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William Dalrymple

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Chetan Bhagat

John Ruskin

Toni Morrison

Amitav Ghosh

Laxman Mane

Mahashweta Devi

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Pearl S. Buck

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Taslima Nasreen

Kiran Desai

Kunal Basu

William Shakespeare

American Puritanism

The Booker Prize

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EDITORIAL

Apprehending arrest for reading passages from Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, four eminent Indian English writers had to abruptly disappear from the 2012 Jaipur Literature Festival. Engrossed in the bliss of ignorance, they possibly forgot that "You can discuss a book, read from other writings by the author, have conversations with him, invite him, but you cannot either possess a copy or publicly read from a book that is banned." So explained William Dalrymple, the co-Director of the Festival, and went on to add how "the consequences could be serious for the four delegates since the readings constituted a premeditated act." After such knowledge what forgiveness!

Since time immemorial controversies around bans and censorships have always evoked and generated tremendous amount of interest both in the educated elite and the illiterate. The graph of public curiosity naturally rises when it pertains to anything that is denied for reasons extending from the sublime to the ridiculous. It reaches a feverish pitch especially when the issue in question is either pornographic or pertains to what Karl Marx referred to as the "opium of the masses." Battle lines are instantly drawn between the self-appointed guardians of public morality and over-enthusiastic defenders of free speech and action, be it the case of Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Though it would be an exercise in futility to ruminate time and again on whether a book ought to be banned for offending the sensibility or the fundamentalist sensitivity of a certain class of people, I do feel the urge to recall a particular passage from John Milton's immortal treatise against censorship entitled "Areopagitica": "Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."

What I find seminal in Milton's classic statement, an adage that most of us have grown up with, is his emphasis on the phrase, "a good book," which many of us may tend to miss while discussing censorship or ban. I distinctly recall that what had impressed me most about *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, when I lay hands on it for the first time, was not the picture of alluring nudity displayed on the frontispiece of the book or the charge of obscenity that was brought against it; I saw the magnetic appeal of Lawrence's magnum opus in his very opening

statement: "Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen."

I discovered on reading the novel how the inherent complexity of life after the apocalypse was as significant as the intimate scenes involving the union of Connie and Mellors and how the blending of these twin concerns went on to create an exquisite work of art. In this context it may not be out of place to quote Oscar Wilde: "The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame."

Contrary to my admiration for Lawrence's novel, I wish to cite an instance related to my initial date with *The Satanic Verses*. When Rushdie's novel hit the stands in 1988, fetching the author \$2 million within a few months of its publication, it immediately stirred the proverbial hornet's nest and initiated a controversy that has not dimmed in any way with the passage of time. I was obviously intrigued by Rushdie's open letter to Rajiv Gandhi, then prime minister of India, which I happened to see on the front page of *The Indian Express*. Protesting against the ban imposed on the book on the testimony of a few parliamentarians who had *not* cared to read the book, Rushdie had stated: "The right to freedom of expression is at the foundation of any democratic society....I ask you this question: What sort of India do you wish to govern? Is it to be an open or a repressive society?"

At that point of time, I was working on my book *Calculus of Power* at the American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad. When a friend made *The Satanic Verses* available, I tried reading a couple of pages and found the experience excruciatingly unenjoyable and gave up the effort in despair. Over the years, I have come across many honest readers whose opinions about the book have not been much different. Though I confess being an avid reader of many of Rushdie's other works and greatly admire him as an icon of IWE, I'd reiterate the absurdity of banning books that are considered unreadable. This approach, I guess, would be wiser and safer than suppressing the suppressors of freedom of expression.

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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IN PRAISE OF POPULAR FICTION: A CONTRARY VIEW OF “THE BOOKER PRIZE AND INDIA”

Ronald D. Klein

I have read and appreciated all the works of the Indian Booker Four. I swell with pride when another India jewel gets added to the Booker crown, along with those other novels shortlisted. Clearly an essay, “The Booker Prize and India” was called for. My problem was in the premise of the proposition: What *was* the relationship between the Booker and Indian Writing in English? At the same time as the Booker has been a cause for celebration for some of its winning writers, there has been an implosion of IWE within India itself which is also worthy of notice. Published in India by Rupa, Penguin India or Harper Collins India, these works are not widely read by the Eurocentric world, but are nonetheless widely read. And while Sir Salman has been noisily picking up his knighthood and Best of Booker awards, Chetan Bhagat has been quietly crowned by *The New York Times* as “the biggest-selling English-language novelist in India’s history.”

