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CHIEF EDITOR : NIBIR K. GHOSH
EDITOR : A. KARUNAKER

Re-Markings has fostered cross-cultural understanding and opened doors for new, exciting scholarship that will prove to be seminal for the future. During its first decade of existence, the breadth of its content - spanning fiction, poetry, literary scholarship, reviews, and special features on cultural questions of perennial interest - has been nothing short of breathtaking, thereby fulfilling its ambitious mission statement.
- Charles Johnson

There is no other publication like *Re-Markings* that I know of and it occupies a unique place in the world of global journals.
- Jonah Raskin

The canvas of *Re-Markings* is varied and vast comprising articles on mainstream and marginal representations of human experience.
- Shanker A. Dutt

RE-MARKINGS

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

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EDITORIAL

If the ancient Indian civilization and the Roman Empire were once known for attributes of glory and greatness, what links India and Italy in contemporary times is rampant corruption in every segment of social and political life. Indians visiting Italy may find the nation almost like a second home: life is chaotic, no one obeys the rules, policemen can be bribed to any extent even to be tacit accomplices in crime, there is massive tax evasion, the mafia controls real estate, the government counts for little, and, for the powers that be, life can indeed be a bed of roses at the expense of the national exchequer.

In this context I am unwittingly reminded of a painting that I had seen, among numerous other exhibits, at the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston, Massachusetts, during the course of my Fulbright year (2003-04) in the U.S. This canvas entitled "The Truth Unveiled by Time," painted by the Italian artist, Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770), around 1743, shows a young woman, representing Truth, holding a mirror in her right hand, while her left supports the disk of the sun, symbolising the light of Reason. The naked, soft sensual body of the young woman with a bared nipple is clasped in the arms of Time represented as an old man. On the right of the painting appears Falsehood, dazzled by the blinding light of Truth.

In the corridors of Italian power and pelf, this painting created quite a flutter among all sane citizens. According to the express wishes of the Italian Prime Minister, Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, a copy of this painting was placed as the backdrop of his media briefing room in Palazzo Chigi after he took office for the third time in 2008. It is believed that this painting was chosen because of its title. A couple of months ago, while the prime minister was becoming entangled in a succession of controversies involving women friends and associates, Berlusconi was apprehensive that the exposed breasts could "offend the sensibilities of some people," and apparently decided to cover the woman's naked breasts, fully exposed in the original painting, by a white veil. It is rumored that since Truth has a new top fitted by Berlusconi's image consultant, Lies should feel altogether more at ease in the office of Italy's prime minister. As reported by Hilary Clark for *The Independent* in Rome, "In his former life as a media entrepreneur, Mr. Berlusconi part-built a multibillion-pound media empire on revenues generated by television programmes featuring gyrating women showing-off their naked breasts." After such knowledge, what forgiveness!

Though the present Indian prime minister may personally stand unquestionably committed to ethics and morality, the elite lineup at the Tihar jail – Ministers, MPs, bureaucrats, senior police officials, doctors, teachers, members of judiciary and the like – ought to convince anyone how deeply embedded in the national consciousness is the cancer of corruption. The abhorrence displayed by all power-brokers towards Anna Hazare's crusade for bringing everyone in power under the scanner amply justifies the fact that Truth needs cover-ups so that it does not find illumination by the light of reason. In the corrupted currents of today's world, it is ironical that Truth, unlike in Tiepolo's painting, must be constrained to remain dazzled by the glaring lights of Falsehood. That makes the world a dangerous place to live not because of the people who perpetuate evil but because of the saner ones who prefer to remain 'strictly neutral' and do nothing about it.

The challenge before all of us – writers, academics and intellectuals – is, therefore, to give up the comfortable stance of neutrality and engage ourselves in our own little ways to conjure and create a world where Truth remains unembarrassed by falsehood.

Before closing this editorial note, I deem it a privilege and pleasure to share with you all the satisfaction and joy that comes from placing this twentieth issue of *Re-Markings* in your trusted hands. If our journal has been able to reach the ten-year milestone with such style and dignity, it is largely on account of the faith that all of you have reposed in our editorial policy that remains committed to offering nothing but the best with clockwork precision. I deeply appreciate the patience that our precious contributors have displayed in waiting for over 12-18 months to see their work in print. I am immensely thankful to the contributors who have enriched this celebratory volume with their creative rendering of universal concerns that remain central to the world we inhabit. I am no less grateful to our esteemed members on the Advisory Board who have always shown rare zeal in being an integral part of *Re-Markings*. I am truly humbled by the praises that have been showered on the journal by celebrities from various walks of life. I have absolutely no hesitation in giving a large measure of credit for such lavish accolades to Dr. A. Karunaker, Mr. Sundeep Arora and members of the entire *Re-Markings* fraternity for their constant encouragement and support.

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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**EAST IS EAST, WEST IS WEST,
EVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET:
A CONVERSATION WITH JONAH RASKIN**

Nibir K. Ghosh

Jonah Raskin is a Professor at Sonoma State University, California where he teaches courses in American literature, media law, and an interdisciplinary program for entering college students. From 1967-1972 he taught English and American literature at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. During that period, he wrote for underground newspapers, and was active in the movement against the war in Vietnam. Since 1975, he has lived and worked in northern California - with the exception of one year as a Fulbright Professor in Belgium where he taught American literature at the University of Antwerp and the University of Ghent. He is the author of 12 books and several volumes of poetry. His work has been translated into French and Spanish. The opportunity to meet professor Raskin came in 2004 when I visited him at Santa Rosa, California. Since then he has been a regular contributor to Re-Markings. In this interview, the focus is on India in all its diversity.

Ghosh: Though you have never visited India, you have displayed remarkable insights into the shades and nuances of Indian society. What created your interest in this great subcontinent?

Raskin: I would be more modest about my own insights. My father gave me Indian novels to read when I was a teenager, and an aunt lent me her copy of Nehru's autobiography. On my own, I learned about Gandhi; young boys need and want heroes and Gandhi and Nehru were two of my earliest heroes. I thought of them as belonging to the world, not just to India.

Ghosh: What elements in Nehru's autobiography appealed to you?

Raskin: Nehru had a sense of humor. The story goes that when Churchill and Roosevelt asked him what he thought about "Western civilization," he replied, "That would be a good idea." From Nehru, I learned to appreciate subtlety and a light touch and through his experience I came to appreciate global movements for independence.

Note: For complete conversation contact remarkings@hotmail.com

SECOND COMING OF GODZILLA: JAPAN'S NUCLEAR DISASTER

David Ray

In 1954, movie producer Tanaka Tomoyuki, desperate to come up with a hit, posed a question: "What if a dinosaur sleeping in the Southern Hemisphere had been awakened and transformed into a giant by the bomb? What if it attacked Tokyo?" And he had his hit.

