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# RE-MARKINGS

Vol. 15 No.1 March 2016

30<sup>th</sup>  
issue  
15  
YEARS

CHIEF EDITOR : NIBIR K. GHOSH  
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William Shakespeare

Lewis Carroll

Saadat Hasan Manto

R.K. Narayan

Khushwant Singh

Imraan Coovadia

Paule Marshall

Bharati Mukherjee

Adrienne Rich

Mahasweta Devi

Ruskin Bond

Anita Desai

Vijay Tendulkar

Mohan Rakesh

Patricia Prime

Zehra Nigah

Jonah Raskin

Tijan M. Sallah

Digital Divide

Poetry

Book Review

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# RE-MARKINGS

Vol. 15 No. 1 March 2016

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

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30<sup>th</sup>  
issue  
15  
YEARS

Inspirational Tribute from  
Tijan M. Sallah

*At a time when the thoughtless mercenaries of dogma, religious and tribal extremists of all stripes, faiths and colors; bloody in their binary taxonomy of the world – into us and them – losing sight of our singularity as humans; at a time when these faith-mercenaries brandish their inhumane weaponry wanting to drag a sane world into a nihilist abyss, I am reassured by the 30<sup>th</sup> issue of Re-Markings, a journal that provides a generous platform for the sharing of stories, essays and criticisms of what is magnificent in our being human albeit molded by the rich diverse cultures of the world. When I read any issue of Re-Markings, I get reassured that Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" was wrong. His framework was too cynical of human nature, asymmetrically weighed to the darker side of human nature. Re-Markings is an avenue for the brighter side of human nature, a journal for the "Dialogue of Civilizations," the hybridization of humanity that the late Senegalese poet-President Leopold Senghor so ceremoniously championed. It is a journal of critical and creative exploration of the world's great literatures and cultures – a platform for global enlightenment. May its next 30 years be that of growth and continued vibrancy as its first.*

--**Dr. Tijan M. Sallah**, former World Bank Executive, is the most eminent Gambian poet, short story writer, biographer and essayist. He is one of Africa's most important writers following the generation of Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. His most recent books are *Dream Kingdom* (a book of selected poems), *Chinua Achebe: Teacher of Light* (a biography) and *Harrow: London Poems of Convalescence*. His works have been broadcast over the BBC and the National Public Radio in the U.S.

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## EDITORIAL

It is my privilege and pleasure to offer to our avid readers this 30<sup>th</sup> issue of *Re-Markings* that marks its glorious entry into the fifteenth year of its publication. Ever since its inception in March 2002, the journal has remained dedicated and committed to addressing pressing issues and concerns relevant to the world we inhabit, be it local, national or global. It is intensely fulfilling to believe that members of the *Re-Markings* fraternity have consistently engaged themselves in creating with their erudite scholarship, experience and expertise a veritable climate of opinion congenial to critical inquiry and intellectual debate related to the human predicament bordering on conflict and discrimination in terms of caste, class, creed, race, colour, gender, ideology, religion and the like. It is no less heartening to note how such discourses have encouraged them to shun the seemingly comfortable path of deterministic skepticism and express firm faith in the fact that change for the better is not only imperative but that it is also feasible through one's own determined initiative and proactive involvement in a good cause.

As a case in point, we may refer to the menace that we in India have witnessed in very recent times – the scourge of what has come to be known as “intolerance.” Though “Intolerance has been the curse of every age and state,” as observed by Samuel Davies, the term has come to assume new connotation in the most recent context of questioning as well as challenging our inalienable right to voice our own opinion or to express dissent in matters that concern us as individuals. The ensuing debate between “us” and “them” often leading to unwarranted violence and even death have engaged the attention of one and all with writers, poets, academics, intellectuals, politicians, sportspersons as well as stars from Bollywood joining the fray. As the tragic drama engendered by “intolerance” unfolded in the public domain with adequate media hype, we also had the opportunity to enjoy a bit of what one may call comic relief in the form of *Inaam Wapsi* by those who held the government responsible for supporting and perpetuating “intolerance.” Interestingly, there were also those who, as a counter measure, organized marches and *dharnas* at the power centres to placate the powers that be by showing their solidarity against the dissenters in the hope of procuring similar *Inaams* and/or lucrative offices.

There can, however, be little doubt that events like the murder of the famous Kannada writer Dr. M.M. Kalburgi, the lynching of Akhlaq Khan

and the suicide committed by Rohith Vemula are a slur not only on our national claim to “unity in diversity” but also a gross mockery of our constitutional reassurance of liberty, equality and fraternity. It is sadly ironical that such terrible episodes could project two sides to choose from to the writers and intellectuals in the country. Rather than allowing political expediencies to justify lies and falsities, each one of us in our role as a true Indian should have shown total unanimity by coming together in absolute unison to condemn the forces responsible for such shameful events irrespective of our individual preferences and dislikes. As a matter of fact it is incumbent on each one of us to put our heads and souls together to seriously explore ways and means to expose and bring to book the elements that are bent on rending the country apart in the name of religion or caste. Social, political and economic apocalypses and cataclysms that adversely affect and threaten man’s very existence also teach us to heed what Edmund Burke proclaimed in his own time: “When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.”

What I have said above may seem idealistic rumination to anyone familiar with the historical realities of the Partition, the 1984 Sikh riots and the recurring acts of communal violence that have rocked the nation from time to time since Independence. The contributors to this celebratory volume hailing from Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and other communities and also from various nations like Gambia, America, South Africa, New Zealand, India and Pakistan amply substantiate what Dr. Tijan M. Sallah so emphatically states in his generous tribute to the role of *Re-Markings* in contemporary parlance. To provide such a suitable platform for recognizing our familiar selves in the strangeness of others and to be able to blend spirit and thought of diverse people and nations augurs well for our avowed mission to safeguard mellifluous coexistence in an age submerged in intolerance.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not convey my profuse thanks to all the contributors to this volume for enriching it with their insightful essays, interview, poems and reviews. My heartfelt gratitude is especially reserved for one and all who have contributed in no mean measure to take the journal to higher levels of perfection with each issue. I am deeply indebted to Sandeep K. Arora for his selfless ideational and cyber support. Long live the *Re-Markings* brotherhood!