It is this disconnect that I would like to pursue in this essay. The old literary conflict between high and low literature has an ironic and particularly Indian focus, worthy of study within this context. I should like to begin with a brief overview of literary criticism, moving into the more relevant history and judging of the Booker Prize, before considering IWE and the issue of the Indian Four as representations of IWE in relationship to other non-Booker Indian writers inside and outside of India.

Shifts in Literature, Culture and Criticism

In 1869, exactly one hundred years before the first Booker Prize was awarded, Matthew Arnold published *Culture and Anarchy*, dividing society into three groups, basically upper, middle and lower classes. He worried that the “Populace” would wreak havoc on the higher values of the upper classes and prescribed a heavy dose of “Culture.”

- **Dr. Ronald D. Klein** is Professor of English at Hiroshima Jogakuin University. His specialization is Asian English Literature and U.S.-Japan cross-cultural studies.

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BEYOND LITERARY BOUNDARIES: CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

Anuradha Sen

Cambridge historian, the writer of award winning, bestseller travelogues and narrative histories, the presenter of many BBC television series, regular contributor to *The New Yorker*, *The New Statesman*, *The Guardian*, the co-director of the Jaipur Literature Festival, William Dalrymple is a scholar who dons many caps. He is the winner of the Wolfson Prize in History in 2003 and the Scottish Book of the Year award for his recent book *White Mughals*. Dalrymple is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of the Royal Asiatic Society. In 2002, he was awarded the Mungo Park Medal by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society for his “outstanding contribution to travel literature” and in 2005 he was given the Percy Sykes Medal of the Royal Society of Asian Affairs. He wrote and presented the television series “Stones of the Raj” and “Indian Journeys,” which won the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Series at BAFTA in 2002. His oeuvre is in writing intensively researched non-fiction, mainly narrative histories like *The White Mughals*, *The Last Mughals* (2006) and travelogues like *City of Djinn*s (1993), *Age of Kali*, *In Xanadu* and *From the Holy Mountains* and now his latest in 2009 - *Nine Lives*, *In Search of the Sacred in Modern India*. Anuradha Sen had the privilege of meeting William Dalrymple, the great-nephew of Virginia Woolf, at the Assam Valley Literary Award Function organized by the Williamson Magor Group of Companies at Guwahati in March 2010. This old erstwhile English tea company organizes an annual event where an Assamese poet/writer or novelist is honored with a lifetime achievement award in a grand ceremony. Last year, Dalrymple was invited as the chief guest to give away the award to Imran Shah, an old Assamese writer of repute. In this conversation the celebrity Dalrymple sheds light on diverse issues and concerns related to the contemporary interest in ‘borderland’ spaces and transnational discourses that have moved to the fore and caught the attention of all.

Sen: Good morning Mr. William Dalrymple! It’s a lovely day here in Guwahati beside the Brahmaputra.

- **Dr. Anuradha Sen** is Senior Lecturer, Department of English, A.N. College (Magadh University), Patna.

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PEARL S. BUCK'S NICHE AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY CANON

Aysha Munira

It's ironic that not all the people with a flair for writing and especially writing fiction can make a haloed niche in the canons of writing after getting through the scanner and scrutiny of the high-browed art/literary critics. Some of them are sieved out for lack of 'artistic excellence'. Pearl S. Buck is one such thespian writer who could gain popularity the world over but could not be welcomed in the American literary fraternity without a sense of discomfiture.

