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EDITORIAL

In the 250th anniversary year of the *Declaration of Independence*, curated by the founding fathers of American democracy and adopted by the Continental Congress at Philadelphia on 4th July 1776, it may be worthwhile to remember how the *Declaration* set free the thirteen English Colonies from the British rule under King George III and set in motion the genesis of a nation that is recognised today as the most powerful democracy in the world.

However, when we reflect on “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness” enshrined in the *Declaration of Independence*, we cannot stop wondering at the irony of these democratic ideals being at variance with ground reality of American society and polity. Besides the tragic narrative of the “Trail of Tears” related to the fate of the native Indian tribes who were driven away from their own land, it is significant to note that slavery was a part and parcel of the thirteen Colonies when the said document was signed. It is believed that a whole paragraph condemning slavery that had been included in the initial draft of the *Declaration* by Thomas Jefferson was cleverly omitted from the document before it was finalized to avoid causing displeasure to influential slave owners, especially in the Southern British Colonies. In this context it is relevant to recall the “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” speech delivered by the self-educated former slave Frederick Douglass on 5 July, 1852 wherein Douglass candidly jolted the conscience of predominantly White America: “The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me.... I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting.”

The Black Power Movement, Affirmative Action, Bills and Legislations outlawing segregation may have reduced the extent of the Black/White divide in the U.S. but the recent Black Lives Matter movement has again brought to the fore that discrimination on the basis of colour and race remains a reality. In his American Book Award winning book, *Between the World and Me* (2015), Ta-Nehisi Coates writes emphatically: “America believes itself exceptional, the greatest and noblest nation ever to exist, a lone champion standing before the white sky of democracy and the terrorists, despots, barbarians, and other examples of civilization.”

Interestingly, the “pursuit of happiness” by the U.S. as a nation is nowhere so visible as in the arena of war. The Spanish-American war in 1898, dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, indiscriminate involvement in the Vietnam war, the “Operation Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq, the ongoing operations code-named *Epic Fury* and *Roaring Lion* against

Iran, offer glaring instances of the unabated longing of America to satisfy its urge for expansionism and conquest.

Notwithstanding the above inconsistencies, it cannot be denied that the U.S. holds a position of its own in numerous spheres making it the first choice of all concerned across the globe who yearn for value-based education, lucrative careers or quality of life. A country that can boast of 430-plus Nobel Laureates and where even school and university dropouts like August Wilson, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Oprah Winfrey, Stephen Spielberg among others have displayed their potential to transform the world with their innovative contributions to life, art and technology, certainly deserves to be congratulated for the 250-years milestone. The dictatorial antics of the present President in making a mockery of democratic principles may be overlooked as comic relief with the Buddhist stance: 'this too shall pass.'

Intensive analytical discourses on democracies and their dilemmas have always figured among the top priorities of Re-Markings along with issues and concerns related to nation, culture, religion, gender, race, caste, colour, class, technology, displacement, migration, environmental crisis and human rights on global scale. It is not surprising that the plight and predicament of women worldwide figure prominently in this issue as in most previous volumes. It is doubtlessly one of the most complex issues confronting mankind since the dawn of human civilization.

Be it democracy or dictatorship, the hope lies in the belief that telling, sharing and writing stories of struggle and resilience do awaken our conscience and make us look within and without rather than turn our eyes away from facing reality. Four years ago, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini died in police custody in Iran for not wearing her hijab 'appropriately.' Her sacrifice did not go in vain because out of her martyrdom arose the "*Jin, Jiyan, Azadi*" ("Woman, Life, Freedom") movement that took the world by storm. In mid-June this year the Iranian singer Parastoo Ahmadi was sentenced to 74 lashes for singing without a hijab in a concert. Her loaded response to the punishment is inspirational indeed: "I am Parastoo, a girl who cannot stay silent and refuses to stop singing for the people she loves. This is my right, one I will never surrender... listen to my voice in this imagined concert, and dream of a free and beautiful nation." May Parastoo's tribe increase to carry forward the resistance and defiance by women against patriarchal and tyrannous societies and regimes.

Before concluding I would like to put on record my grateful thanks to the contributors for their offerings to enrich our celebratory volume and to the devoted and dedicated members of Re-Markings' fraternity for their consistent motivation and encouragement. I also take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate Dr. Satvir Singh on his induction into the Editorial board.

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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VIEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

Jonah Raskin

THE TOXICITY OF WAR: *MR. NOBODY AGAINST PUTIN* A MOVIE REVIEW PLUS COMMENTARY

By now everyone who watched the 2026 Academy Awards or who has learned about them, knows that *Mr. Nobody Against Putin* won the Oscar for best documentary. Few films produced and directed in the 21st century have condemned war as profoundly as this one. And few have cried out as loudly for world peace. While there is some footage from the battlefields in the Ukraine most of the sounds and sights are from Karabash, a mining and industrial center near the Ural Mountains which is said to be “the most toxic town on earth.”

The pollution is toxic and so is the air people breathe. What is also toxic is the pro-war government propaganda and the pro-war government policy that comes down from the Kremlin with a thud and that’s meant to instill a sense of (fake) Russian patriotism and persuade young men to give up their lives—to die—for their country. There are no professional actors in the film. Everyone who appears on camera is playing himself or herself.

The “Mr. Nobody” in the title and the hero of the film is a young, rather modest Russian school teacher and filmmaker who makes it his mission to document how the war slowly and surely eats away at the life of a peaceful town and turns it into a kind of factory that mass produces soldiers and turns most of the ordinary citizens into Putin’s minions.

At a crucial point in the film, archival footage shows Putin on camera telling the Russian public, “Teachers win wars.” One sees the truth of that remark in the documentary made by Pavel Talankin, the school teacher turned subversive filmmaker and his co-director, David Borenstein, who is defined as a “Jewish American director.”

The school where Pavel teaches and where he befriends his students is where future soldiers are taught to march, sing patriotic songs, use automatic weapons and accept government lies. One of their teachers is a war-loving, mini-autocrat who remembers fondly the days of Stalin’s dictatorship and the secret police. Of course, he’s rewarded by the powers-that-be. The film is intensely personal as well as profoundly political. It offers a self-portrait of the filmmaker himself who uses his camera as his weapon of choice, and who makes an honest documentary in plain sight, not in secret. Everyone in the school assumes Pavel is making a pro-war, pro-Putin film, though fellow teachers and their students become increasingly suspicious of him and before long he decides to flee Russia for his own safety, taking his valuable tapes with him to Western Europe. He’s a true patriot.

“DELHI CRIME”: A THREE-PART NETFLIX SERIES SET IN INDIA TODAY

In this review/essay about the three-part Netflix series, “Delhi Crime” critic Jonah Raskin writes about the characters, the setting, the dramatic conflicts and the acting. He asks why police procedurals are so popular today and offers suggestions about the audience and about the influence of social and economic conditions that prompt crimes. He urges viewers to start with series one and also focuses on the climatic scenes in series three in which the top Delhi cop, Vartika Chaturvedi, confronts the arch-villain Meena Choudhary who buys and sells young Indian women.

In the 1980s, when I was a Fulbright professor teaching American literature in Belgium I watched more American TV than when I was at home. The students watched the same programs: “Hill Street Blues,” “Miami Vice” and “Dallas.” The shows were on French, Italian and Belgian stations. One of the students asked me why programs that revealed the worst of American society were exported. Why didn’t the US advertise the best of the US, she asked.