The fact that the movie and its comic book and toy spinoffs have been regarded as Grade B pop culture does not obviate the reality that inspired the film. There are conferences devoted to the putrid old rubber lizard; fans seek his claw prints, just as starry-eyed Star Trekkers turn up at jamborees. They collect kaiju eiga dolls and videos. They swap signed pictures of stars. They download thousands of pages of trivia.

To Americans, Godzilla (Gojira in Japan) was an entertainment, but to a nation recovering from the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the visions of supernatural demons, serpent deities inhabiting remote valleys and dragons that could traverse water, land, and sky were conflated with the horrors of atomic weaponry. Like the city-leveling egg of woe that had been dropped from the Enola Gay, the image of a raging monstrous reptile reflected an angst-driven zeitgeist. The atom was, to say the least, suspect. "The original Gojira was a sincere horror film, intended to frighten rather than amuse, which engaged honestly - indeed, even grimly - with contemporary Japanese unease over a mounting nuclear menace, untrammelled environmental degradation, and the long shadows of World War II," wrote William Tsutsui in *Godzilla on My Mind*. Yet there were already on the scene plenty of enthusiasts who were promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear power, as if a bargain could be negotiated with a temperamental deity. Thus Godzilla, if pacified and appeased, could bestow blessings. He would become a raging out-of-control tyrant, spewing deadly radioactivity and knocking down skyscrapers with flips of his tail only if inexpertly and disrespectfully treated.

- **David Ray** is author of several books of poetry, including one about the Holocaust, one about the Iraq Wars, three about India, another about New Zealand, and yet another about Australia. He was one of the founders of American Writers Against the Vietnam War in 1966.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

THE LIFE OF THE MIND KNOWS NO GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

Charles Johnson

As the former fiction editor of a literary journal, *The Seattle Review*, a publication I served for 20 years, I can say without any hesitation whatsoever that *Re-Markings* is a simply remarkable (pun intended) contribution to our literary and cultural experience. During its first decade of existence, the breadth of its content - spanning fiction, poetry, literary scholarship, reviews, and special features on cultural questions of perennial interest - has been nothing short of breathtaking, thereby fulfilling its ambitious mission statement. What strikes me most about that mission is that from the beginning chief editor Nibir K. Ghosh has maintained a vision inspired with a sense that the life of the mind (and heart) knows no geographic boundaries.

On the pages of this publication, East and West are constantly in conversation, offering readers the opportunity to reflect upon the works of Samuel Beckett, Thomas Pynchon, Jhumpa Lahiri, W.H. Auden, Henry David Thoreau, Jainendra Kumar, and many others. And for that reason we can say that *Re-Markings* is a bellwether publication for this new century and millennium in which the old tribal, nationalistic, ideological and provincial approaches to literary culture are destined to give way to a robust, multi-cultural appreciation of humankind's global achievements in general. True enough, as I write these words in July, 2011, the world is wracked by conflicts based on race, ethnicity, and religion. But these, I suspect, are the last death twitches of a limited, tribal way of thinking at the dawn of the 21st century, a new era in which science, technology, advances in communication that obliterate isolationism and insularity, and a "global economy" made possible the recent "Arab spring," i.e., young people demanding democracy, transparency in government, and prosperity for all. In both its spirit and practice, *Re-Markings* significantly nurtures these profound, evolutionary changes remaking (pun also intended) the world in which we live.

- **Dr. Charles Johnson** is novelist, essayist, literary critic, short story writer, cartoonist, screenwriter and Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington. He is a 1998 MacArthur fellow, author of *Middle Passage*, which received the 1990 National Book Award for fiction.

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REVISITING 'FIRES'

Ajay Singh

I first met Editor Nibir Ghosh at a debate competition organised by Agra's popular newspaper *DLA* at St Peter's College on October 11, 2008. The subject, if I remember correctly, was "whether politicians should also retire at age sixty." I, as the ex-Member of Parliament from Agra rushing towards my sixties was soon joined by Raj Babbar, the sitting MP (age wise in somewhat the same category (!)). It was a fun event with young talent from the city's best schools debating on both sides of the issue.

As we were leaving, Nibir gave me a copy of *Re-Markings*, the journal that he edits and publishes. I lazily opened it on the train journey back to Delhi and soon was mesmerised. Here was Anna Akhmatova, Frantz Fanon and so much more. I could not believe it. I called a friend next day to go and pay for my subscription so that I could have regular supply of the journal.

The journal excited me for it was a continuation, it seemed to me, of the great literary traditions of Agra, of debate and discourse in all our diversities.

Our country has one of the biggest publishing industries in the world. In all our many languages are journals dealing with a myriad of issues. I too once, decades ago, edited and published a monthly journal *Asli Bharat* that took up the issue of public interest and got prominent people to write for us giving their views. It was based somewhat along the lines of *Seminar*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *The Other Side* and so many others. So I know the difficulties that alternative media have with producing their journals. Newsprint, printing, distribution, staff and above all lack of advertising support on which all mainstream media survive. It is one reason why I respect and admire Editor Nibir Ghosh for his devotion and dedication to his journal. He, and through him, *Re-Markings* took me back to my youth when we thought we could, as Frantz Fanon said, "It is also the consciousness of collaborating in the immense work of destroying the world of oppression."

- **Mr. Ajay Singh** is a noted journalist. A former MP from Agra, he was Minister of State for Railways in the Indian government during 1989-1990. He has also had an eventful tenure as the Indian High Commissioner in Fiji.

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**FORGETTING AND RE-MEMBERING:
SHIRLEY GEOK-LIN LIM, LI-YOUNG LEE AND
THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN DIASPORA**

Walter S. H. Lim

One of the ways in which people respond to trauma is with the loss of memory, a phenomenon that may be psychological in nature or related to the ways in which the brain processes and accommodates trauma. Forgetting facilitates the survival of the human organism in the face of a devastating experience. In psychoanalysis this forgetting that involves deflecting and suppressing a debilitating mental or emotional event is not straightforward, for what gets shoved beneath the surface of ordinary consciousness and remembering may re-emerge elsewhere as abnormal psychology and pathological manifestations.

In diasporic and exilic literatures, the psychic and emotional dimensions of remembering and forgetting have a distinctively spatial and geographical emphasis as one's position in (the present of) the host country is inexorably defined with reference to (the past of) one's nativity in the old country. If the experience of the old country was traumatic, any transnational movement to the new becomes an enforced and survivalist-driven one—a response that entails escaping overwhelming social and political problems to seek a better life promised by the West. This trajectory gives material and symbolic form to the typical narrative of migration desire in which it is the East that always desires the West. When circumstances compel forced transnational movement and migration, any psychic attempt at forgetting may not be able to garner sufficient energy to cordon off the effects of historical trauma upon the individual and communal body.