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, despite her Nobel and Pulitzer prizes, is considered to be a literary lightweight, a writer supposedly popular with the housewives. This is partially due to her belief in a simple Biblical narrative and a preference of rather "episodic plots" to "complex structures." Her famous biographer, Peter Conn declares that "she was not a felicitous stylist and she displayed a taste for formulaic phrases" (xvii). Pearl S. Buck cared about what the popular style and fashion of writing fiction was in the literary circle as little as she cared about her sartorial style. She avoided fripperies and embellishments in her writings in the same manner as she refused boxing in her tummy with a corset despite being jeered at by her college friends at Randolph-Macon.

The fact that her principal subjects are women and China or Asia instead of Europe and America in which her target language-group, people of European descent, would have been interested, also did not endear her to the American, predominantly male, literary critics. Her being away from the main literary scene in America where her target audience was, in the beginning of her career, may also have added to her disadvantage. Or was it her isolation from the mainstream macho culture that a young nation like America loved so much? Nevertheless, much to the chagrin of literary critics, Pearl S. Buck became a Nobel laureate in literature (with Tony Morrison, she is one of the only two American women Nobel laureates in Literature). In 1932, she won Pulitzer Prize for *The Good Earth* which is considered to be her magnum opus and was given Howells Medal by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1935.

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MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: DRAUPADI AS AN EPIC HERO

Tanutrushna Panigrahi

This paper takes a look at Draupadi in the *Mahabharata* and argues that she stands out as the epic protagonist deserving deeper understanding, attention and awe. Coming down the line, Draupadi's character has been read, reread in many different lights, especially from the feminist perspective. The publication of Mahashweta Devi's "Draupadi" which was followed by its translation and foreword by Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak and her postcolonial reading of it, have brought this epic character a lot of critical attention and contemporary interpretations in the West as well as in India. This paper proposes that her "experiences" that are generated, while she transacts and negotiates the several female identities, make her the epic hero since the epic value emphasizes the importance of "experience" of its protagonist. The "epic centrality" component comes out of her involvement as well as her responses to those experiences.

In Draupadi's sub-narratives one finds in context the major identities of women exploring certain important attitudes that have been perpetuated over the historical process. She is the ideal original woman that asserts the "Shakti" of the ancient Hinduism and Indian culture. She mutely suffers at the same time as a victim of the social pressure created under the normative, traditional society as the dumb and silent stereotype. She at still another level is an assertive aggressor against exploitation, breaking away from the stereotype. This image of Draupadi, thus, is of an articulate woman who is feminine and yet is a firm opponent to injustice and victimization. She assumes the archetypal female form with her birth from the sacrificial altar, the yajna, as the daughter of Yajnasena to be called Yajnaseni to fulfill the pre-designed agenda of killing the Kauravas to avenge her father's enemies and write the destiny of the epic narrative. With her unusual birth she is in possession of unusual power that approximates the "Shakti." The description of Draupadi rising from the Yajna fire is both archetypal and stereotypical.

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HISTORIOGRAPHY AND AMERICAN PURITANISM

A. Karunaker

American history began with the transplantation of Puritanism to the New World. It can be argued that the Puritans were the first among others who survived to the establishment of the New England theocracy. Historiography studies the process by which historical knowledge is obtained and transmitted. The task of historiography lies in reflecting human life in the continuum of past, present and future. However, it must be noted that American historiography had its beginning elsewhere. Early historians like Herbert L. Osgood and Charles Mclean Andrews wrote American history beginning with New England colonial history within the framework of imperial history by concentrating on relations between the colony and the mother country and totally neglecting colonial life and culture in New England. It was only in the 1920s that American historiographers turned to eleventh-century Puritanism to offer new insights into American life and culture by undertaking an intellectual interpretation of Puritanism and its contribution to the origins and development of America.

In 16th and 17th century England, the people who rejected the Reformation of the Church of England and justified separation from the Church of England following The Elizabethan Religious Settlement and who sought "purity" of worship are generally called Puritans by historians. Puritans were relatively radical protestant, committed and highly informed. They wanted the Church of England to resemble the Protestant Churches of Europe, especially the Church of Geneva. They objected to rituals and idolatries in churches, denouncing them as "Popish pomp and rags." Puritanism evolved from discontent. Puritans of England suffered religious oppression by the High Anglicans under the English Archbishop Laud. Puritans immigrated to North America during 1620-1640s because they believed that the Church of England was beyond reform. Between 1630 and 1640 thousands of men, women and children sailed to Massachusetts. The Great Migration of Puritans to New England was primarily an exodus of families from Europe to North America. According to Breisach: "In the new land the Pilgrims set about the work of building a new Zion (or Canaan).