One might pose much the same question about India. Why does the world have to see the poverty and criminality in Delhi? The answer seems to be that the whole world wants to watch police procedurals and crime series. Perhaps there’s something comforting knowing, as Sudhir explains to his young colleague, that the gap between rich and poor is increasing all over the world and with that gap comes a jump in crime. “It’s normal,” he says. Of course, “Delhi Crime” also depicts close-knit families, loving couples, respect between parents and children and citizens who have a strong sense of community. Watch the series and you might come to love the Indian police.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A ROMANTIC REVOLUTIONARY

About 1955, give or take a year
I declare my independence
from Sam and Millie, my parents,
and from my teachers at school: Mr. Lee
with his atom bomb; and Miss
Muller with her dangling modifiers.
I wear jeans & a T-shirt, play bongos,
join the crowd that rocks ‘n’ rolls,

let the tide carry me to Greenwich
Village, become a renegade, part
outlaw & part traitor to my own class,
a romantic revolutionary addicted to excitement,
go to jail and have my skull cracked, bones broken
lose all my ideologies behind bars, released &
hired to dig ditches,
I pull strings,
find employment at State,
wear the color purple,
assign Camus, Cain, Dorothy Hughes, Jim Thompson,
watch my comrades blow themselves
up while I morph into a renegade from the renegades,
turn into my opposite, grow organic
tomatoes and eggplant, negate my own nostalgia,
flaunt my despair, rage against citizens
who wave high the banner of hope,
travel to India, see the Taj
watch my body fall apart, collect social security,
tell the truth as often as I can which isn't
often enough, move into the country of
the blind and the dying in wheelchairs and
with walkers, watch the empire fall apart
remember my Ukrainian grandfather, Aaron,
and decide to die as he died, in bed
as the US goes to war again, and I surrender my soul
to the cause that he loved.



MAHASWETA DEVI: THE MOTHER TERESA OF INDIGENEITY

The American literary scholar Jonah Raskin has written a critical review of *Mahasweta Devi in Defence of the Human: The Poetics of Translating Resistance*, edited by Anuradha Ghosh and Mahmoud Al-Zayed. With the aid of quotations by Devi that are from the book itself the author illuminates her ideas about the indigenous peoples of India and their culture. He suggests the directions that students of Devi's life and work might now take and offers biographical information about his connections to India, Indians and their cultures.

**AN ENTIRE STAR HAS LEFT US:
CHINUA ACHEBE, IN MEMORIAM**

Tijan M. Sallah

In the words of Tijan M. Sallah: “I have tried in this paper not to rehash too much of existing literature on Achebe for his writings have spawned an entire industry. I have tried, instead, only to recount a few memorable anecdotes and encounters.” This unique personal tribute was first published in 2014 in *Chinua Achebe: Tributes and Reflections* (285-293).

I will miss Chinua Achebe. His passing away is as if an entire constellation-star has collapsed. It is monumental, weighty, concerning, depriving, and sad.

It is monumental because it is difficult to imagine African literature without Achebe. He was one of African literature's most ardent champions and undoubtedly one of its great contemporary voices. Achebe is by no means the first African novelist; there have been antecedent novelists like the South African Thomas Mafolo, who wrote *Pitseng* (1910) and *Chaka* (1925). He is not the first Nigerian novelist; there has been Amos Tutuola, who wrote the *Palmwine Drinkard* (1953), which the Irish poet, Dylan Thomas, described as a “grisly and bewitching story, written in young English by a West African.” Dylan Thomas was alluding, in typical imperial condescension, that Tutuola's story was “primitive” and his English was “young”—it still had some way to grow. If one goes narrower, Achebe is not even the first Igbo novelist; there has been Peter Nwana, who wrote *Omenuko* (1933) in Igbo, which won the all-Africa contest in indigenous African languages. Achebe is not even the first Igbo novelist who wrote in English; there has been Cyprian Ekwensi, who published *People of the City* (1954). The significance of Achebe, I would argue, is that he was a cultural revolutionary figure in the same way that Einstein was revolutionary for science. He led a paradigm change in African literature, which was that Africans did not have to imitate Europeans to tell their own stories. They could use European languages to expand their audience, but they must tell their stories as Africans in the same way that Europeans tell their stories as Europeans. Chinweizu and his Bolekaja group of critics put it succinctly: “And Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was, as he himself has often said, a deliberate (and successful effort) to recreate a pre-Westernized African reality, using authentic Igbo characters, situations, values, and religious concepts, and bending the English Language to express Igbo proverbs and idioms (*Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*, pp. 288-289).” Achebe set the foundations for an African story telling that was to be done as simply and unapologetically truthful as possible, drawing on the rich repertoire of Africa's traditions and environment.

THE POET UPENDRA BHANJA

Biswanath Kar

Translated from the Odia by *Manoranjan Behura*

Upendra Bhanja (1670-1740) is popularly known as the emperor of the Odia poets who composed 52 Kabyas. Odia poets across all periods of literature followed his style of composition. Drawing on themes from the epics, he composed masterful Kabyas in a refined and archaic form of Odia. His most popular Kabyas are *Baidehisa Bilasa*, *Subhadra Parinaya*, *Labanyabati*, *Kotibhrambhanda Sundari* and others. The researchers found that Upendra Bhanja coined and contributed 32,300 words to Odia language. A separate Odia dictionary has been compiled to facilitate an easier understanding of Upendra Bhanja. Biswanath Kar wrote this essay “Upendra Bhanja,” rejecting him as the greatest poet of Odia language.

Whether Upendra Bhanja be accounted a *sukabi* (good poet) or a *kukabi* (bad poet), the taking up of his pen has proved fruitful. On his account, many learned persons have been awakened from their slumber to this day. The noble example which he has left behind – having spurned the pleasures of royalty and devoted his life to the service of *Bagdevi* (the goddess of speech) – remains worthy of emulation even now amongst the educated circles of Utkal, possessed as they are of Western learning. Concerning the poet Bhanja, a tumultuous agitation has arisen in the field of Utkala literature. It is our belief that this marks the commencement of a new epoch. The ancient methods are being transformed, and gradually new methods are becoming established. Poetry is a principal genre of literature; therefore, its thorough examination is highly desirable. However, when debate and counter-debate transgress the bounds of decency and good taste and degenerate into personal attacks, the hope of beneficial results is, in large measure, extinguished. Every man possesses the right to express his opinion freely, and the general public likewise possesses the right to accept or reject that opinion. True greatness consists not in striving to maintain one’s own opinion, but in keeping one’s gaze fixed upon the triumph of truth and adopting the path of simple and pure reasoning. We owe an inviolable duty both to the departed poet and to our mother tongue to approach his works with fairness and understanding. In the field of literature, we have neither enemies nor friends. Literature is dearer to us than any particular individual.

Amongst the ancient poets of Utkal, four persons have attained elevated positions: Upendra Bhanja, Dinakrushna Das, Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara, and Kavisurjya Balabhadra Ratha.

THE LITERARY GENIUS OF SATYAJIT RAY: THE LAST RENAISSANCE MAN OF INDIA

Rakesh Bhatia

Considered The Last Renaissance Man of India, Satyajit Ray was not only one of the greatest filmmakers of all time but was also a prolific writer who made seminal contributions to Bangla literature. He is the most accomplished short story writer in Bangla; the vast range of his short fiction encompasses a striking variety of genres including science-fiction, detective stories and fantasies. His adaptations of literary works for the screen turned cinema into a literary art form. Also instrumental in creating the modern Bangla prose style, Ray was a literary genius far ahead of his times.