In this essay on the experience and representation of forgetting and remembering in Chinese American Literature, I consider two first-generation Chinese American authors, Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Li-Young Lee, both associated with the Southeast Asian diaspora. Lim and Lee wrote in genres that readily accommodated deeply personalized and subjective experiences.

- **Dr. Walter S.H. Lim** is an Associate Professor of English Literature at the National University of Singapore.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

**PATRICK'S CHOICE: ESCAPING NATURALISM IN
JOYCE CAROL OATES'S
*WE WERE THE MULVANEYS***

James Giles

Violence has always been central to the fiction of Joyce Carol Oates. In her novels and short stories, Oates explores the reactions of her characters to acts of violence that descend upon them with shocking abruptness and permanently alter the directions of their lives. In such memorable early novels as *them* (1969) and *Wonderland* (1971), Oates portrayed her characters as naturalistic victims of a random violence that is almost as controlling as biology and the ghetto in classic American naturalism.¹ While never departing completely from her vision of violence as a deterministic force, Oates in later fiction moves away from the predominantly naturalistic vision of her early novels. Elements of what June Howard calls "later-day naturalism"² are present in Oates's 1996 novel *We Were the Mulvaney's*, especially in the Michael Mulvaney, Sr., subplot; but they are evoked primarily to be rejected in favor of Oates's brand of the domestic romance.

While an act of violence shatters the edenic existence of the Mulvaney family in the text, the individual Mulvaney's, with the exception of Michael, Sr., transcend it, choosing not to perpetuate the cycle of violence into which they have been abruptly thrust. Class distinctions are crucial here. The three Mulvaney's have the option of rejecting violence in large part because of their belonging to the American middle class, whereas the ghetto setting of *them* traps the Wendalls in an inescapable and suffocating violence. The mode of domestic romance in which the novel is written demands the kind of happy ending that naturalism prohibits and which is foreign to Oates's earlier fiction and especially to *them*.

Oates's decision to dramatize the rejection of violence in *We Were the Mulvaney's* is crucial to her movement away from a naturalistic vision emphasizing the deterministic power of violence and toward a domestic romance that posits affirmation. This movement is most evident in the contrasting responses to violence by Patrick Mulvaney in the 1996 novel and Jules Wendall in *them*.

- **Professor James R. Giles** was a Presidential Teaching Professor of English at Northern Illinois University, U.S.A., where he taught for thirty-seven years until May 2007.

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A DECADE OF EXCELLENCE

Shanker A. Dutt

English Studies is and should be in a state of flux, always questioning, constantly debating and importantly, highlighting creative excellence. Skepticism, which lies at the core of this process, was described by Thomas Sprat, the Historian of the Royal Society, as not giving assent to any proposition until proven conclusively. Conclusive proof in texts is rarely possible and a man called Derrida ushered in the hypothesis of its improbability. Good research is a process of discovery through informed assessment leading to an opinion worthy of comment, debate and future inquiry. While it reviews existing knowledge which requires to be acknowledged, it says something that is different from what has been said before.

A number of literary and cultural journals have, over the years, provided space for the publication of scholarship in India. However, many of these have often struggled against the vagaries of quality and in trying to find an appropriate balance between the excellence of established names and the need to create space for the young researchers. Other qualities appreciated in a good literary journal are the value of the editorials and the punctuality of its publication. These are three areas where *Re-Markings* has scripted its success. *Re-Markings* is an international refereed biannual journal of English Studies that aims at providing a healthy forum for scholarly interpretations of multiple cultural texts as evidenced in literature, art, television, cinema and journalism with substantial focus on Contemporary Studies in English including translations and creativity. Its Chief Editor Nibir K. Ghosh, a Fulbright scholar and the Head of English Studies at Agra College, wrote rather poetically in the 10th issue:

It is perhaps a happy coincidence that Re-Markings, like the equinoxes, appears in March and September each year. The vernal and the autumnal equinoxes set the globe in perfect gravitational balance and become the harbingers of the Spring of life and the fruits of its Autumn. I am optimistic that Re-Markings will continue to offer, through a clockwork precision of the biannual event, the hope and cheer that one finds in the songs of Spring and the music of Autumn.

It is with this exacting precision of nature's laws that one has to expect the arrival of *Re-Markings* and I cannot recollect an occasion to be disappointed.

In many ways, Ghosh has accepted a new mantle, bequeathed without conscious design, of being a rare crusader for literary scholarship as his illustrious predecessor, Professor Puroshottama Lal the primogenitor of Writer's Workshop in Calcutta to whom Ghosh scripted a fine tribute this spring. In the manner in which Lal had challenged the overwhelming anonymity of his early days to launch the creative careers of India's now famous poets and writers, so too Ghosh has provided space for discussion and interrogation of cultural productions in English and brought together a band of critics and commentators from different parts of the world on a truly globalised forum for expression and exchange. In the inaugural editorial, Ghosh had stated that "a good work of art invariably leaves its indelible markings on the shifting pages of time. It may or may not offer solutions to the problems that beset mankind but its sublimity lies in the way it contributes not only to the profound understanding of the age in which we live but also in making us aware of our private fears and insecurities, our joys and hopes." In an age of considerable bitterness and despair, when the world seems to be ideologically partitioned, when development and progress have many, often contradictory definitions and core human needs are subservient to lifestyle choices, it compels us to engage with the narrativised world in search of understanding:

The sublimity of such time-honoured imprints is further affirmed through subsequent revaluations and reconsiderations by succeeding generations who visualise and discover in these paradigms of the essential human condition, the relevance of every living idea that is dynamic, and the significance of every precise emotion which tends towards intellectual formulation. What is, therefore, needed is an effective forum which can function as a repository for a coherent system of thoughts and ideas. I strongly believe that in addressing specific issues and concerns central to the human predicament, Re-Markings will play a seminal role" (Ghosh, 2002).

And indeed the prophecies of ten years ago have manifested over time in meaningful dialogue with texts. It was Umberto Eco who spoke of the written texts as being machines to generate interpretations.

Readers from different cultural contexts and personal backgrounds engage with texts in different internal dialogues revealing multiple meanings. The author thus is relegated to being a controlling device as readers vie for space to interpret and explain. It is this valued space that *Re-Markings* provides.

The canvas of *Re-Markings* is varied and vast comprising articles on mainstream and marginal representations of human experience. Each issue has a fair bit for differently interested readers. Women's writings, for instance has been given substantial space and this may be divided socially, culturally, ethnically, racially, geographically and politically. An article named "Feminism in India: Challenges and Obstacles" by Mohammed Asim Siddiqui offers a synchronic analysis of the state of Indian feminism, discusses its fractured history, explores female subjectivities in colonial and post-independent India and the challenges in a globalised world order. Switching to the Black woman's experience in the American continent, Pratima's "Alienation and Affirmation in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*" looks at the quest of self-identity amidst racial discrimination and white dominance. The colonizing effects on the Black psyche makes Pecola long for blue eyes, a distinguishing characteristic primarily of the whites. Morrison believed that authenticity emerges from self-affirmation and making choices that leads to self-ownership. Dalit Feminism in which B.K. Sharma discusses the triple marginalization of Dalit woman with reference to Tagore's dance-drama *Chandalika* offers another perspective on woman's subjectivity living on the edge.

