Poems: 1970-2005 by Keki N. Daruwalla. Penguin Books, India. 2006. 376 pages. Rs. 350.

Keki Daruwalla's *Collected Poems: 1970-2005* provide testimony to his prodigious output bringing together nine volumes of poetry, and an entire section devoted to his latest work. The collection begins with new poems; we are then taken back to his first book, *Under Orion*, published in 1970, which established him as a name to reckon with in Indian poetry. Nissim Ezekiel, among a select group of individuals to whom this book is dedicated, wrote that Daruwalla "was born full-grown from the head of some hitherto unrecognised goddess of poetry."

His earthly peers too have recognised his poetic achievement. In 1984, Daruwalla won the Sahitya Akademi Award for *The Keeper of the Dead* and in 1987 *Landscapes* won him the coveted Commonwealth Poetry Prize for Asia. He remains one of India's best known poets, appearing in various prestigious anthologies, such as *Scanning the Century* (Viking, London) and *Uncommon Wealth* (OUP, Toronto); and his poems have been widely translated.

One of the distinguishing features of Daruwalla's poetry is his breath of vision. From Chinese poets in exile to "Partition Ghazal," "Letter from Helsinki" to an "Egyptian Testament," Daruwalla's range is sweeping; his sensibility being among the most cosmopolitan of his generation. From *Under Orion* to *The Map Maker*, along with his new poems, we experience over three decades his growth as a poet, along with the evolution of an extraordinary range of themes – "from the epic

concerns of culture and history, myth and religion to the quotidian affairs of life and death, love and passion.”

He mellows from an angry young man, for whom “blood and fog/ are over half the town/ and curfew stamps across the empty street” (“Curfew in a Riot-torn City,” *Under Orion*) to one exploring “the fog at the edge of things” as he moves “into loneliness at last” (“Bypass,” *New Poems*). In *Under Orion*, Daruwalla noted: “A work of art must hit you in the gut” (“Dialogues with a Third Voice”). In his *New Poems*, he asks: “What was it like before language dropped like dew,/ covering the scuffed grass of our lives?” (“Before the Word”).

While his themes did not change dramatically, death and loss appear consistently, it is language that evolves from the immediate and visceral (“Pestilence” or “The Epileptic” in *Under Orion*) and the densely poetic (“Death of a Bird” in *Crossing of Rivers*, “Mandwa” in *Landscapes* or “Suddenly the Tree,” in *Winter Poems*) to a more honed, leaner verse (“Foal” or “The Glass-Blower,” in *Summer of Tigers*) and finally to the more contemplative cadences of his *New Poems* (“The Tawang Monastery” or “Epiphany”).

All through his poetic development, he records experiences with a sharp eye, a wry sense of humour, often harking back to history to make his point, giving his observations an objective yet subjective feel simultaneously. Many of his poems – from “Crossing of Rivers” (1976) to “The Night of the Jackals” (*Keeper of the Dead*, 1982) to “The Immolated Kings,” (*The Map-Maker* 2002) – have a narrative structure steeped with psychological realism. A commentator on the Indian scene, his poetry often rooted in the Indian landscape is not in the Indian tradition.

Born in Lahore in 1937 to a Parsi family, he received his Master’s degree in English Literature from the University of Punjab. Having lived in rural India as an officer of the Indian Police Service as well as in various cosmopolitan cities of the world, Daruwalla’s poems capture a world-view that is not necessarily centred in an Indian philosophical tradition, as A.K. Ramanujan’s poetry is, for example. It is his mix of ancestry and upbringing that fostered in him a cosmopolitan sensibility that enables him to remain detached, write about Indian themes from an alternative perspective.

Poems with Indian/ Hindu themes bear witness to this trait – “We, the Kauravas,” (*New Poems*), “Shiva: At Timarsain” (*Under Orion*), “Pilgrimage to Badrinath,” and “Carvak,” (*Apparition in April*). Most of *Crossing of Rivers* reflects this first-hand knowledge of his subject matter and his ability to remain an outsider: “I listen avidly to his legend-talk/ striving to forget what I chanced to see;/ the sewer-mouth trained like a cannon/ on the river’s flank. It is as I feared;/ hygiene is a part of my conscience and I curse it/ and curse my upbringing which makes me queasy here.”

His *Winter Poems*, published in 1980, for example, to use the poet’s own words, are “a dark rumination on a dark decade.” This Janus-faced quality emerges in much of his best work.

Daruwalla described this sense of not being rooted in any Indian tradition as “a Western sensibility” in an interview in 1995. It is only to be expected, as he went on to explain: “If I’d been brought up in Sanskrit, or even in my own *Avesta*, I’d have been a different person. But being brought up on the Roman script, on Anglo-Saxon history, colonial history and literature, how do you expect me to be different?” In “The Poseidonians,” Daruwalla says: “All it takes to blight a language/ is another sun....” In his 1995 interview, he noted: “When I move out of the country (meaning India) I can’t write poetry.” This tension between his country, his life and upbringing, his evolving poetic sensibility lies at the crux of his work.

In “Ecce Homo,” (*Under Orion*), for example, Daruwalla goes about depicting Christ on the Cross in his unique way; the effect is breathtakingly moving: “First I’d mark a tree/ fluent with muscle/ with limbs transverse/ and on the fork/ nail a splay-winged Christ/ - a tiny statuette/ just about a foot/ but I would graft it so/ the sap would run into his veins/ and they grow one-veined/ with a common pulse/ the Christ and the tree/ like lovers caught in a cramp./.... And his hair will turn to leaf/ and his eyes run with pollen/ and in autumn under a harvest moon/ the leaves will flame so/ that we will know/ they have been dipped/ in the fir-bowl of his wounds.” His imagination never endorsed anything so magnificently in Hinduism.

Having spent most of his career in the Indian Police Service and latterly in the Intelligence Service, it is not surprising that power and its consequences engage his imagination. There is both fascination with power and the recognition of its limitation, the havoc it leaves.

Daruwalla's verse travels like the eye of the storm; his hawk, like Ted Hughes' before him, emerges as a symbol of power and mastery. Only that Daruwalla's hawk is "a rapist in the harem of the sky." ("Hawk," *Keeper of the Dead*). The poem ends with a chilling prophecy: "I will hover like a black prophecy/.../ I shall drive down/ with the compulsive thrust of gravity,/ trained for havoc,/ my eyes focussed on them/ like the sights of a gun.// During the big drought which is surely going to come/ the doves will look up for clouds, and it will rain hawks."

There is tremendous energy, movement, change, transformation in his poetry as we move across the canvas. By the time we come to *Night River* (2000), we are caught in the midst of the "shifting nature of things." The poems in this section use a vocabulary of masks and dreams; of mirrors and pools that reflect in different, changing ways; of shimmering islands; of hyphens held between possibilities; and of ferries that constantly shuttle between destinations. Living in a country where a river can be a mother, a goddess, a laundry and a toilet all at once, nothing can be obvious or taken for granted. Living on hyphens and the need to arrive at some sort of understanding of the nature of Life itself is at the heart of this poet's evolution. There is a note of reconciliation and peace that passes understanding in delicate matters of negotiations with oneself in the poem, "Small Space," establishing a new direction for the poet: "The cave of the self is small./ We are talking of the word here/ of one small candle/ in the encaverned dark." His later poems reveal the insight he brings to his experience, viewing them from shifting angles and offering to the reader changing perspectives on reality.

-Shanta Acharya

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