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**NATION-STATE DEBATE IN
AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE SHADOW LINES***

Tamishra Swain

Amitav Ghosh is better known for his writings about the Asian commoners and their societal problems. In all his writings starting from his first novel *The Circle of Reason* to his latest venture *The Sea of Poppies*, his writings trace the roots of uprooting the people, their settlement and the conditions under which they are made and forced to migrate across the country and continents. Apart from migration, his concern for 'nation-nationalism' is further endorsed by numerous critics and fans. Butt argues that "in order to bring out the irony of dividing ancient cultures and civilisations by drawing borders and giving a new name to a piece of mutual territory, Ghosh contends the sinister smoke screens of nationalism hitherto unknown on the Indian subcontinent till the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 through the all-pervasive metaphor of 'shadow lines' in the novel" (Butt 2).

The Shadow Lines tells the story of three generations of the narrator's family spread over Dhaka, Calcutta and London. It lines up characters from different nationalities, religions and cultures in a close-knit fictive world. The novel is written against the backdrop of the civil strife in post-partition East Bengal and riot-hit Calcutta. The events revolve around Mayadebi's family, their friendship and sojourn with their English friends the Prices and Thamma, the narrator's grandmother's links with her ancestral city, Dhaka. The riots in 1964 claimed the lives of jethamshoi (father's elder brother) Khalil and Tridib. These deaths raise questions and pose a challenge to the concept of intercultural understanding and friendship in contemporary society divided by arbitrary demarcations of national boundaries.

Beginning in the colonial times, the story is woven around two families, the Datta-Chaudhuris of Bengal and Prices of London. The relationship between the two families spans three generations and involves several passages to and from India on both sides. In another section of the novel Ghosh returns to the Indian subcontinent, to Calcutta and Dhaka.

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**KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*:
A POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE**

Randeep Rana

Postcolonial writing encapsulates the cultural contours effected by the imperial process of the colonial period to the present times. Postcolonialism invokes the idea of social justice, liberation and egalitarianism in its endeavour to counter the authoritarian structures of racism, discrimination and maltreatment. Postcolonial writing is suffused with suffering, pain, protest and resistance experienced in history. Apart from exploring difference or subjugation during the colonial period, postcolonial writers ardently question the postcolonial bias and oppression too. During the last two decades issues regarding ethnicity, displacement and gender are being analyzed and scrutinized by these writers. Postcolonial writings accentuate the exposition of certain elementary oppressive structures in class, gender and caste. Under the pretext of national stability, so called Indian 'high society' elides dissimilarity and perpetuates oppression of the subalterns or the marginalized. Postcolonial writings, therefore, discuss the problems and narratives of much of the world's marginalized classes.

The present paper is an attempt to analyze Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* from the postcolonial perspective with special emphasis on the ill treatment of the marginalized section of Indian society.

Kiran Desai shot into fame after winning the coveted Booker prize for her novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*. The novel highlights the socio-economic discrimination prevalent in Indian society. It is a realistic portrayal of the plight of the marginalized, the domination by the rich over the oppressed corroborating Frantz Fanon's notion of dominance and submissiveness. Judge Jhemubhai's arrogant demeanor and attitude is translated into his vindictiveness and insolence towards his wife, Nimi Patel, his orphaned granddaughter Sai and also his cook, Pannalal.