**Nibir K. Ghosh**  
**Chief Editor**

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## DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE: ALICE AND THE ECCENTRIC LEWIS CARROLL

*Jonah Raskin*

Charles Dodgson (AKA Lewis Carroll), the author of the Alice books as well as renowned poems such as “Jabberwocky,” certainly loved young girls as much as he loved word play, though he certainly wasn’t a pedophile or a Humbert Humbert of the sort that Nabokov depicted in *Lolita*. A quintessential eccentric Victorian who imbibed much of its prudery, Carroll also deconstructed a great of the mythology of the Victorian age, including its reverence for queens and Queen Victoria in particular. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871), both of them works of fantasy and the fantastic, show just how elastic the English novel as a genre has been ever since its origins in the age of Daniel Defoe.

The two Alice books also suggest that novels that are deeply rooted in particular times and places can often transcend them and achieve a kind of universality, though one wouldn’t want to argue that Carroll’s books will automatically appeal to all readers in all places and at all times. Still, the furtive Alice who seems to be able to go almost anywhere – including down a rabbit hole – and who can change her shape from small to big and back to small again, has been translated into more than 100 languages – from French to Russian and Hindi - ever since she first appeared in print and apparently won the heart of Victoria herself.

A new hefty, attractive volume, *The Annotated Alice*, that contains both *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* – along with copious notes and essays – provides an opportunity to revisit two classics of nineteenth-century English literature. The illustrations that accompany the text, especially John Tenniel’s sketches for the original edition of the first Alice book, enhance *The Annotated Alice*, though the notes are laborious and pedantic and tend to detract from the narrative itself.

- **Jonah Raskin**, author of *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg’s Howl and the Making of the Beat Generation*, has taught journalism, media law and the theory of communication at Sonoma State University, U.S.A.

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## IMPRINTS FROM THE RAINBOW NATION: A CONVERSATION WITH IMRAAN COOVADIA

*Nibir K. Ghosh*

Imraan Coovadia is a writer and director of the creative writing programme at the University of Capetown, South Africa. He is the author of a novel, *The Institute for Taxi Poetry* (2012), winner of the M-Net Prize, and a collection of essays, *Transformations* (2012) which won the South African Literary Award for Creative Non-Fiction. In 2010 his novel *High Low In-between* won the *Sunday Times* Fiction Prize and the University of Johannesburg prize. He has published a scholarly monograph with Palgrave, *Authority and Authorship in V.S. Naipaul* (2009), two earlier novels, and a number of journal articles. His most recent book is *Tales of the Metric System* (2014). His fiction has been published in a number of countries and he has written for many newspapers, journals, and magazines in South Africa and overseas, including the *New York Times*, *N+1*, *Agni*, the *Times of India*, and *Threepenny Review*. His Research Interests include Eighteenth- and nineteenth century English and American literature, philosophy and literature, political and social thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries including Adam Smith, Hazlitt, Hume, Edmund Burke, and Swift, and contemporary fiction. In this conversation with Nibir K. Ghosh, Imraan Coovadia addresses issues and concerns relevant to his art and ideas against the backdrop of the changing contours of South Africa.

**Ghosh:** Imraan, it's a pleasure to greet you from the city of the Taj! Rabindranath Tagore called the Taj "a tear drop of love on the cheek of death." How would you like to describe your impressions of this monument of love you saw during your visit to India?

**Coovadia:** Coming across the Taj Mahal, in India, is like what I imagine coming across the Earth in space might be like—a dreamlike place.

**Ghosh:** Any thought of South Africa obviously brings one to think of apartheid. Having been born and brought up in South Africa, what memories of the repressive apartheid regime do you recall as a citizen of the nation?

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## THE NARRATIVE ART OF SAADAT HASAN MANTO

*N.S. Tasneem*

David Lodge in his *New Modes of Writing* takes up the Jakobsonian framework, elaborates upon it, and shows that the traditional fiction is metonymic and the modernist fiction is metaphoric. Saadat Hasan Manto's mode of narration is at times realistic and metonymic whereas at some other times he adopts the metaphoric mode of narration. His choice mostly depends on the subject matter of his short stories. In fact he chooses the metonymic mode when he aims at depicting the outer reality. When he seeks the inner reality he takes recourse to modernist/metaphoric mode.

The subject matter of Manto's stories reminds the reader of the stories of Guy de Maupassant. But there is an obvious difference in their approach. Maupassant is gleeful while depicting the idiosyncrasies of his characters and at times he makes fun of ethical concepts. Manto, on the other hand, is concerned with the inherent goodness of the so-called fallen people in the contemporary society. In the process he too treads on the moral corns of the bourgeoisie. Admittedly, both of them are not moralists in the strict sense of the term. Still, in my opinion, Manto is not with Maupassant but with D.H. Lawrence.

Like Lawrence, Manto wants to comprehend the reality of life by removing the masks from the faces of the people around him. Again, like Lawrence, Manto is an omniscient narrator but his style makes him a modernist. In his lifetime, Manto was content to be called a writer of new fiction (*Naya Adab*) or modern fiction (*Jadeed Adab*). Initially he identified himself with the progressives but later he drifted away from them. He had abhorrence for anything contrived or constructed with an ulterior motive. He was a true artist who loved life in totality. He could not overlook the seamy side of life; rather he revelled in its depiction.

Manto was a born storyteller but he never devised ways and means to project his viewpoint. He was not only seized with a particular aspect of life but was also obsessed with it.

- **Professor N.S. Tasneem** is the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award (1999), and the Punjabi Sahitya Ratan Award by the Languages Department, Punjab Government. A former Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, he taught English at Govt. College, Amritsar.