Over the years a number of articles have been published covering every genre on Diaspora experience, Popular fiction, Ecological concerns, Globalised experience, Identity, Subaltern subjectivities, Multiculturalism, Migration and Nationalism, Alienation and Assimilation from perspectives that span the entire critical matrix from liberal humanism to contemporary theory and beyond. Aside of explorations into multiple texts, the journal includes stimulating interviews, informed book reviews and an unusual repertoire of exciting poetry from diverse global locations.

Re-Markings has an impressive list of advisors: Charles Johnson, Jayanta Mahapatra, Amritjit Singh, Ruediger Kunow, S. Ramaswamy, Jonah Raskin and C.R. Visveswara Rao. The editorial collaborators along with Ghosh, A. Karunaker, Sundeep Arora and Katy Whipple ensure production-quality and punctuality. These eminent personages contribute to the authenticity of the journal's distinction and encourage

qualities of scholarship, good writing and some remarkable creativity that one has come to associate with *Re-Markings*. Some years ago, commenting on *Re-Markings*, I had written:

it must be a daunting task to publish a journal having to undertake the editor's onus of sorting out variable quality and the publisher's jugglery to balance finance and production. I really liked the honesty with which you have written the editorial in the March 2006 edition of Re-Markings. Often we do not problematise, question or challenge concepts because we are daunted by the reputations and the linguistic magic of what we read. You have taken the lid off manufactured mysteries in a short but telling editorial. Many congratulations for the excellent work you are doing.

Today, as the ten year milestone is crossed, it is a pleasure to reiterate what I had written and state that it is getting better with each passing equinox.

- **Dr. Shanker A. Dutt** is Professor of English in Patna University. He is associated with a number of Indian and off-shores educational institutions in different advisory, publication and resource capacities. He is currently the Chairman of Bihar Sangeet Natak Academy, Patna.



MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN INDIA: A CALL FOR URGENT ACTION

Daya Singh Sandhu

*Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again,
but expecting different results.-- Rita Mae Brown*

*Problems do not go away. They must be worked
through or else they remain forever, a barrier to the
growth and development of the spirit. -- M. Scott Peck*

Upon the cusp of the new millennium, it is encouraging to see India emerging as one of the leading economic powers of the world. Remarkable performance in manufacturing and professional services has provided a great economic impetus to help India join the galaxy of the strongest economies of the world. Clearly, there are many indicators of economic progress all around the major urban places. Some of the rural areas are also witnessing positive economic changes. According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), real per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in India has grown steadily for last ten years and it is hoped that in 2011, GDP will grow at least 8.6 percent.

A person returning to India after ten years will definitely be shocked with pleasant surprises of life style changes and economic prosperity. New roads, new constructions everywhere, new restaurants, e.g. McDonald, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, etc. makes one wonder whether he or she is in India or in the United States.

While economic progress is welcome news, unfortunately it does not portray the complete picture of a nation's health. The mental health, the emotional strength, and psychological well-being of the citizens cannot be ignored at the expense of economic gains. At the core of economic advances lies an agenda of transforming the society to become more psychologically healthy, spiritually sublime, and above all more humanitarian, egalitarian, and a just society.

- **Dr. Daya Singh Sandhu** is a distinguished professor of research and former Chairman, Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, U.S.A. He is also the Founding Executive Director of the Association of Mental Health Counselors at the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (Punjab), India.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

*CRISIS IN
AMERICAN LITERARY STUDIES IN INDIA*

Anisur Rahman

Introduction

When our students would sit to recount their student days some years from now, and think of what areas of study they pursued in the university, they would certainly not think of American studies. I say so with a certain sense of loss and sorrow. Lest I should turn nostalgic, I would like to put it plainly that studying America was a fad, an academic necessity, and a matter of being relevant in the academic scenario when we were university students in the late 1960s and early 70s. To be precise, anyone who went for English studies in India during those decades did almost necessarily study American literature, as a part of the curriculum. It is not so today. Much has changed during the past decades; the Indian academic has re-mapped his priorities and America does not figure too prominently in the list of academic preferences, unless he wants to pursue it as a matter of one's choice. True, fads do not last for long, academic priorities change, and contemporary relevance too is a matter of shifting priorities, but meaningful linkages and preferences stay in place in spite of all these.

American Studies in India: Beginning, Middle, and End

American Studies outside America were initiated after World War II with America becoming a major presence globally. The Fulbright Act (1946), US Information and Education Exchange Act (1948) and Fulbright-Hayes Act (1961) played major roles in creating a condition for the initiation and acceptance of American studies beyond the American frontiers. These also led to cultural exchanges and award of scholarships to promote this new area of studies and interaction. The efforts made by Rockefeller, Watamull and Ford Foundations must also be mentioned here that made their first important contributions towards introducing American studies in India by sponsoring and facilitating visits of American scholars to India, and promoting its acceptance as a major area of new interest and research.

- **Dr. Anisur Rahman** is Professor in the Department of English and Modern European Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

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10TH ANNIVERSARY REFLECTIONS

Jonah Raskin

I deem it a pleasure to offer my impression of *Re-Markings* on the cusp of its 10th-anniversary. The fact that the publication has survived a stormy decade is a real achievement and cause for celebration. Over the past 10-years *Re-Markings* has evolved and continues to mature. There is no other publication like it that I know of and it occupies a unique place in the world of global journals. I feel really honored to be connected to it, and to contribute to it and I have found a real sense of satisfaction as a writer and a thinker because of my links to *Re-Markings*. If I may say this, I believe that much of the success of *Re-Markings* is due to the vision, dedication and courage shown by its Chief Editor, Nibir. He has played a major part in making the journal what it is today. *Re-Markings* has a global perspective and it's also interdisciplinary. It aims to synthesize and to see the big picture as well as to look at and celebrate the local. The fact that it's both global and local makes it an extraordinary publication. I have written about films, fiction, theater, autobiographical pieces and traditional literary criticism and it is important to have a magazine that originates in India and that goes out and around the world to have a diversity of views and approaches. India itself as a country has made important strides in the past decade and it deserves a journal such as *Re-Markings* that looks critically at Indian society and culture. The world is a place of conflicts and clashes, but it is also a place of confluences and *Re-Markings* helps to further the dialogue between different cultures around the world. It aids communication around the world and it has moved with the times and with the technological changes in the past decade as evidenced by the website which is impressive and professional. I hope to continue to work with Nibir and with *Re-Markings* and I hope that the journal has been shaped in beneficial ways by my contributions just as I have been shaped and influenced in beneficial ways by my association with the journal. Nibir has given birth to and nurtured a publication of which he and his contributors and his advisory board ought to be proud. So, congratulations Nibir and keep up the excellent work.