No other Indian, in any field of creative endeavor, has garnered more widespread critical acclaim globally as Satyajit Ray. Often called the Last Renaissance Man of Modern India, Ray not only excelled as a filmmaker but was also an accomplished author, screenplay writer, music composer, graphic designer, calligrapher, illustrator, magazine editor, and much more. Acknowledged as one of the top ten greatest filmmakers of all time, Ray revolutionized Indian and World cinema through his neorealist storytelling style and lyrical humanism. Critics across the globe consistently rank him among cinema's greatest auteurs, often comparing him to Akira Kurosawa and Jean Renoir. Most outstanding of Ray movies are: The Apu Trilogy including the globally acclaimed *Pather Panchali*, *Apurajito* and *Apur Sansar*, *Charulata*, *Jalsaghar* and *Shatranj Ke Khilari*. With his 'Neorealism', Ray changed Cinema forever. In a most memorable tribute, Akira Kurosawa said: "Not to have seen the cinema of Ray means existing in the world, without seeing the sun or the moon."

Satyajit Ray's oeuvre includes not only 36 magnificent films, but also more than 90 short stories, screen plays, detective tales and fantasies. He is considered one of the most versatile fiction writers in Bangla, widely acclaimed for his contributions to multiple genres, specially to children's and young adult fiction. Ray started writing stories much later in his life, around the age of 40 years, when his reputation as a filmmaker was firmly established. He revived the *Sandesh*, a children's magazine founded by his grandfather Upendra Kishore Ray, and started contributing stories, poems and illustrations.

Ray, the Story-writer

Among children, he was much better known as writer of fabulous stories than as a filmmaker. Generations of Bengali kids have cut their literary teeth while reading Ray stories.

NOT ALL THAT STRANGE: AN EXAMINATION OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S *STRANGE INTERLUDE*

Shernavaz Buhariwala

My paper on Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* starts out to examine and illustrate the concept of "interlude," both in personal and cosmic space. Its ramifications acting on the lives of characters are assessed; their journeys followed and sparks of recovery salvaged. By comparison and contrast, a fair objectivity is attained and fraternity with the cosmic process recognized. Ultimately, through deviations and meanderings along the journey, the meaning of life is manifested and commemorated.

Ah *Strange Interlude*! How I wonder how strange you are. When one surveys your span, one knows not where to begin or where to end. A cessation somewhere, a resumption elsewhere. An interval? A reverie? A diversion maybe. Is it a period of rest from which we may emerge refreshed or a period of tribulation from which somber truths are wrenched? So interludes are personal or they could be universal. So history is a cruel sage and human lives so many interludes in that aggregate of time we call epoch or age. This inexorable condition has been dramatized by O'Neill in a narrative of strange encounters and confused reasonings, currently under discussion. These delusions make up an interlude of about twenty-five years. Set against a century given to man by chronology and anthropology, it covers maybe a quarter of the allotted space. The malaise is then endemic in the system of time, and calls for a penetrating examination of circumstances and tendencies.

At the very onset we are presented with an impression of death. Not death which is consequent to an expiry of breath, but death which is bankrupt of life. Call it anti-life, if you will. So words are bandied and no communication reached. The patient is an apparatus in the laboratory. Prayers are directed to a god unknown. Love is mechanical, and a lover's kiss no more passionate than a devotee's lip-brush on a statuette. To make matters worse, the landscape is draped in patriarchy. Religion invokes God, the Father. Mythology is tilted in the man's favour (Helen being blamed for the Trojan war, and not Paris, who blasphemously desecrated his host's hospitality by absconding with the wife). Except for Nina, the heroine, the cast is wholly male. She is the antagonist who strides through the play like a broken colossus – perhaps O'Neill's protest at an unjust social order. Around her revolve a compact coterie of male retainers – her father Professor Leeds, her platonic admirer Charles Marsden, her doctor friend Edmund Darrell, and her husband to be, Sam Evans.

**BHUPEN HAZARIKA:
THE ‘BARD OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA’**
Sukalpa Bhattacharjee

The paper attempts to map the unique appeal of Universal Humanism in the creative oeuvre of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the musical icon of Assam. His songs are rooted primarily in the ethno-cultural lifeworld of Northeast India but the doyen of music celebrates multiculturalism in his music by connecting the culture of the region to rest of the world. His songs have been translated into other languages and have been used in films. Hazarika's songs reflect his ideological position on the issue of exploitation of disempowered subjects, destruction of environment, parochialism and the position of women in the society. The river Brahmaputra has been used as metaphor by Hazarika in his songs, to symbolize humanism, resilience, and brotherhood, bridging diverse cultures across Northeast India and Bangladesh.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011), a legendary singer, poet and filmmaker, known as the "Sudhakantha" (nectar-throated) or "Bard of the Brahmaputra," is quintessentially a multicultural icon of the twentieth and twenty-first century. His music and compositions profoundly connect the cultural life-world of Assam, to the rest of the world, often focusing on themes of Universal Humanism, emancipation of the working class, environmental consciousness and social justice. He is known as "Bard of the Brahmaputra" because of his profound emotional and aesthetic connection with the river. It is not just a river for him but a metaphor for describing Assam's history, its socio-cultural landscape and the narratives of the people who live on the river banks. In his music and poetry he has depicted the Brahmaputra as a symbol of humanism, resilience and brotherhood, bridging diverse cultures across Northeast India and Bangladesh. Throughout his career, he was honored with numerous national awards, including the Padma Shri (1977), Dadasaheb Phalke Award (1992), and the Bharat Ratna (2019).

He primarily sang songs in Assamese, Bengali and Hindi. He also sang a few songs in English, that embrace themes of international peace and brotherhood. His famous English song is "We Are On The Same Boat Brother," which was inspired by his friendship with Paul Robeson when he was in New York. The lyrics of the song reflects deep philosophical underpinnings of Universal Humanism.

We're on the same boat brother
if you tip one end...

CONSCIOUSNESS OF WOMEN IN THE WRITINGS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Sunita Rani Ghosh

In this brief and succinct tribute to Rabindranath Tagore on his recent birth anniversary, the focus is on the writings of Tagore that foreground his talent in vesting his woman characters with the power to create a future for themselves rooted in independence, freedom and self-reliance.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's literary works reflect a deep consciousness of womanhood. He played a major role in establishing Indian literature, music, art, philosophy, and culture on the global stage. Tagore, the composer of the national anthems of both India and Bangladesh, was honored with the title "Gurudev" by Mahatma Gandhi. In 1913, his poetic work *Gitanjali*, translated into English by himself under the title *Song Offerings*, received the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him the first Asian to receive this prestigious honor.

As an educationist, the establishment of Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan was the embodiment of his educational philosophy. As a poet, storyteller, dramatist and essayist, Tagore enriched literature through his timeless creations.

Tagore's creative period was marked by political upheaval, uncertainty, tension, and conflict. His literature is not merely a document of his times; it is also a journey toward the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and moral development of humanity far ahead of his time. No great writer in the world has remained untouched by sensitivity toward women's consciousness, and Tagore was no exception. His female characters are not merely imaginary; they represent positive social transformation and continue to inspire and move women even today.

In his poem "Sabala" (The Empowered), the woman persona seeks to conquer her own destiny. She prays to God for the gift of speech so that the emotions within her may find articulation in the right direction. Tagore's literature clearly reflects the influence of the Bengal Renaissance. In his works, women sometimes appear as compassionate and sensitive embodiments of humanity, and at other times as protectors of moral values who struggle for self-respect and dignity while fighting against social orthodoxies and so-called "Lakshman Rekhas."¹

In the story "Streer Patra" (The Wife's Letter), the narrator and protagonist Mrinal writes a letter to her husband after fifteen years of marriage, informing him of her decision to leave home.