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**WHEN THE PLACE BECOMES A PERSON:  
PAULE MARSHALL'S  
"FROM THE POETS IN THE KITCHEN"**

*K. Narayana Chandran*

Paule Marshall's "From the Poets in the Kitchen" (1983) is a celebrated recollection of a writer's ordinary childhood, of the first lessons she learns at home by just observing, listening, overhearing, wondering, associating, and building a small world that eventually grows into a much larger and richer world of professional writing and teaching. While its brilliance as an endearing narrative is plainly evident and has often been applauded, it conceals a carefully evolved pattern of *reading relations* tied to specific locations and designated spaces. As a matter of fact, we are apt to miss a fine narrative point or two of Marshall's if we do not attend to this pattern of alignment between locations and reading, the reciprocity of both, contributing to the "poetry" of her mini-*Künstlerroman*.

The locales in Marshall's own narrative chronology are easier to begin with. In a classroom where she teaches a graduate seminar, a guest-speaker almost risks anger and derision by commenting that *women* are luckier than men as writers "because they usually spend so much more time as children around their mothers and their mothers' friends in the kitchen" (2073). From the present and real space of a Columbia University classroom, of sophisticated reading and contentious discussion, Marshall conducts us to the past of remembered space, completely endorsing the guest-lecturer's view that a writer's early "training, the best of it, takes place in as unglamorous setting as the kitchen" (2073). Sustained throughout this essay is this contrast between the more elegant and professional halls of learning and scholarship and the simpler if drab environs where nothing so much as 'knowledge' will ever appear, or strike us as such at first flush. And this contrast is mainly premised upon some space where 'knowledge' might putatively be found or is extant. Furthermore, what distinguishes this 'knowledge' is its reliance *not* on writing, books, and recorded learning, but on memory.

- **Dr. K. Narayana Chandran** is Professor of English, School of Humanities, at the University of Hyderabad

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## IDENTITY AND CULTURE IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S SHORT FICTION

### *Itishree Devi*

*We are like chiffon saris – a sort of cross-breed  
attempting to adjust to the pressures of a new  
world, while actually being from another older one.*

– Feroza Jussawala

Is the New World tolerant of its newcomers? If so, why do those coming to America, particularly those from South Asia, not feel "at home" on its soil? Bharati Mukherjee seeks to address these questions in her fiction. Her protagonists' sense of belonging is forced into a process: their cultural identity passes through a recurring process of translating and being translated.

The question of identity and homeland has become urgent as travel and migration have become a reality for many. The quest for roots is linked to the yearning for a space and community that one can call one's own. This new hybrid of hyphenated community, born in one place, brought up in another and living in a third, constantly struggles for self-affirmation in order not to be erased.

Bharati Mukherjee, the Indian born North American novelist, uses language as a tool to give expression to this perennial struggle on the part of third-world immigrants in their attempt to assimilate into the North American lifestyle. As Shirley Geok-lin-Lim puts it: "Language gives indiscriminately to every human inherent abilities to shape, manipulate, express, inform to protest, to empower oneself in the world."

For many of the immigrant protagonists in Mukherjee's short fiction, the assimilation into American culture creates tension resulting from a process of appropriation and abrogation of traits of the two cultures. For "... in crossing borders...an immigrant exchanges more than passports and citizenships" (Wickramagamage 171).

- **Dr. Itishree Devi** is currently working as DGM Corporate Communications & PR at Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Ltd. (IMFA), Bhubaneswar.

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## ADRIENNE RICH'S 'RE-VISIONIST' UTOPIA

*Tasneem Shahnaaz*

*Overthrow. And make new.  
An idea. And we felt it.  
A meaning. And we caught it  
as the dimensions spread, gathering  
in pre-utopian basements figured shadows  
scrawled with smoke and music. - Adrienne Rich,  
"Rereading *The Dead Lecturer*" (2006)*

This essay attempts to offer a reading of Adrienne Rich's poetry as positing, albeit unconsciously, a utopian vision of society in the context of history and gender. It also intends to offer a strategy of reading which is appropriate to the feminist impulse that informs the poetry of Adrienne Rich. It is interesting to note that her early poems in *A Change of World* begin by being closed forms of versification which won the Yale Younger Poets award and was commended by Auden as being "neatly and modestly dressed, speak quietly but do not mumble, respect their elders, but are not cowed by them, and do not tell fibs" (ARPP 278-279). His description recalls a male centric image of a neat, well-dressed woman who is quiet, modest and submits to traditional role enacting. In fact, the poems in this volume are formal, metrically correct compositions where the poet is least visible and the themes are "universal." Helene Cixous writes in "The Laugh of Medusa": "If a woman has always functioned 'within' the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its specific energy... it is time for her to dislocate this 'within', to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers ..." (257). A feminine textual body would thus be defined as a "female libidinal economy, a regime, energies, a system of spending not necessarily carved out by culture" (287).

- **Dr. Tasneem Shahnaaz** is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Sri Aurobindo College, Delhi University.

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# THE INTERNET AND ‘DIGITAL DIVIDE’

*Melwyn Pinto*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet had been sensationally termed as a ‘great equalizer’ (Cf. Wolf). In other words, the Internet was conceived as a medium that would break the barriers of race, gender, economy, class and power. However, the rising digital divide globally and locally has established that this grand narrative of the Internet has failed to live up to the early sensation it created. Of course, as will be established in this paper, the term ‘digital divide’ is not to be taken as a binary between those who have the know-how of and access to the digital technology and those who do not. The term needs to be looked at from its wider scope and consequences.

It is important upfront to acknowledge that the Internet, unlike other media, requires and presupposes quite a lot of basic ‘qualities’ from its users. Any dearth in degree of any of these qualities can alienate the user digitally at various levels. As regards traditional media, a person with minimum or no education (in case of radio and television) could read, listen and see and grasp media messages. Not so with the Internet. A person not only needs literacy in general, he/she also needs the technical know-how, besides specific computer literacy to first and foremost enter into the Internet realm. Further, if one has to gain something from it that could help one in terms of enhancing one’s quality of life, one needs advanced knowledge to break the intricate digital divide nature of the Internet.

It is in this context that the present paper looks to argue how the Internet as a medium tends by its very nature towards a complex digital divide that not many can break successfully. The objective is to trace the patterns of inherent digital divide nature of the Internet and look at various ways in which this ‘deficiency’ could be overcome. The basic methodology would be a survey and review of the literature and statistics available on the subject, using them as analytical tools to suggest the way forward.