- **Jonah Raskin** is Professor at Sonoma State University & Member, Re-Markings Advisory Board.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND HISTORICAL COMMUNITIES

Michael Boylan

Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October, 2010. The prize was given for two decades of political activism on behalf of democracy—especially for his co-authored manifesto: *Charter 08*. This treatise is an argument on behalf of various democratic reforms that recognize such human rights as freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of political expression. The document also calls for separation of powers, an independent judiciary, private property protection, financial and tax reform, environmental protection, a federated republic, and a truth and reconciliation commission (on the model of South Africa). The spirit of many of these suggestions is reminiscent of Czechoslovakia's *Charter '77* or the United States' *Constitution* and its *Bill of Rights*. Václav Havel and Desmond Tutu nominated Xiaobo for the Nobel Peace Prize because his experience in China mirrored their own experience in Czechoslovakia and South Africa. I think they made a wise choice. I once had the privilege of talking to Tutu about how transition happened in apartheid South Africa. Tutu lived in a country in which the white minority trampled on the human rights of the majority black population in that country. Tutu told me that change occurred through constant internal pressure by the black majority population along with the International Boycott of South Africa (that created unbearable economic and social pressure upon the European-descent rulers). Tutu was a pivotal player in helping change come about. This was because he had a foot in both worlds: the world of black South Africans and the world of European descent South Africans (through his role as archbishop in the South African Episcopal Church).

The lesson of that experience is that economic leverage as well as public scorn (in time) can have an effect in international policy towards a regime that was a flagrant abuser of human rights.

In Czechoslovakia the path from the Prague Spring (1968) to the Velvet Revolution (1989) was a little different. Much of the impetus for that change came from continual internal struggle and protest against the Soviet Union along with Mikhail Gorbachev's program of Perestroika. In the long run the USSR's Eastern European project was not sustainable.

- **Michael Boylan** is Professor of Philosophy at Marymount University in Arlington, VA, USA.

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REMARKABLE *RE-MARKINGS*

S. Ramaswamy

Re-Markings now has a decade of remarkable achievement. The 'leanings literary' and 'critical sensibility' have not only continued since the journal began its eventful journey in March 2002 but have established themselves in a marked pattern, all its own, under the dynamic editorship of Dr. Ghosh. What sets the mood and method of each issue is the EDITORIAL. His forceful presentation can be seen time and again. For example in the 2002 September issue, his comment on 11th September 2001 – "The catastrophe that reduced the mighty twin-towers of the World Trade Centre to mere fragments of etherised memory in the twinkling of an eye showed the seamy side of inhuman ingenuity to which even the sky seems no limit." Quite an indictment. With the support of scholars like Charles Johnson and Jonah Raskin on the Advisory Board, *Re-Markings* has taken marked strides in the last ten years to establish itself as an elitist but eclectic literary journal. From time to time 'Special Sections' have been published like the section on V.S. Naipaul, Communalism, Racism, John Steinbeck, David Ray, W.H. Auden and Doris Lessing.

What makes *Re-Markings* unique among Indian Academic Journals is that it holds a perfect balance between creative and critical endeavours. Readers of contemporary poetry are as much benefited as the scholars who care for 'Re-Valuations' as indeed there are re-valuations of a wide variety of authors – old and new, from all over the world. It is a combination of the global and the local. What more can a literary journal do?

In my experience of reading literary journals for six decades, the latest decade – I call it the decade of *Re-Markings* – has indeed been truly remarkable.

- *Prof. S. Ramaswamy* has been a Senior Fulbright Fellow at Yale, in their famous School of Drama. Besides the Fulbright scholarships and fellowships, he got the British Council Scholarship twice, and has been a Shastri Indo-Canadian Fellow at McGill University. In 1959, he helped found the Bangalore Little Theatre (BLT).



FAULT LINES IN DIASPORA: POETRY OF MEENA ALEXANDER

Arti Nirmal

The Indian diaspora of the post-independence phase is a remarkable phenomena in the history of world literature in producing works of cultural, national, social and global significance. Diaspora, which traces its history back to the Jewish exile from Babylon, has now become one of the highly debated discourses on account of the unprecedented migrations across the continents. True to Amitav Ghosh's view that "the modern Indian diaspora has now become an important force in world culture and literature," (Ghosh 73) the expatriate or immigrant writers of Indian origin have excelled in all the genres of literary writing. Preoccupied with the questions pertaining to the origin, identity, loss, alienation, memory and homesickness they very often try to interrogate and subvert the established authority and stereotyped notions. Rooted invariably in such issues, the following discussion is focused on Meena Alexander's distinct perception of diasporic milieu pertinently expressed through her poems.

Writers of the Indian diaspora have produced a wide range of literature that entails the process of self exploration and bridges the gap between the past and the present. Though the majority of diasporic text consists of fictional writing, yet we do have some very significant poetic compositions too. B. Rajan, H.O. Nazareth, A.K. Ramanujan, Shiv K. Kumar, Agha Shahid Ali, G.S. Sharat Chandra, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Meena Alexander etc. are some notable figures about whom Bruce King remarks in the following manner: "Indian expatriate poets do not write from the position of a distinct foreign community, such as the exiled black or West Indian novelists, but their writing reflects the perspective of someone between two cultures. They may look back on India with nostalgia satirically celebrating their liberation or asserting their biculturalism, but they also look skeptically and wryly on their new homeland as outsiders, with a feeling of something having been lost in the process of growth." (King 209-210).

- **Arti Nirmal** is Assistant Professor in English at Vasanta College for Women (B.H.U.), Varanasi (U.P.).

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HOW NIBIR GHOSH LOST HIS HAIR

Omkar Sane

Anniversaries are very tricky business. Firstly, you have to remember them. There is no secondly, because you forget them. And forgetting an anniversary is the biggest crime. You'll notice there are belated birthday cards, but no one has come up with a belated anniversary card. Another problem with anniversaries is you have to wait an entire year before you get a chance to remember it and undo your wrong, but since it is a year old, you forget again. Yes, it's cyclical, just like anniversary is. The third problem with anniversaries is they are sure to come but yet you forget them. That makes the forgetting worse. It's not a one-off incident that you are pardoned for forgetting. You know all along it is going to come, then how could you forget it? The fourth problem with anniversaries is they come with gifts. And thoughtful, useful gifts don't count as anniversary gifts. If you do not believe that, try gifting your girlfriend sellotape the next anniversary (if you remember it, that is.) The logic is: the value of gifts reflects the investment that the couple gives of themselves to each other. Because of this logic, anniversary gifts typically are:

Candles you can't burn.