THE POETICS OF PEACE: A DIALECTICAL STUDY OF WILFRED OWEN AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Shrikant Singh

The emergence of Peace Studies as a modern academic discipline has significantly broadened the conceptual understanding of peace, particularly through the distinction between negative and positive peace. Yet, this expansion has remained largely confined to empirical and structural frameworks, often overlooking the role of literary forms—especially poetry—in shaping peace consciousness. Drawing upon Johan Galtung's theoretical distinction, the paper establishes that Owen's poetry enacts a deconstructive poetics of negative peace by dismantling the ideological and sensory foundations of war, while Tagore's poetry constructs a vision of positive peace grounded in spiritual unity, ethical freedom and universal humanism.

The twentieth century was a period defined by unprecedented global conflicts and deep ideological crises which necessitated the birth of Peace Studies as an academic discipline. This field was initially committed to understanding the root causes of violence and envisioning ways to create a sustainable and lasting peace.

A major conceptual shift occurred when Johan Galtung redefined peace not just as the absence of direct violence, which he termed "negative peace," but as the presence of social justice, harmony, and equitable relations, known as "positive peace" (Galtung 167-68). While this theoretical expansion enriched the discourse surrounding peace, the field's methodological orientation has remained primarily empirical.

Scholars have tended to privilege sociological, political, and economic analyses over aesthetic and imaginative modes of understanding. This reliance on data and structural analysis, though valuable, remains incomplete because peace is not solely a structural or political condition. Peace is also an ethical, emotional, and imaginative experience that resides within human consciousness. It is within this specific context that literature, and particularly poetry, assumes a role of critical importance. Poetry does not simply describe a peaceful reality; it has the power to transform human perception entirely.

Through its dense linguistic structures, sensory immediacy, and symbolic depth, poetry enables a reader to experience the realities of violence and the possibilities of harmony in ways that abstract academic discourse cannot achieve. Consequently, this paper argues that poetry is not merely an illustration of peace but is actually constitutive of peace consciousness itself.

SYMBIOTIC AMBIENCE IN THE FOLKTALES OF BIHAR

Bhavesch Chandra Pandey

The Eco-consciousness of pre-urban phase of human civilization is not anthropocentric. Here man does not treat nature as 'other' and he lives peacefully with the flora and fauna around him. This harmonious coexistence is sincerely reflected in the folktales found in all cultures of the world. The folk tales of Bihar are no exception to this general phenomenon. In them the boundary between man and nature seems to be blurred. The setting of the folk tales is not predominantly human but all inclusive. In fact, these folktales present an ecological vision of a different kind which seems worth emulating for deciding the course of human development.

Human exceptionalism and anthropocentric vision of the world is predominantly a product of civilization and urban approach. With the rise of humanism, not only the idea of divinity was gradually sent to the periphery, even nature was gradually ascribed a tag of 'otherness'. Silos were created between human, animals and objects and everything other than humans were treated as resource rather than components of a composite whole.

In the folktales across cultures, however, we can find a sense of communion between the humans and non-humans. In fact, the boundary between them is so blurred that it is often difficult to treat anything as 'other'. Here the identities of animals and humans are fluid and the organic and the inorganic are interconnected. Folktales often portray sentient objects and anthropomorphic creatures which challenge the human centric narratives. They demonstrate an animistic perspective where animals, rivers and mountains demonstrate a personhood. Here there is no antithetical relation between the human and the non-human but a symbiotic relationship between them, so much so that the non-human takes a human form and significance. The ambience in the folktales represents a posthuman approach to the relationship between the human and the non-human.

According to Lisa Yaszek, a Regents' Professor of Science Fiction Studies in the School of Literature, Media and Communication, the posthuman, or posthumanism, is a philosophical concept used to explore questions about what the world is and what it could look like if humans weren't the central characters. "Posthumanism extends our moral concern to people and things different from ourselves. It allows us to see ourselves as enmeshed in, rather than distinct from, the greater web of being. Posthumanism invites us to think outside traditional human categories of race, gender, or nationality;

FEMINISM OR FEMISCHISM?

Deepa Chaturvedi

Feminism, repeated ad-nauseum since its formal inception in the nineteenth century in the white world (which is a total of 8-10 percent of the total world population) with its Four waves has actually circumambulated where it stood. The Oriental world was, indeed, never in the need of this concept which has its genesis in the holy texts of the monotheistic Abrahamic religions such as Christianity and Islam. Women are supposed to be created out of the ribs or twisted rib of Adam whereas the biggest heathen-pagan tradition believes her to be the half part of Shiva, the eternal creator Himself. The social fault lines at the very inception of the concept is the mainstay of this paper where a detailed study of the lack or irrelevance of this concept in Hinduism will be examined. Being born out of the ribs of Adam in any case allotted a second rate citizenship to the white and Muslim women whereas being the half of the Lord himself gave her a wholesome existence in our world. The schism is not required. The paper shall establish this.

Feminism or Femischism

The entire corpus of the western thought process seems to be caught up in the resolution of binaries: objectivity; subjectivity, general; particular, masculinist; feminist, discrete; relational, society; individual, nature; culture, materiality; discourse, orderly; chaotic, global; local, explanation; interpretation, sex; gender, philosophy; myth, individuality; conformity, good; evil, authority; power, soul; body, speech; writing, good; evil, logical; emotional, victim; predator, insider; outsider -- the entire mass of theory at times appears to be a mental exercise of seemingly great rigor, but less effect.

A close study of the western world's thought process does reveal that from Enlightenment onwards, every century threw up some fancy idea accidentally and a few intellectuals then worked hard to make it essential or central to the times upon which the entire "Other" world would "gloat with an epicurean delight" whereas the western world would inflate itself no end on the achievement of such intellectual ricochet. But this might not be the case with Feminism, as we were too balanced before the advent of Islam and Christianity in the sub-continent and have all the reasons to argue it's futility.

The strictly monolithic way of thought which probably owes its genesis to the Monotheistic religions sees life on a linear basis which remains undeviating, unswerving where, most importantly, life and religion are two different strains which run parallel like the two sides of the river, complementing each other...

**EXPLORING THE LIFE OF A FORGOTTEN PIONEER:
A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF DEEPTA ROY
CHAKRAVERTI'S *DAKTARIN JAMINI SEN***

. Lalita Sharma

This paper examines the life and contributions of Dr. Jamini Sen, one of the earliest Indian women to train as a doctor in India and abroad. In colonial times, women's achievements, especially in professional domains, were often overlooked in historical writing. Through a postcolonial-feminist reading of Deepta Roy Chakraverti's *Daktarin Jamini Sen*, this paper highlights her educational journey, including her recognition from a prestigious medical institution in Glasgow, and her efforts to improve women's healthcare in India despite social, gender, and racial barriers. The paper also seeks to show her significant contributions and to highlight how Chakraverti's narrative recovers a historically silenced life through personal archives and memory, questioning the structures that led to her erasure and contributing to feminist historio-graphy in India.

Introduction

History does not simply record the past; it shapes it. What gets remembered, and what quietly disappears, often depends on who is writing and whose voices are considered important. In colonial India, women's contributions, particularly in professional domains, were frequently marginalised within imperial historiographies. Dr. Jamini Sen's life offers a powerful lens through which to examine these processes of exclusion, recovery, and reinterpretation. This paper undertakes a postcolonial-feminist reading of *Daktarin Jamini Sen* by Deepta Roy Chakraverti, arguing that the text functions as a counter-archive that reconstructs a historically silenced life. Rather than presenting Jamini Sen as an isolated figure of achievement, the paper situates her within the broader socio-political transformations of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century colonial India. In doing so, it highlights the complex interplay between colonial modernity, gendered constraints, and historiographical erasure.