- **Melwyn Pinto** is Research Scholar in the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at Kuvempu University, Shivamogga, Karnataka.

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## ***WAS NOT THIS LOVE INDEED? REVISITING SHAKESPEARE'S TWELFTH NIGHT***

***Prabha Pant***

*Twelfth Night* is considered to be one of Shakespeare's most entertaining comedies. Feste, The Clown, gives a voice to the dominant theme of the play when he sings with gay abandon "What is love?" In the song, he sings about the uncertainty of the future and so focuses on the here and now, the *carpe diem*. This is what the two female characters do in the play when caught in a volatile situation. Viola finding herself in a strange land after her shipwreck, disguises as a boy page and falls in love with her master. Her disguise protects her from unwanted attention; yet it is this very disguise which forces her to keep her feelings for Orsino a secret. Olivia in love with Cesario gives herself up to the overpowering emotions and talks of the power of fate.

Interestingly, the play opens with the Duke, Orsino, pining for the love of Olivia and expounding on the qualities of the spirit of love. He surrounds himself with music, with sweet bowers, to daydream about Olivia and sending her messages of adoration through his emissaries. The reader's curiosity is aroused and wonders what course this love is going to take as Olivia not only rejects his proposals but refuses to even meet his messengers. But the skilful Bard has a card up his sleeve. In comes Viola, disguised as a page, and finds employment with the Duke. Her disguise gives her a new identity under the name of Cesario.

The Duke is drawn to the youth and lays bare his soul to Cesario/Viola. The people in his court notice this bonding and comment that at this rate Cesario would soon "like to be advanced." Cesario is asked to carry messages to Olivia and woo her so that she agrees to the Duke's proposal of marriage. The crux, in Viola's words is, "whosoe'r I woo,/ myself would be his wife"(1.4.7). There is still more to come. Olivia falls in love with Cesario and wishes "the master were the man."

- **Dr. Prabha Pant** is Associate Professor in the Department of English at HNB Garhwal University Campus, Badshahi Thaul, Tehri (Uttarakhand).

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## THE A/POLITICAL M/OTHER: A STUDY OF MAHASWETA DEVI'S *MOTHER OF 1084*

*Navleen Multani*

Born in 1926 in Dacca, East Bengal (now Bangladesh), Mahasweta Devi is a renowned writer and an activist. Her father, Manish Ghatak, was a poet and novelist and mother, Dharitri Devi, was also a writer and a social worker. Mahasweta Devi was also influenced by *Ganantya*, a group that attempted to bring social and political theater to rural villages in Bengal in the 1930s and 1940s. After the partition of India, Devi moved to West Bengal with her family. In 1964 she began her career as a teacher but also worked as a journalist and a creative writer. Devi began her prolific literary career with her first book *Jhansir Rani* (1956). She has published twenty collections of short stories and about hundred novels, primarily in her native language (Bengali). A recipient of the *Sahitya Akademi Award* (1979), *Padma Shri* (1986), the *Bharatiya Jnanpith Award* (1996), *Magsaysay Award* (1997) and *Padma Vibhushan* (2006), she is also an activist dedicated to the struggles of tribal people in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Oppression of tribals and untouchables by landlords and government officials, ordinary people (women, workers) and their struggle against exploitation characterize Devi's fictional works. She writes about slavery and exile of indigenous tribes. Devi has been actively associated with many grassroots level social movements related to bonded labour, feudalism and forceful acquisition of agricultural land. She firmly believes that her writing is an extension of her commitment to social work. Unwavering in her pledge to the cause of the underprivileged and vulnerable sections of society, Devi rejects the official historiography in her writings. She does not merely capture tribal communities living at the edges of the forest but also writes about the upper middle class urban society within the larger frame of the Naxalite movement and Emergency. In *Mother of 1084*, Devi brings out the ruthless killing of young men, inhuman maiming of activists in police cells and the response of the people to such killings in order to quash underground political activism.

- **Dr. Navleen Multani** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, Punjab.

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## **FRIENDSHIP AND FAMILIAL BONDING IN RUSKIN BOND'S *NO MAN IS AN ISLAND***

*Ajay K. Chaubey*

Quintessentially, the substratum of family and friends has always been in the state of flux and fluid. The postmodern society has shifted its focus from the pluralistic to the individualistic state as Bond himself writes in his recently published book, "... every man and woman is an island" (Bond 2013: ix). People with such atypical motive have observed, perverted and moved from pillar to post especially in search of spatial locations and livelihood. They keep on moving; moving for the survival—for the "survival of the fittest." It knows no natural avalanches, drought and flood. Hence, family and friends both fall apart. They are fragmented, fissured and live unfriendly as it is said "the rolling stone gathers no moss." The bizarre situation of human life makes the individual idiosyncratic. Such convulsions of life enervate the natural and magnanimous consortium between family and friends. The exposé of the very state of affairs of pluralistic lives in literature and celluloid are very common as the said genres emulate and epitomize the society. The present paper is a humble venture to map the familial and friendly liaison in literature with special reference to Ruskin Bond's *No Man is an Island* (2013), a collection of short stories.

The lineage and genealogy of literature displays that Bond is not the first author to write, to narrate and to exhibit the ebullient ambience of family and friendly folks. Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" marvelously archive the collective enterprise of his twenty nine characters who embark upon the journey from the Tabard Inn to Thomas Becket's shrine. Shakespeare's friendship with Mr. "W.H" has been the subject matter of his first 126 sonnets that were addressed to the latter. The close male relationship has been the "recurring fascination" (Hiscock 179) in Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night* though such relationships were marked as "explicitly homoerotic" (Hiscock 178) by the critics worldwide.