Wastebaskets you can't throw trash in.

Filly pillows you must never sleep on.

A diary with scented pages you can never write in.

Stuffed, cute, furry toy animals.

So, these anniversary gifts keep piling on year after year till you do not have any more space for them. And that's the next problem with anniversaries. You're basically stuck with anniversary gifts till you die, because you can't throw an anniversary gift even if you're not celebrating the anniversary of the particular important event with that particular person anymore.

At this crucial juncture, it's time to see where it all began. Obviously anniversaries did not exist when they couldn't count. No wonder the men in the Stone Age cave paintings look so happy. They say, the practice of giving peculiar gifts on various wedding anniversaries originated in Central Europe. Among the medieval Germans it was customary for friends to present a wife with a wreath of silver when she had lived with her husband twenty-five years. The silver symbolized the harmony that was assumed to be necessary to make so many years of matrimony possible. On the fiftieth anniversary of a

wedding the wife was presented with a wreath of gold. Hence arose 'silver wedding' and 'golden wedding.'

Maybe, it was cool back then to celebrate anniversaries, because things lasted that long. According to iMac's dictionary, the word anniversary has its roots in Latin: *anniversarius* – *annus* (year) + *versus* (turning) – which means, 'returning yearly'. By that definition, in today's fickle and frivolous times, anniversaries seem like a dated idea (no pun intended). It's rare you complete a year with anything except your bed-sheet, that too because you're too lazy to change it. Otherwise, everything pretty much fizzles out before a year completes – a job, a relationship, a resolution, a gym membership, you name it, and it ends. (In the mid 90s, in India, we followed that pattern even for governments, but thankfully, we gave it up). It's maybe because of this that we have come up with monthly, weekly and hourly anniversaries, or maybe it has something to do with Hallmark and Archies.

Another thing we can certainly say about anniversaries is it was a woman's idea. There is no way a man in his right or wrong mind could've ever come up with that. Try imagining a man saying, 'Let's remember a date every year to celebrate this special moment right here'. It even sounds wrong. But it totally sounds like something a woman can do. Women can have the strangest anniversaries: the fourth month of the day he first told me we might be getting serious. Or, the 6th week of the first time he held my hand. Yes, women remember all this. Why are women like this? Why is the seventh week anniversary of the first time you saw a movie together, or the one-month anniversary of the first time he left his toothbrush at her place so incredibly important to women? One of the reasons is: They see getting a guy and keeping him in an exclusive, committed relationship, the way Lance Armstrong views the Tour de France - a long, gruelling competition with worthy adversaries, bad luck lurking around every corner, and a huge champagne-fueled celebration at the end of it.

Come to think of it, all anniversaries are like that. Sure, there are simple anniversaries, like your own birthday. You seldom forget it because you always have some woman in your life who calls you on that day to remind you. But most anniversaries are tough: marriages, relationships, and jobs, to name a few.

However, the toughest one is an anniversary issue. Which is what makes this anniversary so special. It is 10 years. 10 years is no small time. And to come up with twenty issues without missing deadlines is even a bigger feat. If you have no idea what goes behind releasing an

issue, here's a quick glance. 1. You need to come up with a topic for an issue. 2. Since you can't fill all the pages yourself, you need to convince others to fill it for you. This is where authors come in handy, because we are used to writing for little or no money. 3. Once you've convinced them to write for you, you have to track them like Google. 4. While tracking them, you also have to be polite at all times, since you want it and they're the ones who are doing you a favour by writing it. 5. While being polite, you also have to be pushy. This is an art that one can master only after seven issues. 6. You need to check and edit what the person has sent. 7. If it doesn't match the brief, you need to tell the person to rewrite it, but without telling him to rewrite it, lest you sound impolite. 8. If the person doesn't correct it, you have to do it yourself. This makes it tricky to send the issue to the concerned person, in the fear of insulting him. Because then, the very same person who did not make changes turns around and says, "Why did you make changes to what I wrote? Why couldn't you just ask me to do it?" 9. You have to then edit and proof-check everything. (Newspapers today generally forget this step). 10. You have to release it and remember everyone who contributed and send them a copy while thanking them deeply and sound sincere while doing it.

And Nibir Ghosh has done this year after year, issue after issue, for 10 years and counting. Yes, *Re-Markings* has made it. It's completed 10 years. How Remarkable. What does this tell us about Nibir Ghosh? It tells us 10 things:

1. He is a brave man.
2. He has a great team.
3. He is a professor with a lot of time on hand.
4. He has a wife who serves him food on time.
5. He really loves *Re-Markings*.
6. He is a zen master but doesn't yet know it because he is busy editing this issue.
7. He looks older than his age.
8. He is an expert at getting things out of people.
9. As an editor, he has to write this point.
10. He has lost more hair than he can count.

Because all said and done, at the end of the day (or the year), simple or tough, that's what anniversaries do. They make you lose hair. But some of them are worth it. And this is one of them. As I try hard to come up with a witty ending, I think I may have lost a few to this anniversary.

Cheers to everyone who's been involved with *Re-Markings* in any way whatsoever over the past 10 years. It couldn't have been possible without you. Now for god's sake, can you send your piece on time as an anniversary gift? I am sending Nibir a diamond-studded comb.

- **Omkar Sane**, a product of J.J. Institute of Applied Art, Mumbai, is the author of widely acclaimed books *Welcome to Advertising! Now, Get Lost and Coming Soon. The End.* The March 2011 issue of *Re-Markings* carried an exclusive interview entitled "Creating Desires and Changing Mindsets: Conversation with Omkar Sane."



INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY IN MAMET'S *EDMOND*

Devi Archana Mohanty

In the post-World War II period in America, invention and technology had changed an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance, but it was the era of abundance that witnessed the greatest and prolonged depression. The whole American society at that time became a nightmare of fear and jealousy, gossips and slander, envy and ambition, greed and lust, where almost any means were justified to attain private and selfish ends and where ideals were tarnished and virtue debauched. In the words of Oscar Handlin: "The typical American lived in a torment of anxiety and cupidity and regulated his conduct entirely by ulterior considerations. He read books to make conversations, listened to music to establish his social position, chose his clothes for the impression they would make on business associates, entertained his friends in order to get ahead, held the respect of his children, the affection of his wife by continuous bribery" (Handlin 80).

The aim of this paper is to examine the projection of relationship between individual and society in twentieth-century America in David Mamet's play *Edmond*. In his play *Edmond*, Mamet, one of the renowned American playwrights, projects a society that is characterized by greed, avarice, hypocrisy, hollowness and snobbery of the so-called sophisticated urbanites. Along with *Edmond* in most of his works like *American Buffalo*, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, Mamet pictures a society slowly disintegrating because those who inhabit it have lost the sense of community. In Mamet's plays, as Carroll examines, "the attempt to make contact is crucial, as it is played out in three thematic areas: business, sex and communion" (Carroll 22). In order to go up in the ladder of social status, the individuals of Mamet's plays become increasingly fraudulent and unscrupulous. Right from their young age they become liars and hypocrites. None of them want to be a rebel with the courage to escape this stifling atmosphere of modern urban society in order to live in a primitive world. They have no decent aim in life, no plan for future, no genuine attachment to society.