The recovery of marginalised histories requires not only critical interpretation but also sustained engagement with archival fragments, personal narratives, and dispersed sources. Chakraverti's work foregrounds precisely these methodological challenges. Drawing upon Bengali biographical accounts, family histories, and personal writings, the text positions itself within a counter-archival tradition that seeks to recover voices excluded from dominant historiography.

KILLING INTELLIGENCE DIGITALLY THROUGH AFFECTION AND APPROVAL: A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE AI-SATURATED FUTURE

R. P. Singh

We know from history that we have reached our present state of intellectual evolution through confrontation, not of the violent kind but the clash of minds marked by the discomfort of critique and refutation, and attended by the pain of discovering that one may be wrong. The modern digital technology, in its eagerness to keep users busy in engagement with itself through approval and flattery, has the dangerous potential of dulling the evolutionary human instinct of asking questions whose answers might go against the questioner's bias and presumptions. The smiling interface of most AI hides the danger of ever assuring the engaged users that they are insightful, good and correct. Beneath this digital affection lies the recipe of invisible corrosion of intelligence which is the erosion of the human evolutionary habit of questioning and challenging.

'Personally, I believe the poor are nearing extinction as the world modernizes itself. AI, for example, will make billions of menial jobs redundant. Indeed, it will make the middle class vanish. Their jobs will be taken up by uncomplaining robots. The world would belong to US dollars billionaires in their secluded garden cities behind much-guarded gates' (Surendran 16).

It is too depressing to just think of those 'garden cities'; but it is for the experts of the emerging discipline of futuristic Economics to engage, agree or disagree with the near- or- far -future takeover of the earth by those billionaires. It may happen or may not materialise with such precision as delineated in the above excerpt. The future might not be as obedient as predicted by today's richest man of the world with the net worth of above 420 billion US dollars, or over Rs. 36.40 lakh crores. This man, basing his peep into the future on the assured rapid advances in artificial intelligence and robotics, nonchalantly predicts that 'in less than 20 years working will be optional, like a hobby, pretty much' (Elon Reeve Musk in his interview with Nihkil Kamath, reported by *The Times of India* of December 1, 2025). The future may prove to be recalcitrant in its own unpredictable ways, but the fear lurks heavily in the air, certainly. This article proposes to deal with another depressing dimension of the dystopian future, and that is the machine-controlled corrosion of human mental faculty of curiosity, questioning and dissent, which is simply known as intelligence. The legacy of European Enlightenment calls it, with a universal affirmative nod, reason.

AFROPOLITANISM AND IDENTITY IN SELSAI'S *GHANA MUST GO* AND TEJU COLE'S *OPEN CITY*

Navleen Multani

Literature, cinema, music and digital technologies of the twenty-first century present experiences and identities of Afropolitans that break with Pan-Africanism and Afrocentrism. Afropolitanism reconceptualizes African cultural traditions and identities. Tayie Selasi's "Bye-Bye, Babar" Or "What is an Afropolitan?" (2005) presents Afropolitans as "ethnic mixes" sustaining cultural rather than geographical identifications. Selasi asserts that Afropolitans are "not citizens, but Africans of the world." The present paper engages with Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013) and Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011) that reimagine Afropolitans and map new identities.

Introduction

The myth of national identity marginalizing Africans in the writings of 1950s and 1960s is challenged by the contemporary African writers. The Afropolitan literary texts reimagine African identities and interrogate the monolithic modes of writing. The writers negotiate social identities and African subjects across race, gender, and social status in an attempt to resist imperial domination through hybridity. The modern African novel addresses cultural identity in light of colonial realities experienced by the African nations. While older generation of African writers was associated with anti-colonialism, the 20th century writers and activist in diaspora significantly shaped the literary aesthetic themes and representations of African identities. The dynamics of trans-nationalism challenge narratives of culture rootedness that originated during enlightenment. The language of transnationalism and hybridity distinguishes Afropolitan literary representations from the previous literary and cultural movements on national identity. The enormous transformations that have taken place due to globalization and neoliberalism provide unique ways to theorize about the world. Multiple theories have frozen and new theories that transcend the flaws of previous dichotomous theories give new ideas to meet the challenges of modernity. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), Frantz Fanon argues that Western theories objectify Africans. Thabo Mbeki defines African as a composite of black, white and brown bloods. He owes his being to Koi and San, migrants who left Europe, the Malay slaves and those who were transported from India and China.

**“I MUST SAY WHAT I FEEL AND THINK IN SOME WAY”:
REVOLTING THE REST CURE AND DISENCHANTMENT
IN GILMAN’S “THE YELLOW WALLPAPER”**

Shivika Mathur

This essay revisits Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman’s short story, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), in the light of the late nineteenth century phenomenon of “rest cure” – a popular treatment for hysteria and nervous conditions advocated for women by Dr. Weir Mitchell, and the phenomenon of Disenchantment as defined by Max Weber. Through a close reading of key motifs and passages from the text and a synthesis of historical and new formalist approaches grounded in the work of Caroline Levine and Jennifer Fleissner, this essay reads “The Yellow Wallpaper” as an expression of feminist challenge to the exclusionary and biased modernity narratives of rest cure and disenchantment, their embrace of gendered language and their systemic suppression of women’s intellectual ambitions.

“The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), written by American writer Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman (1860-1935), begins as a first-person account by a nameless narrator—a doctor’s wife who is confined to an “atrocious nursery” of a “colonial mansion, a hereditary estate” due to her “temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency” (648).¹ The wife has been cautioned by her husband that her “imaginative power and habit of story-making” (649) ought to be kept in check with “will and good sense” (649). As the narrative unfolds, it becomes apparent that since their arrival and her subsequent confinement to a room shabbily adorned with a yellow wallpaper, the narrator has been documenting her observations, reflections and feelings secretly in a diary—“There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word” (649). While John is “practical in the extreme” and laughs at his wife’s tendencies, the latter concedes, “one expects that in marriage” (647).

From the outset, “The Yellow Wallpaper” wears its feminism on its sleeve revealing the cultural anxieties around women’s intellectual ambitions, specifically their reading and writing habits and unmasking the cultural and scientific norms that seek to regulate and constrain them. The narrator is “absolutely forbidden to work” and fancies having “less opposition and more society and stimulus” (648). However, her confinement in a room adorned with a yellow wallpaper inadvertently leads her to an obsessive quest for meaning and order. This essay underscores the iterations of rebellion and vision of feminist autonomy in this short story situating them in the specific context...

GOD AS NATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AVATAR AND THE *BHAGAVADGITA* THROUGH DEEP ECOLOGY

Padm Nabh Trivedi & Smita Jha

Ecospirituality has emerged as a new field in the discourse of Environmental Studies. Various religions, films and literature have been studied from this perspective. The Indian Sanskrit Classic of the Sanatana Tradition, the *Bhagavadgita* and the film *Avatar* (2009), directed by David Cameron, share a similar ecospiritual ethos when viewed from an environmental perspective. This study delves into the ecospiritual discourse embedded in the *Bhagavadgita* and the film *Avatar* through the Deep Ecological Approach.