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**“ALONE ON MY BOAT ON THE SEA”:  
EXISTENTIALIST AMBIVALENCE IN  
ANITA DESAI’S *FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN***

*Narinder K. Sharma*

Anita Desai’s fiction predominantly paints the tragedy of human souls trapped in pangs of existence. Her focus on intangible realities of life, the innermost depths of the human psyche, demystification of chaotic underworld of human mind, dilemma of making a choice and an individual’s quest for a personal meaning in life assigns her a distinct position in Indian English Fiction. The present paper attempts to ascertain the existential dimensions in Anita Desai’s *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) since “philosophically, (it) is a lyrical fictionalization of the quintessence of existentialism” (Gupta 185). Further, the novel “presents a kind of emotional wasteland in which hardly anything happy or good takes place; in a rocky background where the landscape is barren, bare, and dismal with dust storms” (Tripathi 83). The foregone discussion refracts that the existentialist undercurrents are quite prominent in the novel. Hence this study.

Existentialism is a man-centered philosophy which is drenched in the problematic of human existence. Kaufman opines: “Existentialism is a timeless sensibility that can be discerned here and there in the past; but it is only in recent times that it has hardened into a sustained protest and preoccupation” (12). In the twentieth century it arose as a philosophical movement. It becomes more visible in the works of Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Gabrielle Marcel. Steven in his book, *Existentialism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, rightly points out the major parameters of the existential philosophy: “Focusing on the subjective individual, (existentialism) explores themes such as freedom; authenticity; *angst*; alienation; the individual as ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’; the self as ‘exception’; responsibility for one’s ‘existence’; the necessity to ‘choose’ one’s life; the self as a ‘relation’ rather than a concrete entity; the self as ‘style’; the self as ‘future orientated’; the ‘leap of faith’; dying as ‘mine’” (31).

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## **PANGS OF PARTITION IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN***

*Satyendra Prasad Singh*

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is a milestone among the partition novels of Bala Chandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* (1959), Manohar Malgaonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981), Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975) and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy man* (1988) etc. The classic novel deals with fratricidal violence and it is a "prolonged exclamation of horror combined with sentimental evocations of love and fellow feeling" (Gopal 70-71).

The colonial India is partitioned on the basis of religion into two independent nation states of India and Pakistan. The unfortunate division, primarily, has affected densely Muslim populated regions – Punjab in the north-west and Bengal in the east. Khushwant Singh is greatly moved by the tragic events of partition as he has been a witness to the great holocaust. The partition, a great havoc of history, has left solid impression on his mind and his faith in the natural nobility of mankind is shaken. In a talk for the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Guest of Honour programme in 1964, he stated in retrospect:

*The beliefs that I had cherished all my life were shattered. I had believed in innate goodness of the common man. But the division of India had been accomplished by the most savage massacres known in the history of the country. I had believed that we Indians were peace loving and non-violent; that we were more concerned with matters of the spirit, while the rest of the world was involved in the pursuit of material things. (ABC).*

*Train to Pakistan* expresses the theme of holocaust of India's independence and the traumatic effects of the partition – massive migration and bloodshed.

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## CHRONUS-HYPERION SYNDROME IN THE FICTION OF R.K. NARAYAN

*Bijay Ketan Pattanayak*

Hyperion takes on and kills his father Chronus (Saturn) to gain power. And this patricide became a myth. So Joseph Campbell in "The Hero with Thousand faces" has singled out this syndrome as a paradigm of the aesthetics of conflict. Against this critical backdrop, this paper intends to prove that the Father-Son conflict is portrayed in the fiction of R.K. Narayan with astute understanding of the psychology of the two generations.

As one reads the golden pages of the Indian myths and legends, one comes across excellent examples of perfect love between father and son: Rama and Dasarath, Duryodhan and Dhritarashtra, Abhimanyu and Arjun etc. Yet nobody can afford to miss the accounts of discord between the mythical son and his father. Some such coils of intergenerational rift and drift are the ones relating to Nachiketa and Vajasrvas, Prahallad and Hiranya Kashyapa, Lava and Kusa vs. Rama. As R.K. Narayan has himself declared in his autobiography *My Days*, he has been literally fascinated by the Indian mythic lore. Thanks to the titular influence of his grandmother on him during his formative years, he has been quite responsive to the myths and legends of India. It is no wonder, therefore, that in the fictional world of Malgudi, one comes across fathers and sons both pulling on well with one another and also at loggerheads with one another. As of today, no focused study on Chronus-Hyperion syndrome as portrayed in the works of R.K. Narayan has been attempted. So this paper intends to revisit briefly some of the works of R.K. Narayan to prove how *Bachelor of Arts*, *Financial Expert*, *Guide*, *Vendor of Sweets* etc. are tales depicting the manners of exclusion by the traditional Hindu old world order. However, they do not end with sound and fury but with notes of truce and two-way traffic. Hence, the principal aim of this critical adventure is to prove that R.K. Narayan is not an exclusionist/disintegrationist despite his iconoclastic fervour.

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**DEHUMANISATION IN  
VIJAY TENDULKAR'S *SAKHARAM BINDER* AND  
MOHAN RAKESH'S *HALFWAY HOUSE***

*Lowleen Malhrotra*

Vijay Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder* and Mohan Rakesh's *Halfway House* are the two social plays in which, though the philosophical attitude taken by the playwright is quite different, former a naturalist and the latter an existentialist, both converge on one central theme – the deplorable plight of an Indian Hindu women in modern or postmodern society. Simone de Beauvoir says, "One is not born a woman, but becomes one." God makes man in his own image whether it be a man or a woman. Society colours them into two sexes, male and female, former being superior and a lord, the latter, inferior and a slave.

In the play *Halfway House*, we learn about Savitri, a girl from a respectable middle class family, who is married to Mahendranath, a man from a respectable middle-class family but incapable of taking decisions and supporting his family. His prime concern is only to make his friends happy. She tries to settle the family but is always treated as an animal at home: "Mahendra who smiles meekly among his friends, becomes fiend when he comes home. One never knows when he may scratch one's eyes out or drink one's life-blood! One day he makes a bonfire of his clothes in anger. Another day he sits on my chest and bangs my head against the floor" (71). He mishandles her simply so that he is flattered and eulogized by his male partners. His male chauvinism makes him too blind to banal effects of his behavior. Savitri tries to awaken the man in him but is wasted due to the overbearing influence and interference of his self-centered friends in his life. She expresses anguish at this: "There was even a time when I tried to turn him into a man. But if my efforts ever began to bear fruits, his friends started pitying him. 'Savitri is leading Mahendra by the nose!' 'Savitri has broken him...he is no longer a man.' Just a puppet...poor Mahendra!" (71).