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IDENTITY ORDEAL: LESBIANISM IN TENDULKAR'S *A FRIEND'S STORY*

Jamsheed Ahmed

Lesbian theory developed from the radical movements of the 1960s. With its roots outside the academia particularly in the Gay Liberation Movement of the late 1960s, it marked a seminal moment in the development of rhetoric and political doctrine to challenge the 'heterosexism' of the society. Lesbian theorists adopt a deconstructive mode of dismantling the binary opposition of Western culture such as male/female, heterosexual/homosexual and natural/unnatural by which a spectrum of diverse things is forced into only two categories, and in which the first category is assigned privilege, power and centrality while the other is derogated and marginalized. They take up the postmodern concern to break down the essentialist notions of gender and sexual identity and replace them with multiple diversities. They stress that lesbianism is the single 'correct' feminist identity. In the mid-1970s a call to political lesbianism by the radical feminists was based on the principle that heterosexuality was a further indication of women's oppression. American writer Charlotte Bunch argues in her book *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement* (1975) that a lesbian rejects male sexual and political domination; she defies his world, his social organization, his ideology and his definition of her as inferior (qtd. in Gamble 239). Adriene Rich took the lesbian concept to an entirely new sphere when she coined the phrase 'lesbian continuum' where she explains the diversity in the spectrum of love and bonding among women. She talks about family relations and other social intimacies. In her words the relation among women may include friendship, practical and emotional support and other relations which cannot be defined by sexual and familial convention (Gamble 238).

Vijay Tendulkar takes the bold theme of lesbianism in his play *A Friend's Story* (originally written in Marathi as *Mitarchi Goshta*) and clearly gives the message that the world still isn't ready to shelter human assortment and complexity. Tendulkar, by writing such a play with a lesbian heroine, touches a very sensitive issue; at least at that time it was.

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LITERARY CRITICISM OF RUSKIN: A CRITIQUE

Krishna Singh

John Ruskin's literary criticism has two broad sections—Theoretical criticism and Practical criticism. His theoretical criticism discusses his thoughts on art and morality, aesthetics, imagination, nature and landscape and pathetic fallacy. Ruskin's Practical criticism deals with critical approaches and techniques and his treatment of individual authors and their literary works. The present paper attempts to analyze Ruskin's theoretical speculations and practical criticism against the backdrop of Reader Response theory in order to locate their modern relevance.

It is in the interaction between text and reader that aesthetic response is created. And Ruskin succeeded in doing this to a great extent. He harnessed textual, contextual, impressionistic, eclectic, structuralist, Marxist, and other types of theories for different types of subjects. With the development of new species of literature, Ruskin invents dynamically new methods to apply. In Ruskin, vision is achieved simply because he knew how to blend judiciously the insights yielded by different critical approaches.

Philosophically, the greatness of Ruskin's criticism lies in his emphasis on moral law: "every great composition in the world, every great piece of painting or literature - without any exception, from the birth of Man to this hour - is an assertion of moral law" (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter lxxxiii). In Ruskin art and literature are synonymous. Truth - moral or intellectual or fidelity to facts - is the standard of all given excellence. He harshly disdained the authority of conventions by propounding the principle of Naturalism in art and criticism. Naturalism was his great contribution to art and literature. He has a respect and reverence for fact of any sort, or for truth, and is opposed to empty fancies or to imaginations whether they are found in the idealistic dreams of German philosophy, or in those attributions of human feeling to inanimate nature, which are characteristic of modern poetry. While criticizing individual authors he is eclectic, often impressionistic.

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BEAUTY AS METAPHOR OF VIOLENCE IN TONI MORRISON'S *LOVE*

Khem Raj Sharma

Toni Morrison has played an active role in promoting black voices. One of these is seeking beauty in all its forms on the American scene. Every black person in America is forced to struggle against a standard of beauty and by implication beauty is never just beauty but everything else, from goodness to worthiness of love—that is almost exactly the opposite of what they are and the consequences can be deadly. For the African Americans, seeking for beauty is a quest for relevance. But beauty in various forms always head toward violence of some sort. Many characters in the novels of Morrison meet their action in violence originating from beauty whether physical, scenic or psychological.

The present paper seeks to delineate beauty as metaphor of violence in Morrison's fictional works with special reference to her latest novel *Love*. During the discussion a progression in the concept of beauty is seen till *Love* sees a different beauty resulting in violence for the final resolution. Starting from *The Bluest Eye*, in which beauty is prayed before God due to the desire to conform to white standards at various levels, in *Love*, we see that when African Americans are well settled in American society, how their action becomes violent when originating from beauty. From the pain and dissimulation chronicled in *The Bluest Eye* to the advocacy of love in *Love*, we find that Morrison has finally rebuilt the centre to discover the powers which lie hidden in blackness.