Introduction

One of the most prominent debates in academia is the ecological crisis. Rising pollution, species extinction, global warming and the accumulation of solid waste have emerged as a demon engulfing Earth. Its impact is so complex and hostile that the planet's future is precarious.

Academic fields respond to the ecological crisis in different ways. Economics counts on sustainable development, science seeks to minimize the loss to Nature in its use, and literature has seen a sudden escalation in the study of the relationship between humans and Nature (Glotfelty 3). Religions, among the most ancient knowledge systems, have also begun to reflect on themselves from an ecological perspective. Lynn White Jr.'s seminal essay "Historical Roots of Ecological Crisis" attacked Christianity for being essentially anthropocentric (1967). The article raised a serious question for all religions about their relevance in the face of the ecological crisis. If there were no Earth, there would be no religion that would impart the paramount importance of the environment. Especially in religion, terms like eco-religion, eco-theology, and eco-spirituality were introduced.

The *Bhagavadgita* is one of the most famous tracts of the world and a gist of the Indian Sanatana Religion. It comprises 700 verses, spoken in dialogic form between Lord Krishna and his Disciple, Arjuna, during a scene in which two opposing armies are ready to fight. Arjuna is unwilling to fight because the opponents are his relatives and brethren, and Lord Krishna convinces him to fight. The text, however, holds a separate value and is part of the *Bhishma-parvan*, spanning Chapters 23-40 of the biggest epic written in any language, the *Mahabharata*.

**FLAVOURS OF HOME:
FOOD, MEMORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN
SELECTED DIASPORIC WRITINGS**

Shweta Awasthi

Food Studies has come a long way from being a minor and marginalised entity to an integral subject in the domains of academia. It has become a vital area of discourse. It is both a means to merge as well as a criterion for segregation. Writers have used it as a powerful metaphor to denote multiple perspectives in their writings where recipes become historical narratives, a polemic for gender, memoir, etc. The present paper attempts to bring to the fore the use of food as a cultural identifier in the works of selected diasporic writers where protagonists try to sustain their roots in foreign lands with the memory and practice of their traditional cuisines. In such narratives the native Indian cuisine with its assemblage of sweet pickles, curry leaves, spices celebrate the symphony of diverse cultures.

Food Studies as a branch of interdisciplinary studies looks for the inherent relationship between food, culture and society through the prism of humanities and social sciences. It does not confine food to the mere rudimentary role of satisfying hunger; rather it establishes it on a pedestal where far from being an innocent entity it acquires socio-political undertones. What we eat and the way we eat associates us with certain social groups. Therefore, the simple act of choosing our food becomes imbued with socio-political act: "eating is a biological imperative but what we eat depends on preferences dictated by society, not just availability and environment." (Freedman 16) Hence, a routine activity like eating often creates rifts and disparities. Starting from the activity of growing, harvesting, and cooking to eating and preserving, all these activities involve different set of people and, therefore, it becomes a social activity. In every society there are several rules related to who can eat what. Even skills related to the process of cooking are divided on the basis of gender, caste, class, race, etc. For example, baking is associated with females whereas grilling is considered a masculine task. Paul Freedman in his book *Why Food Matters* (2021) has undertaken a holistic study of the efficacy of food and its evolution from a routine activity to an academically pertinent field of study and furthermore the social, religious and racial reverberations associated with it. While discussing the gendered divisions of cooking he mentions one film *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1979) wherein the character says: "Shshlik (grilled kebabs on skewers) does not tolerate women's hands." Therefore, the act of grilling is taken as masculine and is a symbol of strength...

TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN BEINGS IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *NEVER LET ME GO*

Harneet Brar

Imagine a technologically advanced society creating human clones for harvesting human organs. These organs resuscitate dying humans but kill the donor clones in the process. Kazuo Ishiguro raises this frightening spectre in his novel *Never Let Me Go*. Humans may push frontiers of science to increase human longevity but should it be pursued at the cost of ethics and human dignity? This paper adopts a posthumanist perspective to explore this question. This study attempts to probe the human angle to Ishiguro's imagi-nation. It hopes to contribute to the literary world's note of caution to humans assuming the role of creator.

Technology has enabled human beings to overcome limitations in the natural world and become the masters of the planet. They have harnessed science to redefine frontiers in several fields for their own benefit. What if human beings manipulate technology to reduce a human being to a mere body – nothing more than a repository of organs, devoid of agency? This is one of the themes of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005). The novel tells the story of Kathy H., a human clone. This paper examines the existence of genetically engineered human clones as depicted in Ishiguro's novel and contextualises their impact on the lives of characters. It strives to deepen our understanding of the broader cultural implications of such biotechnological interventions in days to come. Finally, the paper interprets Ishiguro's imagined future of humanity through a posthumanist framework.

In addition, the paper will explore disquieting questions arising from the text. The novel depicts situations resulting from a callous use of technology to address human ambitions. How does that impact the humanity? *Never Let Me Go* envisions a project which harvests healthy human organs for transplant. The authorities approve such clandestine projects, turning a blind eye to ethical principles and humane considerations. Ishiguro suggests that although technology offers solutions for the needy, the means by which such ends are achieved may be fraught with risks for humanity. The novel juxtaposes two contradictory facets of the human nature – ruthlessness, and the sheer indomitability of the human spirit. To understand the rise and pervasiveness of ever-evolving technology, we must recognise its dynamic nature and the need for humans to evolve alongside it in order to survive.

SPACE, PLACE AND CITY: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Harpreet Kaur

In an increasingly urbanized world, certain literary texts, like other cultural products, represent city spaces and various other facets of urbanity. Cities and cityscapes, depicted therein, invigorate the readers but also make them think about the spaces and places they inhabit and spend their lives in. In order to comprehend cities, their respective milieux and urbanity in general, one needs to delve into the concepts of space and place. This paper is an attempt to understand the categories of space, place and the city so as to further contextualise and investigate the modern city spaces in which texts representing cities are based.

The concept of space conjures up images of emptiness, vastness and nothingness, as deep and unfathomable as the cosmic void or something that could not be spanned and surmounted. Conversely, space may also suggest an area that one has to cross over and conquer. For ages, the idea of space has been expressed in phrases, such as, an empty container, a bottomless pit or an unending abyss. Space has often been conceived in mathematical or even geometric terms. Additionally, it has also been defined in relation to time so that space and time make a spectrum of sorts within which things take place and cohere together. Resultantly, space and time were conceived as two axes, or gradients even, in order to locate and understand the physicality of things, happenings and events. In the nineteenth century, therefore, time came to be understood as a continuous progression, a movement ahead, whereas space served as a background for the river of time to flow. In a word, space was regarded as a static, unchanging entity and time, on the other hand, was considered a continual flow.

In twentieth century, however, in humanities and social sciences, the idea of "spatial turn" (Howarth 106), has gained currency. Diverse forms of knowledge acquired through technological transformations of the postindustrial society and the concomitant cultural attitudes have indeed led to a proliferation of spaces. From being a void or a mere backdrop, space has come to be characterised in terms such as open and closed space, private and public space, political space as well as spaces of resistance and freedom. Indeed, the high-speed information and communication technology has compressed space and time resulting in the fourth dimension given to space, namely, the spacetime or spatio-temporal. Apart from this, the burgeoning global capital has given rise to economic exchange, trade and investment among financial markets ...