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## POETRY

### FIVE POEMS

*Patricia Prime*

#### THEMES ON A VARIATION

Two women at the start of summer  
sit outside on the veranda talking  
while all I hear is the rustling  
of tui in the apple tree and see  
their black wings and white throats  
as they flit from bough to bough.

There's a great grey cloud  
paused above the distant hills  
so still it shapes the slow afternoon,  
then storm-light breaks through cloud,  
flares for an instant and dies  
far away in the evening sunset.

#### SCENE AT THE BEACH

He's walking behind them –  
the man, the woman, the dog,

beneath the pohutukawa trees

lining the burning sand.

There's a pulse in the air:

the sound of gulls, the churn of waves,

but most of all is the argument

that continues along the beach.

The woman leans away

towards the comfort of the trees,

the man dips his feet in the cooling

sea, trailing the dog's lead,

while the child, the one they

are fighting about – they think

can't hear – is counting seashells

in his bucket without a care.

## **BLUE BOWL**

Walking along the seawall

where the gulls craft the blue  
there is only that moment  
of wave-song crashing on the rocks  
for a billion years.

It can be hard to look,  
hard to stop and breathe in  
slowly, let the footsteps  
get near, see the child's fingers  
picking up a pebble.

A blue upturned bowl  
seals the horizon, cumulus  
clouds licking its edges.

To live is to perch, precarious,  
on the rim. I stand still  
noticing only a gannet  
swimming in the deep blue.

He's circling the harbour  
waiting for something to swim  
past, his pin-eyes alert.

## **TOUCHING WOOD**

Why imagine the worst happening?



A boy knocked down in the waves,  
the back door broken into, robbing  
the home of its security. I recall  
leaning my face into the flowers  
in the Rose Garden on being inspired  
by the perfume I hadn't expected;  
of being moved by emotion  
of the music at my husband's  
funeral. I try to focus on the present,  
this negative thinking banished  
by the beauty and endurance of nature,  
to extinguish what I cannot say  
and banish it forever; to thank  
my good fortune as the prized  
and privileged survivor of fate.

### **RYUKA**

whatever the news on the screen  
while we can we must love each day  
it dawns to give us life or lack  
to enjoy the next day  
I cannot see the ocean waves  
on the other side of the hill  
where the road comes to a sharp bend  
there's the smallest cottage  
if I doze it is to expand

my vanishing point while traffic  
blurs past me outside the window  
towards the motorway

the gas sheen in Van Gogh's puddles  
yellow halos rimming cafes  
almost the colour of sunshine  
the image is so strong

spring has come and the pink blossom  
sways in the breeze like a dancer  
bare and graceful on the hillside  
its presence fills my life

an old couple walk in the park  
taking advantage of the sun  
their thoughts that spring has come at last  
greeted by buds and trees.

- **Patricia Prime**, based in New Zealand, is co-editor of the haiku journal *Kokako*, reviews/interviews editor of *Haibun Today* and a reviewer for *Atlas Poetica*, *Takahe* and other journals. Patricia edited the special issue of ekphrastic tanka for *Atlas Poetica*, has selected haiku for the *Touchstone Awards* and has written an essay on her tanka for *Ribbons*, an essay on collaborative writing for *Lynx*, and one on tanka prose for *Haiku NewZ*. She is on the editorial panels of the Indian journals *Poetcrit*, *Writers*, *Editors*, *Critics* and *New Fiction Journal*. Her poetry, interviews and reviews have been published in the *World Poetry Almanac (Mongolia)* in 2009-2015. She has recently edited, with two Australian poets, *Amelia Fielden* and *Beverley George*, an anthology of tanka written by New Zealand and Australian poets, called *100 Tanka by 100 Poets*. The world haiku anthology, *A Vast Sky*, edited with *Dr. Bruce Ross* and others was published recently. She has published a book of collaborative tanka, *Shizuka*, with French poet, *Giselle Maya*.



## **FOUR POEMS**

*Zehra Nigah*

Translated from the Urdu by

*Urvashi Sabu*

### **THE ACROBAT WOMAN**

She stands, against the wooden board  
As though impaled in every part  
First her son, then her husband  
Will rain knives upon her  
Over her hands, over her shoulder  
Over her head, over her back.  
The spectators, with bated breath  
Watch this spectacle again and again  
As if it's the first time.  
But no one knows  
That in this carnival called life  
Ornamented and impaled  
To the board of domesticity  
This woman conceals within her  
The knives aimed by her own kinsmen.  
If there's a difference, it's just this:

The sharp blades of these knives pierce her body  
But are invisible to the world.

### **EXILE**

Sita's the talk of the town  
Barefoot on the flames, as she walks down.

A goddess, if she emerges unscathed  
A sinner if the flames consume her whole,  
She whose beauty soothed the universe  
In the mirror of fire, does herself behold.  
Let the world think what it will  
But that all-knowing God!  
The destroyer of sin and falsehood  
Is so naïve, and still her Lord?  
Behold! She crosses the flames unharmed  
And her husband's trust does win,  
She sees Rama, his arms wide open,  
All eager to fold her in.  
She walks up to him, having crossed that extra mile.  
But from that day onward, she lives in true exile.

## **SUPERMAN**

Why do you stare at him thus? Remember?

He's the same urchin you would see

Every time, when you traveled this way.

Early in the morning, yellow dust cloth in hand

He would eagerly wait for the signal to turn red.

Late afternoon, with those bundles of mid-day newspapers

Clutched to his chest, he would come.

And in the evening, laden with fragrant *gajras*

He would bloom in these streets.

Maybe you've forgotten the lilt of his voice

That chirped on endlessly.

Perhaps you've forgotten his luminescent eyes

That saw and shone all at once.