- **Devi Archana Mohanty** is Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (West Bengal).

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QUEST FOR ROOTS IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S *SUCH A LONG JOURNEY*

Vijay Negi

Dispersal is one of the major and powerful aspects of nostalgia. It is another name for diaspora. Nostalgia is revealed in the writing of diasporic writers through 'dispersal' or 'journey' motifs. The 'dispersal' of the Parsis occurred between 638 A.D. and 641 A.D. when the Persian Empire was attacked by the Arabs, giving rise to a new religion, Islam. The Parsis did have 'such a long journey' all the way from Persia to India. They were permitted to settle in Gujarat at Sanjan by King Jadav Rana. The Parsi Dustur (Priest) agreed to certain conditions imposed by the king. To reassure the king, Dusturji stirred a spoonful of sugar in a brass bowl full of milk and said, "we shall try to be like this insignificant amount of sugar in the milk of your human kindness."¹ Since then the Parsis have merged themselves accordingly by adopting the language, custom, tradition of Indian community, indicating an 'urge to merge', 'fusion' and 'assimilation'.

The backdrop of the novel *Such a Long Journey*² (1991) deals with the historical movements such as: the partition of India and Pakistan, 1962 Indo-China war, failing of the Nehruvian dream of a secular India, scam of sixty lakh rupees during Indira Gandhi's rule, and the 1971 Indo-Pak war giving birth to Bangladesh. Along with the historical events as its setting and background, the novel is more of an inward voyage of its chief characters. Mistry explores the external as well as the inner lives of Gustad Noble, his wife Dilnavaz, his son Sohrab, his friend Major Jimmy Bilimoria, and the other inhabitants of the Khodadad Building. In this particular novel, the writer employs images and symbols more decisively for the structural framework. It is commonly agreed among critics that *Such a Long Journey* deals with the marginalization of the Parsi community. It is indeed the study of the psyche of the dispersal and the various assimilating factors which portray a complete picture of the Parsi community.

- **Dr. Vijay Negi** is Assistant Professor, Department of English, Maharishi Markendeshwar University, Mullana, Ambala (Haryana).

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CONCEPTS OF STYLE: SOME TRADITIONAL NOTIONS

Chavan Sandip Pandurangrao

In English the term Stylistics was coined in 1860. Style is composed of three elements: intellectual, emotional and aesthetic. The intellectual element consists of thought and expression. The emotional element brings out these thoughts clearly before the readers and finally the aesthetic element presents the aesthetic grace of style which gives more immediate pleasure. These three elements are combined to form style.

The concept of style is an old one; it goes back to the very beginning of literary thought in Europe. It appears more connected with rhetoric rather than politics. A man's style is more closely connected with his personality and his whole personality is mirrored in his style. Hence, style is the image of man. According to the French writer Buffon (1753), "Style is the man himself."

The basis of good style is clear thinking. First you must know what you wish to say exactly; then you must say it briefly and clearly, in oral or written form. As writing is a means of communication, its civilized action implies good manners. Stylistics studies how language operates in the context of literature. Great literature is simply a language charged with meaning to the almost possible degree. Hence, stylistics is the study of linguistic forms and their literary functions. In short, style is nothing more than the expression of thoughts in the best possible way.

The message in this definition is to be equated with our 'content' or 'referent' of style. Stylistic choices are based on convictions but the convictions themselves are developed in conformity with nature of content. Recently the term stylistics has come to be known as the linguistic study of 'style' of language as a function, of the mode and manner and variety of written or oral literature. As an independent discipline it has only a history of about twenty-five years with a great deal of controversies and with a boiling pot which is still on the oven. Style can be divided into two parts – Traditional Notions of Style and Modern Notions of Style.

- **Chavan Sandip Pandurangrao** is Lecturer in the Department of English, Dayanand College of Arts, Latur (Maharashtra).

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POETRY

TWO POEMS

Jayanta Mahapatra

POETRY AND TIME

(letter to Nibir K. Ghosh, May 1, 2003)

Time has been
so inconsistent with me;
at times sitting there,
right in front of me
huge and bizarre-faced
not moving at all;
and at other moments
flitting away,
like a wraith,
as if it wasn't there.

And I never knew
what to do at those times.
Poetry which seems so much
interlinked with time
also plays the same
deceitful tricks with me.

SOMEONE IN MY ROOM

Twenty years after, someone in my room
will be walking up and down between
the graves of these footsteps of mine today,
looking quietly at the clock, hands at eleven,
at the window with the rounded iron bars,
and ahead, will discover on a tropic sky
the appealing honesty of white hibiscuses
about to bloom. In the room, perhaps nothing;
not even the wind, or a word, to show
how someone ought to walk around, or read,
or touch this book or that in a dusty shelf;
only a morning which could stretch out
its hand in silent, uncertain greeting.

“Five minutes to eleven,” will be his thought,
not said aloud, and he will not know
who he is, maybe a part of that immensity
in which a hidden pink lotus bulb
rushes to flower in the corridors of its own destiny.
Is it really possible for one to prove his identity?
And someone will give an unpleasant sneer
at an old photograph of two of us together
(I know I don't wish to wake up in someone's life),
and he will not know it was Paula I'd met
at the Galway festival, or my wife who was happy once,
as tired raindrops begin to hit the window again.
Then of course the poems, filed away,
faded light-hearted compasses that had lost direction.
Or, perhaps, this very one I am writing now.
Someone's eyes will stay on the silent antagonist:
God, the direction of words begins to change.

Only a few letters from so many leave
a marvellous stain in the air. One, from a girl
in Zaragoza: Jayanta, a thousand kisses to you.
That hidden world never seen before,
holding in its cellophane-wrapped hands
his unhappy childhood, the unkempt jungle
of his desire, his false teeth and his quiet lies.
Someone in my room twenty years hence,
and something suddenly born shall nudge me
to convince my poem it should better stay dead.
Shrouded in misty silence, the useless copy
of a letter written to H.E. The Life President
of Malawi for a friend-poet, Jack Mapanje, as he lay
twisting on his cross in some remote prison.
The world is still here as it was the night before,
and the train will still be late as always.
Footsteps can never throw waves into the air,
as from a battery and two old wires.
Someone will think of 1992, and of how he saw
the dawn at the window hoping it was a miracle.