Beauty finds the most focused representation in Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, which holds as its central concern a critique of Western beauty and its self-destructiveness when imposed upon people of color in general and women of color in particular. Pecola Breedlove is forced to long for blue eyes like those of white children so that she could be loved and accepted by both whites and blacks. Her longing for blue eyes in a most violent scene leads her to insanity. *Sula* again sees that 'dark is ugly', which leads her in maintaining unusual relationships.

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HISTORY AS FICTION: THE NOVELS OF MANOHAR MALGONKAR

Jaya Tripathi

Fact and Fiction are obviously two contradictory terms. If one is the byproduct of deep research and is based on concrete evidences, the other is the creation of imagination that can do miracles in realms of literature. A fusion of these two contrary terms is rendered possible in the domain of Historical Novel. The Historical Novel is a literary form that, reconstructs a personage, a series of events, a movement, or the spirit of past age....This literary genre was properly developed and defined in the Western World by Sir Walter Scott with his Waverly Novels. The lead was brilliantly followed by writers like Thackeray, Alexander Dumas, Victor Tolstoy, James Fenimore Cooper, Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Henry and others.

In Indian English fiction novels of Manohar Malgonkar show his strong predilection for history which forms the background for almost all his novels. History provides a solid foundation to all his novels and adds a sense of realism to them. His novels also show an excellent fusion of the personal and historical perspectives in fictional terms. All the novels of Malgonkar reveal his deep concern for Indian social life, tradition and culture. In the process of creating this fusion of history and fiction, Malgonkar throws up some basic assumptions. A study of these assumptions lets us know the writer's capability to merge fact and fiction and present it in the form of entertaining novels.

First of all we see that Malgonkar's novels cover almost ninety-three years of Indian history, i.e. from 1857 to 1950 in his five novels. *Distant Drum* (1960), his very first novel is roughly centred around twelve years of Kiran Garud's life in army (1938 to 1950), but concentrates mainly on the last seven months (from the middle of August 1949 to March 1950). His second novel, *Combat of Shadows* (1962), also focuses on the last ten years of Indian freedom struggle (from 1939 to 1949). *The Princes* (1963), largely concentrates on the period between 1938 to 1947, and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) on 1930 to 1947. Finally, *The Devil's Wind* (1972) is based on the 1857 revolt.

- **Dr. Jaya Tripathi** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Sciences & Humanities at ITS Engineering College, Greater Noida, U.P.

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CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CONFLICT IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART*

Mohammad Kamran Ahsan

This paper deals with cultural heritage and cultural conflict in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The novel is Achebe's attempt to show that African culture was not as savage as the colonizers have presented it. In this process of decolonization, Achebe presents the pros and cons of his native Nigerian culture in which his ancestors were deeply rooted. British colonialism proved a boon as well as bane for Nigerians. On the one hand it brought new light of literacy and development to the tribes of Nigeria, but on the other Nigerians were brutally suppressed and marginalised in this process. Britishers not only colonised their land but also colonized their minds, their language and their culture. According to Prema Kumari Dheram: "As an observer and critic of the society the Nigerian writer finds his culture being trampled upon by his own countrymen, who in order to enjoy material benefits thrust their traditional values aside, changing attitudes to life, ape the European, and even hate their own people. The Nigerian, without finding his future, seems to have lost his past."¹

Colonialism also introduced a new Western outlook of society where every individual had its own values in sharp contrast to traditional social system, where every individual participated in and shared values and customs of the society, and individual had to capitulate in order to conform to it. Collapse of traditional society that led to deviation of the individual from its culture and roots is the major brunt of British colonialism. Lack of material culture became a matter of humiliation for the Nigerians, and a stereotype image of "primitive savage" was created for them. In order to fight against this stereotype, Nigerians began to ape the Europeans and frowned upon their own cultural heritage. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe endeavours to restore cultural heritage and dignity of traditional Ibo society and its individuals. Achebe says: "This theme, put quite simply, is that African people didn't hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry, and above all they had dignity.