Ask him his name and he would reply, 'I'm Superman!'

Almost flying, he would cross each road.

Like so many children in this, my city

He was illiterate, ignorant.

No guiding hand blessed his forehead.

He grew up in the blistering sunshine of his own toil.

A desert bloom, he had been rocked by the winds

And put to sleep on the bare chest of the city  
Amid lullabies of the stars.  
He was the inheritor of this blessed land, the heir apparent  
He was the length and breadth and depth of the sea,  
the forehead of mountains.  
Why do you stare at him thus? Remember?  
He's the same urchin you would see  
Every time, when you traveled this way.  
Today, in this blessed land, this Superman  
Exhausted, and shivering with cold  
Cannot wipe with his own hands  
Even the saliva dribbling from the cavern of his lips.  
No longer now that yellow dust cloth on his shoulder  
No thought of that bundle of newspapers  
No more that philosophy of self-imposed labour  
No more that God gifted intelligence  
No more that audacity of glib talk.  
He's no more concerned with enmity or peace.  
He's now addicted to the poison in his veins.

### **GULZAMEENA**

Gulzameena, Gulzameena, with your delicate finger,

What do you write on this pile of rubble?

Gulzameena raised her questioning eyes and replied,

'A few days ago, this pile of rubble was my school

I would come here daily

And inscribe the Holy name of Allah on its wall.

My paper, pens and books, my fellow companions, have all been destroyed.

I come here every day, and from the satchel of my memories,

I pull out the last lesson I learnt.

I write it on this pile of rubble and return

I know I am not destined to read

At least I can continue to write.'

- **Zehra Nigah** is one of the most respected and admired senior women poets writing in Pakistan today. Born in Hyderabad (India) in 1937, she migrated to Pakistan in 1947. Her poetry conveys a sensitivity towards women which is strikingly different from the usual aggressive feminist stances commonly seen in contemporary women's writing. Even more remarkable is her empathic understanding of the psychology of children and the horror of child exploitation.
- **Dr. Urvashi Sabu** is Associate Professor in the Department of English at P.G.D.A.V. College, University of Delhi. She takes keen interest in poetry, drama and translation and is also passionate about women's issues.



## **TWO POEMS**

*Barbara Briggs*

### **RETURNING**

In the midst of the darkest of nights  
I behold the silent petals of a rose aflame  
In the center of a whirling world  
I behold a sea of peace  
In the middle of the desert  
a garden appears  
and the quiet song of the angels is heard  
melting the snow upon the topmost peaks  
embracing the soil with the fires of love  
and in the distance  
the golden bells resound  
calling us back to you  
O divine most loved  
we are forever returning.

### **THE BELLS OF ETERNITY**

I hear the bells of eternity  
ringing in the morning air  
they sing of love and joy



of the flaming worlds beyond a sea of stars  
they sing of union  
communion  
and the soundless dance that moves from here to here  
they invite you  
O my soul  
they call you  
out of the silence  
into beckoning waves of light  
arise  
O quickening heart  
arise and go forth  
into the billowing space  
of your destiny.

- **Barbara Briggs** is a freelance writer and author of two books: *Vision into Infinity* and *The Contribution of Maharishi's Vedic Science to Complete Fulfillment in Life*. .



## **MY GULF DREAMS**

***Maya Vinai***

*Dedicated to all overseas workers in Gulf countries who sacrifice the best years of their life to fend for their families.*

I brave the storm and wipe the dust and heat off my brow.

To build you a palatial house gleaming with marbled opulence.

I devour the unpliant *khubbus* dipped in unsavory meat,

To placate your taste buds with chicken breast squirming in spicy  
gravy

I hold back my tongue when they whip and thrash me,

To let you spend peaceful nights filled with serenity and comfort.

Like a deity in a shrine, I circumambulate the youngsters who have just  
returned from home.

To get a whiff of oil from their head and placate my patriotic ardor.

I jump at horror when I hear from them of the tales back home,

Of elders in the neighborhood who were unsuspectingly robbed one  
night when they were fast asleep.

Of a co-worker's wife, who spent her day in straightening her in the  
parlour and nights burrowed in her beloved's arms.

On every festival and cricket match day, I take a resolution to come  
back fast to see my child's growing years,

To watch her squeal with delight and fight stubbornly for the toy she  
wants.

To see my wife dazzling with pride in the gold necklace I had brought  
her last Christmas.

To see my parents spend their twilight years in peace and happiness.

But I always succumb to the impulse of gathering *a little more*...

Before I finally, gather my dreams and head back home.

To be with my own when they need me the most.

- *Dr. Maya Vinai teaches English in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad campus.*



## **TWO POEMS**

*Sushil Kumar Mishra*

### **COURTESY**

Courtesy is essence of human values and humanity  
Symbolises politeness and civility.  
Sorry, thank you, please, good morning, good evening etc. are words  
Which sweeten social and family life with good wishes and mercy.  
Enriches human relation and unites the whole nation.  
Beautifies and glorifies human personality with super quality.  
Costs nothing but pays something; extends friendliness,  
Brotherhood and enhances social unity.  
Makes life perfectly meaningful, fragrant and beautiful.  
Improves love and mutual understanding.

### **WONDERS OF SCIENCE**

Science is a blessing for the Universe.  
Caused industrial revolution and all round evolution.  
Caused Green revolution and increased food production.

Created White Revolution and enhanced milk production.

Caused Blue Revolution and increased fish and meat production.

Caused golden revolution in fruits and vegetables production.

Enhanced the life expectancy, decreased the mortality rate.

Made human beings busy and their livelihood easy.

Enlightened the world with knowledge and

Enriched industrialization and boosted globalisation.

Helped us to convert our dreams into reality

By tireless striving and pursuing perfection.

- **Dr. Sushil Kumar Mishra** is Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, SRM University, Sonapat, Haryana.