And saw the mist ride into the trees.
But of this despair between the walls still,
does it wait only for someone to pursue
the identity of whatever lived here once?
Pain will be something someone in the room
might want to share, but it will be like Nicaragua,
far away at the earth's end.
Air has a terrible density; it has no formal laws,
but strangely it asserts a person's will
to act upon another's. And someone
will think of that air in the room
touching the small teak desk he puts his hand on.
He might ask: Is the silence of the room its voice?
Nobody minds there is no one to hear.
But each time someone is in my room,
his morning will grow white within the morning,
until he thinks this is the way it must really be:
the silence, that can only keep words afloat,
as hollowness does to a boat—
coming in not from any known direction,
but always, always from behind.

- **Jayanta Mahapatra**, *Physicist and Poet*, holds the distinction of being the first Indian poet in English to have received the Sahitya Akademi Award (1981) for the collection entitled *Relationship*. He edits the literary journal, *Chandrabhaga*. His latest honours include the SAARC literary Award, the Allen Tate Poet Prize and the Padma Shree, all for the year 2009.



FOUR POEMS

Shanta Acharya

WOODPECKER

Persistence resonating purpose, passion,
energy, reminding me of beings without form –

The unmistakable signature
tattoo of bill beating against bark in rhythm.

Yet nowhere is the wryneck to be seen,
camouflaged among the trees. I am not the only one

Walking with my face upturned toward heaven,
eyes scanning branches of trees April bare,

Giddy with birds' nests swaying in the wind
precariously perched high up in the air,

Caught in crotches of sturdiest oak and hornbeam!
Like cranes sky-calling, cries of *Woodpecker* reverberate

As we spot robins, jays, finches, tits, wagtails, starlings,
with many a thought that did not come flying.

Bird chorus celebrates all that is hidden;
bluebells sleep buried in earthworks,
Dreaming of things tired eyes cannot see –

In the distance a fleeting vision,
a mottled woodpecker's profile disappearing.

ALL YOU CAN DO

Here's your thunder stolen by others,
your losses, ships that never return.

Here's your life passing slowly by,
your body of song promising all it can do.

Here's your heart reaching out to others,
your thoughts fresh rays of sun.

Here's your dream scattered across the sky,
falling stars not knowing what they can do.

Here's hope gold at the edge of the rainbow,
inscribing lives that spell the light.

Here's your fear walking in front of you,
thinking there is nothing you can do.

Here are your hands, place them in mine;
I'll show you the world is yours.

Here's your true love waiting for you,
your tree of life, radiant in bloom.

Here's what you do, what you can do,
it's your future, make of it what you will –

Here's life in all its squalor and splendor,
here's your world and all you can do.

TIME UNCOVERING TRUTH*

Home to nudes in painting and sculpture,
The gossip in this country of art and culture

Is about a government cover-up, plain and simple –
Not the credit crunch or corruption, but a missing nipple.

Image consultants in the Prime Minister's office obsessed
With a bare breast, voluptuous, self-possessed –

Tiepolo's *Time Uncovering Truth*, backdrop for every press
Conference, caught repeatedly on camera alongside the PM's face –

Out of touch with public sentiment they repainted the lady's gown
Just to cover the offending nipple. Young men about town

Joined art critics in pronouncing the decision was totally crazy;
Students labelled the government morally bankrupt and lazy.

Women protested by showing off their cleavage and more.
Aspiring artists gathered in galleries professing to explore

The skill, ingenuity involved in the delineation of breasts.
Cartoonists had fun with impotent politicians' chests.

Clueless foreign tourists received free master classes

On the integrity of naked human bodies by models in glasses;

Etchings of Madonna and Child, milk squirting
From the nipple, were in vogue. 'It's just a misunderstanding'

Confessed a senior source from the Ministry of Culture; story
Was the PM ordered the painting be restored to its original glory.

Tongues wagged with pleasure as reporters gathered to admire
The nipple and breast because frankly the news was pretty dire!

**Based on a news report that Prime Minister (of Italy) Silvio Berlusconi's staff altered a reproduction of a famous 18th century painting by Giambattista Tiepolo to cover an exposed breast on full display in the press room in the Palazzo Chigi, the prime minister's palace.*

HOPE

A bud, a rainbow, a kiss, a promise –

An entire lifetime suspended
like Saturn on gossamer rings,

A feeling, cloud with a silver lining,
shining, unwilling to be diminished.

Always trusting, a child's touch
five fingers folded on a dream.

A seed, an atom, an idea, a prayer –
dawn that dispels the nightmare.

The common flower's eternal surprise
springing in the cracks of cemented high-rise.

Tree with branches bare, a solitary leaf waving,
not falling; snowdrops, anemones, bluebells dancing.

Life hanging by a thread, street artist walking on air;
friend of faith and charity, enemy of fear and despair,

Message on faces of refugees behind barbed wire,

sigh of a soldier slain in battle.

A prisoner's solace, death's companion;
the miserable person's medicine –
Opened gift box and all that's left within...

- **Dr. Shanta Acharya** is Executive Director, Initiative on Foundation and Endowment Asset Management at London Business School. Her Poetry Collections include *Shringara, Looking In, Looking Out, Numbering Our Days' Illusions, Not This, Not That, and Dreams That Spell The Light* .



TWO POEMS

Sharyn Skeeter

FERRY TO THE ISLAND

The drive to the dock runs
parallel to the sea. Children
ride the waves on boards,
laugh when foam overtakes
them. Their bodies bob up and
float to shore. Camera in hand
I pull over, aim, click through
the windshield. Then
I move on, keep to schedule,
catch the ferry where the
tsunami crashed yachts, flooded
tourist traps on the main street.
And now the boat lopes
on white caps. I slip, grab the rail and,
in quick moments, imagine
my face mirrored on specks of mist.
I cup my hands toward
the horizon to catch the spray,
but it is gone, clear,
before my fingers cross the deck.

IN SUM

For instance, my African-faced
grandmother said I was quarter Indian,
when she gave me Daguerre's
version of my great-grandmother,
the Mohegan woman sitting
in brown dress, hands folded, faded,
locked in tin, framed in wood, forever
the story, the northern woman who
survived the Civil War. The woman who
never met my father's Scots-Irish,
Cherokee, German, English, French black
great-uncles, who fought their
white fathers in the South--uncles who
never posed for photos, who vanished
in pulp of dry bones, in dust, as their parts
do in me. I cannot hold memory
in percentages of white, black and brown.
I am no longer slave to fractions
in octoroons and mulattoes. When
I'm cut, my blood flows red in all
directions. I touch you. You feel
its warmth seep past your skin.

- **Sharyn Skeeter** is Assistant Professor at the University of Bridgeport, U.S.A. Her poetry, articles and fiction have appeared in literary journals, magazines, and anthologies. She has taught journalism, media, and English at universities and colleges in the United States.



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It is said
that power corrupts,
but actually
it's more true
that power attracts
the corruptible.

The sane are
usually
attracted by
other things
than power.

- *David Brin*

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