DRAMATIZING NOTHINGNESS/CHAOS: ABSURDIST AESTHETICS IN CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST THEATRE

Anshul Malik & Tanya Mander

This paper examines the feminist absurdist framework given by American theatre scholar Emily B. Klein. She proposes and analyses several plays that mobilise absurdist aesthetics to foreground the persistent, often overlooked struggles of women. Through close reading and theoretical engagement, the study argues that feminist absurdism not only expands the possibilities of theatrical form but also recuperates female agency from its historical marginalisation, offering a renewed critical vocabulary for understanding the evolution of feminist thought on the stage. Klein's formulation of feminist absurdist theatre marks a critical intervention in a tradition historically dominated by white male voices and their existential concerns. The absurdist movement of the 1950s exemplified by playwrights such as Beckett, Ionesco, and Esslin's canonical framing largely erased women's creative labour and circumscribed the human condition within a narrowly gendered lens. Klein challenges this exclusion by identifying a growing body of contemporary playwrights who repurpose absurdist techniques to articulate distinctly feminist experiences.

Introduction

Absurdism as a movement and genre originated from Martin Esslin's seminal work, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961), which redefined traditional theatre by abandoning coherent plotlines, logical dialogue, and well-formed characters. The Absurdist Movement bloomed as a significant cultural and philosophical response to the disillusionment and upheaval following the devastation of World War II. Matthew Bowker outlined in his work that it might be presumptuous and unwise to delimit

the meaning of 'absurdity' or 'absurd experience,' it may be equally foolish not to acknowledge our expectation that in absurd experience meaninglessness likely plays an important role, ... everyday understandings, purposes, and attachments somehow break down (1).

It marked a radical shift in departure from previous norms, not just in terms of theatricality where the resistance was not just against the traditional standards..

INTERSECTIONALITY IN TRANS AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: A STUDY OF A. REVATHI AND LIVING SMILE VIDYA

Monika & Sunita Siroha

The study compares A. Revathi's *The Truth About Me* (2010) and Living Smile Vidya's *I Am Vidya* (2007). Revathi highlights community life and the collective struggle of hijras, whereas Vidya focuses on individual identity and personal struggle with intersectionality. These works highlight the lived experience of gender identity, social exclusion and resistance. Using intersectionality and queer theory as a theoretical tool, the paper focuses on the concept of multiple identities by taking into account gender as a social construct rather than a fixed identity.

Introduction

Indian transgender autobiographies work as both personal accounts and political statements. These narratives offer a space for marginalised individual to describe their lived experience. They show gender identity, sexuality and social rejection. As Nanda states, "hijra often live on the margins of society, negotiating invisibility and hyper visibility in everyday life" (124).

This Paper includes A Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* (2010) and Living Smile Vidya's *I Am Vidya: A Transgender Journey* (2007). These writings are not just stories—they are a protest against society. Revathi's memoir focuses on community life and hijra identity. She also talks about group experience as well as community survival. She states:

Marginalised by mainstream society, denied a legal existence and dispossessed of their rights, hijras turn to their community and its culture for comfort and for nurture. In the hijra community, there is no high or low—hijras do not observe caste or religious differences, and there are hijras from both poor and rich homes (62).

In contrast, Vidya's work emphasises personal identity, self-realisation, and defiance. She includes her individual struggle. She observes, "I was a woman in my heart as a child, even as I was being given male privilege" (Vidya). This paper shows the core differences in the theme of individual experiences, that is, collective versus individual identity.

This paper uses intersectionality theory, developed by Kimberley Crenshaw. It provides a lens that shows how identity is shaped by multiple factors of gender and sexuality. Overlapping identities influence the experiences of social exclusion and personal agency:

FRAGILE THREAD: TRAUMA, REDEMPTION AND AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION IN *THE KITE RUNNER*

Nidhi Mishra & Manjusha Kaushik

This paper explores Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) as a profound literary engagement with trauma, guilt and redemption within the context of Afghanistan's turbulent socio-political history. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra, the analysis investigates how the novel's fragmented narrative structure, symbolism, and character development embody the psychological dislocations of trauma. The discussion traces the evolution of Amir's guilt and the belated processing of his childhood betrayal through the aesthetic representation of memory and narrative disruption. Further, the study situates individual trauma within collective and historical dimensions, examining the ethnic oppression of the Hazara community, the trauma of exile and displacement, and the intergenerational transmission of silence and suffering. Through recurring symbols such as the kite, the pomegranate tree, and Baba's house, Hosseini transforms personal anguish into a reflection of national disintegration and the search for redemption. Ultimately, the essay argues that *The Kite Runner* functions as both a narrative of personal catharsis and a testimony to Afghanistan's collective trauma, revealing literature's capacity to mediate between memory, history, and healing.

Introduction

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) remains a foundational text in postcolonial trauma studies, not only for its portrayal of Afghanistan's turbulent history but also for its formal engagement with trauma aesthetics. Literary trauma studies emphasize that trauma is often represented through fragmented narrative structures, symbolic displacements, and recursive patterns of remembering. This article argues that Hosseini employs trauma aesthetics to dramatize the entanglement of personal guilt with Afghanistan's collective ruptures. Drawing on Cathy Caruth's theory of belatedness and Dominick LaCapra's distinction between "acting out" and "working through," this paper demonstrates that the novel's structure, symbolism, and emotional landscape embody trauma rather than simply depicting it. By reading Amir's individual guilt in relation to Afghanistan's national wounds, the study positions *The Kite Runner* as both a psychological narrative and a meditation on cultural disintegration.

Trauma and Narrative Structure

The term trauma, deriving from the Greek for "wound," has evolved to describe psychic rupture rather than mere physical injury.

NETAJI, THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY AND THE SEARCH FOR AN INDIAN IDENTITY

Monib Ahmad

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the officers of the Indian National Army attempted to forge a unique Indian identity in Southeast Asia at a time (1943-45) when the subcontinent itself was going through significant political and communal turmoil. By examining the speeches delivered by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the life writings of INA members, and the histories of the INA, I have foregrounded the spatial politics of the INA to argue that this radical experiment in creating an identity that imagined the nation, by reimagining gender, language, and loyalty, was facilitated by the fact that it was formed outside the borders of India.

Introduction

The Indian National Army (INA), also known as the Azad Hind Fauj, and its achievements have largely been reduced in the Indian public imagination as the violent antithesis to Gandhi's method of ahimsa and in western histories as a Japanese puppet organisation. However, both perspectives are oversimplifications that obscure the nature as well as the extent of the INA effort in Southeast Asia.

The paper attempts to examine the speeches delivered by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the life writings of INA members and the histories of the INA in order to contest the said oversimplifications. The speeches delivered by Bose as the leader of the INA throw a light on the far-reaching and revolutionary change that he was trying to instil among the Indian soldiers and civilians he was addressing. Life writings of INA members are an indispensable resource that reveal how Bose's revolutionary leadership was received and translated into action by his followers, the challenges they faced in doing so, and how their association with the INA radically changed their worldview.

Life writings by women are of particular interest in this regard, such as the memoirs of Lakshmi Sahgal, *A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist* (1997) and the diary of Asha Sahay, *The War Diary of Asha-San: From Tokyo to Netaji's Indian National Army* (2022). Both women were part of the famous all-women Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Azad Hind Fauj. While Sahgal was the commander of the regiment and participated in the INA's retreat through the difficult terrain of Burma, Asha was still under training at the time of Netaji's death but gives a detailed account of life with the INA.