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THE MARGINAL SELF: LAXMAN MANE'S *UPARA*

Amandeep

Autobiography has acquired special urgency in the wake of postcolonial assertion on self-presentation. The claims of history to objective, grand and universal truths have been questioned and contested through the strategic deployment of intensely intimate personal and private counter-truths articulated and expressed through autobiographies or autobiographical narratives. Remarkably enough, in the last twenty years or so, autobiography is no more the sole preserve of 'national' or 'spiritual' heroes. In other words, autobiographies no longer represent or articulate the overarching national aspirations; rather they offer us the uneasy counter-hegemonic subalternist perspectives, subverting the grand narratives of nationality and spirituality without any aesthetic camouflage. Consequently, there is an unprecedented rush of autobiographies written from the margins.

Upara describes the rift between upper caste and lower caste of nomadic tribes. Its author Mane, a son of very poor parents, belonging to low caste, who used to travel from one village to another for labor and beg for food, went on to claim the Sahitya Akademi award for this very book at the age of 31. At one point of time he, like other Dalit writers, ate out of people's leftovers or at times went without food for days. Mane describes how they searched for food: "Goddess bestows on us, we have to accept. What else can we do to fill our bellies? God makes us travel from place to place in search of food. Give your blessings!...being a low caste in the village, always tortured by rich and high-class people....They were always the first suspect of any theft or crime that occurred in village, even if they were not involved. They used to be picked up by police for no reason and were subjected to jail for days" (31).

First published in 1984 in Marathi, *Upara* gives a detailed account of the writer's struggle in life within the repressive framework of Hindu caste society. It vividly portrays the process of subjugation of the kaikadis, a nomadic group, by the upper caste communities. Because of the nomadic character of the community the kaikadis are always looked down upon by the upper castes.

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TRANSCENDING CULTURES: KUNAL BASU’S “THE JAPANESE WIFE”

Aroonima Sinha

Kunal Basu is an Indian Bengali writer who has written three novels and a short story collection, named after the title piece, *The Japanese Wife*. When his first collection of short fiction was published in 2008, it created quite a stir because Basu’s stories were entirely different from the bulk of stories written by other Indian writers. Though based abroad, Basu, unlike Jhumpa Lahiri and other expatriate writers, does not believe in writing on the weather beaten themes of alienation and the search for one’s roots. Nearly all his stories are firmly based in Indian backgrounds and depict the nuances of the local sensibility of the people. He prefers to work with the element of the unknown and loves to experiment with unfamiliar themes in his short fiction. Basu himself calls his fiction “the chronicle of the unexpected” (*Sunday Herald*).

“The Japanese Wife” is the most remarkable story in the collection. It is a love story, almost surrealistic in element, of long distance love between two people from different countries and entirely different cultural backgrounds. Though the friendship between Snehomoy Chakrabarti, the school teacher from the small fishing town of Shonai, situated on the coast of the river Malda in Sunderbans, and Miyage, the shy girl from Japan begins with a letter of pen friendship, it metamorphoses into a long distance marriage, which has all the frills of an ordinary one. Indeed it is a tale of love that is both traditional and unconventional at once; in an age when marriages end in a few days, this marriage between two pen friends lasts for two decades, sustained just on “book boxes smelling of sweet glue, cartons marked fragile holding ‘Hokusai’ prints, a silk sack filled with mountain cherries, scarves rolled tight like children’s pillows in thick parchment wraps, cards and letters exuding perfume, and rustling sheaves of washi” (4). Basu’s tale of unfulfilled love touches a tender cord in our hearts. It is also a nostalgic tribute to the fast declining art of letter writing and a testimony to humanism.

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RUPTURING THE EPISTEME: A SARTREAN INTERPRETATION OF DOPDI'S ACTION IN MAHASHWETA DEVI'S "DRAUPADI"

Ankita Sharma

Mahashweta Devi's "Draupadi" can be categorized under the "literature of resistance" the purpose of which, according to Sartre, "was not the enjoyment of the reader but his torment. What it presented was not a world to be contemplated, but to be changed" (qtd. in Stern 109). The strength of the story lies in the final section of the story where the voice of male authority fades and Dopdi acts for herself in challenging the man to "(en)counter" her (Spivak, Translator's Foreword 12). Her last act is an act of resistance in which she defies her enemy with the force of an "encounter." For the first time, her enemy, Senanayak, feels fear, the fear of facing an "unarmed target" (37).