## **BOOK REVIEW**

**S. Ramaswamy. *Excavations*. Bangalore: CVG India, 2015. pp. xii+220. Price: Rs. 350.**

*Sudhir K. Arora*

*Excavations*, which is dedicated to teacher Professor K. Anantha Ramaiah, is a collection of 20 essays, written by S. Ramaswamy, a renowned scholar and Phi Beta Kappa International Award recipient. The essays, which are the result of his addresses at various national and international conferences, are the real excavations, done on different occasions with the scholarly tools. The essayist's erudition captivates the reader so profoundly that he is bewildered to see the treasure of erudition lying before him in the form of gems of knowledge.

Ramaswamy begins his *Excavations* with "Vagartha: Word and Meaning," which reveals the changing patterns in English and the journey of the word from its sound value to etheric structural value via vibratory value. He quotes from Eliot and shows his concern when he

states: "We have become an oral society; we have forgotten how to write."

"Indian Literature in English Translation" is a very informative note which becomes a "Key" to the vast treasure house of "Indian Literatures in English Translation." He finds that British translators who were also Sanskrit scholars did a great job in translation. He discovers the fact that the largest number of translations into English have come from Bengali literature. In translation, he traces "the culture-specificity" as "the binding force" and shares his own experience as translator while defining experience as "recollection of past mistake." He is surprised that India has not any "Nobel Laureate" in Literature after Tagore and traces out its reason: the lack of good translations of the major writers. Hence, he recommends the promotion of translation.

The essay "A Green Thought in a Green Shade Tree in Ancient Indian Literature" highlights the role of trees and leaves in the ritualistic literature. Ramaswamy proves his points of view while quoting from the *Vedas*, *Vedanta* and the *Upanishads*. He makes the theme interdisciplinary and exposes the exploitation of Nature's wealth. He cites from the *Kathopanishad*, the *Taittiriya Upanishad* and the *Brihandaranyaka* to make people environmental conscious. The Bodhi tree is associated with the enlightenment of the Buddha.

"Bhakti Movement and Literature" throws light on the traditional Indian philosophy while focusing on Bhaktiyoga, Shaivism, mystical poet Kabir and Aurobindo. The personality of Nehru is the theme of the essay "The Presence of Nehru's Personality in Kannada Poetry." The poems reveal Nehru's cosmopolitan world image as a great leader, a pacifist and an architect of Panchsheela. Ramaswamy discovers that "The greatest literature of the world has always been mystical and visionary. Insight and not just sight. Vision and not mere words. Introspection and not description." 'Nada Brahman' and 'Sabda Brahman' make the Indian tradition highly musical. Globalization becomes a "concern" more than a "concept" for the essayist in "Indian Literature in English in the Context of Globalization," which seems to follow the advice of Theodore Livitt: "Think Global. Act Local." The essayist finds globalization as "the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via settlement and cultural mimesis." While stressing the role of translation to the concept of localization and globalization, he takes the example of S.L. Bhyrappa, the most translated "Pan-Indian" Kannada novelist.

The essayist finds parallels between Gandhi and Tolstoy in the essay "The Gandhi-Tolstoy Correspondence." While referring to Uma Parameshwaran, he focuses on the Indian immigration to Canada in "Immigration and the Indian Diaspora." The essayist shows his vast knowledge of the religious books in "The *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgita*" where he dwells on subjects like Vidya, Knowledge, Learning and Wisdom.

"Rabindranath Tagore's 'Sanyasi' in a Sanskrit Translation" is the essayist's brief tribute to Tagore on the occasion of his 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebration. In "Japanese Drama and Theatre," the essayist mentions various categories of Japanese theatre but focuses on the Noh and Kabuki while recalling Ananda Coomaraswamy's *Theory of Art in Asia* for differentiating between the Asian concept of art and that of the West.

"Tradition and Transformation in French Canadian Writing" peeps into Marie-Claire Blais's *The Execution*, a Canadian version of "Theatre of Cruelty." Marie-Claire Blais reveals the stamp of Albert Camus and the philosopher Nietzsche while attacking traditions for transformation. The essay "Humanism in Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad: A Travelogue*" highlights Twain's observation on human behaviour, particularly of Italians. While citing the cases of Dante, Petrarch, Shakespeare, Sidney, Sri Aurobindo etc., Ramaswamy gives the concept of "Mother Goddess" and talks of "Feminine Principle" in his essay "Feminine Figure of Divinity: The Feminine Divine and the Human Divine."

The most striking essay is "Individual Identity in Relation to Tradition" which reminds the reader of Eliot's "Tradition and Individual Talent." Ramaswamy defines culture as "the assimilation of the best that has been thought and said in the world" and considers tradition as "a part of culture." An individual ceases to be an individual if he "consents to be a mere cog in the wheel conforming to a system which crushes his freedom." Tradition never crushes but encourages individual talent. The essay "Modern Sensibility in European Literature" reveals the cosmopolitan nature of modern sensibility which expresses "a sense of urban cultural dislocation" with multiple points of view. In the essay "The One Life: Coleridge and Hinduism" Ramaswamy reveals the findings of Antonella Riem Natale who, while quoting from Adi Shakaracharya, *Bhagavadgita* and others, finds the threads that connect Coleridge's poetry with the Hindu view of life.

The last essay is S. Ramaswamy's "Presidential Address" delivered at the 56<sup>th</sup> All India English Teachers Conference held in Bareilly (18-20

December 2011). This address displays his gigantic store of knowledge and scholarship and his amazing passion for teaching and learning. What he recommends is to turn inward for searching and finding the difference between *Apara* and *Para*, between *Preyas* and *Shreyas* and between *Pravritti* and *Nivritti*.

*Excavations* is replete with gems and pearls of wisdom garnered from a life dedicated to teaching and research. Evident in this volume is his inherent ability to simplify for both students and scholars the infinitude of the landscape of a soul overflowing with compassion for the wisdom of the ages. The book is informative as well as illuminating for the serious reader who will feel fresh and enlightened while taking a bath in the Sanskrit, Kannada, French and English showers from the fountain called S. Ramaswamy.

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Mankind will  
never see  
an end  
of trouble  
until lovers  
of wisdom  
come to hold  
political power,  
or the holders  
of power  
become  
lovers of  
wisdom.

- *Plato*

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