ENTANGLED MARGINS: INTERSECTIONALITY AND NARRATIVES OF OPPRESSION IN INDIAN LITERATURE

Zahra Ahmad

Marginality refers to the social, political, and economic exclusion of individuals and communities shaped by caste, gender, disability, region, religion, tribe, environment, ethnicity and race. Literary representations of marginality generate discourses and counter-discourses that challenge dominant hierarchies and recover silenced voices. Positioned against a powerful centre, the margin becomes a site of oppression and resistance. Intersectionality intensifies marginalization as overlapping identities create layered discrimination. In contemporary India, technological change, urban migration, environmental degradation and authoritarian ideologies deepen inequalities and exclusion. This paper examines selected Indian literary texts to explore how literature exposes systemic injustice and articulates resistance from marginalized perspectives.

Introduction

Inequality in India works through the lens of intersectionality of several different identities which cause marginalization and oppression manifold. This discrimination differs from that caused by a single axis such as caste, gender, religion, or environment. The concept of multiple and composite discrimination emerged from Black feminist activists in the United States during 1980s and early 1990s. Kimberlé Crenshaw in *Mapping the Margins* coined the term 'intersectionality' to elaborate on the complications of inequality. Helen Lewis states, "Intersectionality means that any consideration of sexism interacts with race, class, sexuality and disability to create unique forms of discrimination" (par. 27). It is seen that intersectional approach is significant in understanding the injustice and discrimination of the marginalized groups as "larger politics frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences" (Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins* 1242). This gives unique and aggravated forms of discrimination rather than aggregate of various discriminations. Intersectionality, therefore, moves beyond additive models of discrimination, recognizing that marginalization is shaped by interconnected structures of power.

India's diversity coexists with the intersectional oppression of marginalized groups. The caste system remains a primary axis of discrimination despite constitutional safeguards and social movements. Based on birth, it determines occupation, status, and access to rights, relegating Dalits and other marginalized communities to systemic social, political, and economic exclusion.

ATTENTIVENESS AND THE RIVER: SIDDHARTHA'S JOURNEY

Princepal Singh

This paper examines Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922) through the lens of *moksha*, the fourth *purushartha* of Indian philosophy, with the river as its central motif. Drawing on the *Purusharthas* – *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* – the paper traces Siddhartha's journey through worldly experience towards transcendence, arguing that the river functions as a living pedagogy rather than just a symbol. *Moksha* is repositioned here as attentiveness, awareness and the acceptance of life's interconnectedness: a reading that resonates with contemporary philosophical concerns. The paper situates Hesse's narrative within a broader literary and philosophical tradition that understands rivers as thresholds to self-realisation and the encounters with the ineffable.

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. – Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Over-Soul" (155).

Ralph Waldo Emerson's words remind us of an ancient truth: the interconnectedness of all life, that is, the idea that we are all parts of one great body. It resonates across various philosophical and civilisational traditions. The individual, it is understood, is never separate from the broader empirical world and the universe but is embedded in it in complex ways. The idea is underpinned by a vision of unity and the concept of *moksha* in Indian Philosophy that refers to such unity. One of the four *mahavakyas* – 'Tat Tvam Asi' (That Thou Art) – from the *Chandogya Upanishad* also encapsulates the idea that the individual soul is the 'Over-soul', as Emerson calls it. This paper considers Hermann Hesse's bildungsroman *Siddhartha* (1922), which continues to fascinate readers as it addresses some of the fundamental existential questions: the purpose and meaning of life. The novel primarily deals with Siddhartha, the eponymous protagonist of the story and his journey through the labyrinthine pathways and how he comes to fathom the true purpose and meaning of his journey.

The paper also examines the motif of the river as deployed by Hesse to foreground the necessary stages through which Siddhartha has to pass to understand the riddle of existence.

TRAUMA AND HEALING IN ANURADHA ROY'S *SLEEPING ON JUPITER*

Saloni

Anuradha Roy's famous novel *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015) discusses the story of the main character, Nomi, a young orphaned woman. Her story reflects past traumas that have led to her disturbed present life. The paper highlights how Roy's novel shows trauma as a deeply psychological and gendered phenomenon. Theoretical frameworks for this paper are drawn on Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth and Judith Herman. The paper also examines how healing in Roy's novel is not a destination but a process, an ongoing and incomplete journey.

Introduction

In the contemporary world of literature, many of the emerging preoccupations include identity crisis, postcolonial feminism, LGBTQ rights and psycho-analytical trauma. Psychological trauma has become a prominent issue in contemporary society. Theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Judith Herman and Cathy Caruth discuss psychoanalytic conditions in their works. Writers from across cultures and genres use traumatic conditions to spread awareness in society. In the Indian context, this theme becomes more relevant and urgent due to the ignorance of Indian society towards mental health problems. Writers often use fiction to show what society hides. In Indian English literature many novelists emphasise the importance of psychological themes such as gender-based violence and mental health problems. Among these writers are Anita Desai, Anita Nair, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri and Anuradha Roy. Literature here becomes the only space where hidden suffering could be shown honestly.

Anuradha Roy is a famous Indian novelist, editor and journalist. She is famous for her quiet, essential contribution to contemporary Indian English fiction. Her famous novels included *Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008), *The Folded Earth* (2011), *Sleeping on the Jupiter* (2015), *Lives We Never Lived* (2018) and *The Earth Spinner* (2021). *Sleeping on Jupiter* was awarded the DSC prize in South Asian Literature and was also longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. This work is widely regarded as her most ambitious, innovative and emotionally powerful novel.

Sleeping on Jupiter, published in 2015, is set in the fictional temple town of Jarmuli, which is situated on India's eastern coast. This fictional town represents two sides of complexities;

Review Essay

SHAPING MINDS AND CHANGING LIVES

Pallavi Sharma Goyal

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one." This meticulous portrayal, attributed to Jojen Reed in George R. R. Martin's *A Dance with Dragons*, which expresses the strong bond present between books and their readers, can be applied to the latest book, *Global Luminous Voices*, by Nibir K. Ghosh. In a single book, a reader can experience a vast multitude of facets of life. The book feels like long conversations held across the globe against the discrimination of caste, creed, colour, gender and reaches at its culmination while pondering over the queries of coexistence with Nature.

The book proffers a task that one can perform during one's lifetime to make this earth a better place; so even after millions and millions of years of civilizational journey, one would peruse this earth, trace the different pathways and yet share an intellectual and aesthetic oneness, a unique power conferred on mankind.

In the panoramic view of the book, the reader finds himself roaming across the American, African, European and Indian societies and cultures, depicted in their literary dimensions, in their artistic cults, in the vast lane of discrimination where human survival experiences sundry resistance based on caste, colour, creed, language, gender, physical disability and try to overcome all such hurdles with an amiable and empathetic desire to maintain a coexistence with each other. The book luminously echoes the voices of those whose dire attempts have enabled civilisations to enjoy a few more perks of the environment by raising their voices against the destruction of this beautiful earth and the associated sentiments. The book appears as a crusade in crumbling humanitarian visions, and takes one through the corridors of memory where reminiscences, wit, wisdom, survival and manipulation turn strong. It avers the luminous aspects of those lives that became successful in bringing out the enlightened versions of their lives before the world. In its structure, the episodic moments raise varied questions before the self-proclaimed intellectuals and the determiners of the rights and wrongs of social, political and individual policies.

It portrays a world that has been standing at the brink of extinction, where even the contemporary natural disasters do not seem to suffice for humans to ponder, analyse and reexamine their errors, where the global tour and travel companies offer the wanderers to explore one of the most fragile landscapes of Antarctica, "as the last chance of tourism," and where the superpowers have decided to poke their noses into the deep strata of earth...

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Life
does not
cease
to be
funny
when people die,
any more
than it
ceases
to be
serious
when people laugh.

– *George Bernard Shaw*
The Doctor's Dilemma

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