Dopdi is a naxalite activist who stands against landlord's oppression. State officials who are on the side of the oppressors succeed to apprehend Dopdi at the end of the story. She is gang raped. When she is asked to wash and clothe herself to go to Senanayak's tent, she insists on going naked. Dopdi stands naked before Senanayak. She turns the terrible wounds of her breasts into a counter offensive and makes a shattering entry into the patriarchal hegemonic structure. It is important to note that after being raped she does not succumb to her bodily cravings of thirst and remains silent. When the soldiers hand her a pot of water, she chooses to pour it on the ground rather than satisfying her thirst. This act is a deliberate protest against and a refusal to accept the position of a victim handed to her. Draupadi directly confronting Senanayak says to him, "What more can you do?" She seems to be telling Senanayak that his methods of torture will not work. His attempts to victimize her will not destroy her emotionally and mentally.

Trauma traditionally refers to the physical piercing or a morbid nervous condition but trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also an enigma of survival. Dopdi's act suggests that survival is the act of re-entering those socio-cultural, political structures that were responsible for the abuse, but with a difference.

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A TOUCH OF FROST: UNDERTONE OF SADNESS IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Nandita Mohapatra

Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught.

– P.B. Shelley, “The Skylark”

Almost all the comedies of Shakespeare are permeated with the conviction that unalloyed joy is unattainable. This is most pronounced in his *Twelfth Night*. This essay argues that an undertone of sadness runs through the play and contributes towards making it one of Shakespeare’s high comedies. As I explore and explain this idea, I focus on the characters, situations and the songs in the play that constitute the structuring principle of the Bard’s high comedies.

Shakespeare’s tragedies grew out of his comedies. In all his tragedies, the comic element is inescapable, be it represented by Polonius in *Hamlet*, the Fool in *Lear* or the Porter in *Macbeth*. Similarly, all his comedies have a tragic thread running through them that lend them certain poignancy. A critical strain marks most comedies. Ben Jonson lashed out at the crimes and follies of the age; Moliere exhibits hypocrisy and snobbery; Ibsen and Shaw expose the dying civilization and the hollow men of their day. But Shakespearean comedy is unique in that it lacked social criticism; Shakespeare got the readers and audience to laugh with the characters rather than at them. His characters often find themselves in absurd and ridiculous situations but they are presented in such a manner that we smile at them indulgently.

The Fool was an institution in Shakespearean drama and Shakespeare used the Fool to produce laughter not only in his comedies but also, later, in his tragedies. The function of the Fool was rather like that of the Chorus in Greek Drama and through him Shakespeare gave his readers and audience an insight into his comic imagination. From the mouths of the fools we are presented some of the deepest and profoundest truths about life which may elude the wisest of men. His observations of life and character are pronounced in such a manner as not to offend anyone but at the same time it has the effect of producing a deep sense of sadness, pathos and poignancy.

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**SUBALTERNITY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN
*ICE-CANDY MAN, TRAIN TO PAKISTAN AND LAJJA***

Monali Bhattacharya

Diversity is the essence of life but unifying and harmonizing the diversity of life is the sanctity of humanity. Yet there is hegemony present everywhere, be it in the religion of mankind, culture of society or geography of earth. The present paper proposes to address this issue of hegemony in the subcontinent in the context of religion and shifting subaltern relations of people amidst changing times.

Religion has played a very important role in creating the present political and socio-cultural environment in the Asian subcontinent. The scars of partition have not healed yet. Whenever there is any strife, post-partition scenario of hatred, oppression and killings is repeated, whether it is in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh. Religious beliefs then become a pathway for creating the subaltern in our society. If it is 1948, Hindus become subaltern in Pakistan, Muslims become in India; if it is 1984, Sikhs become subaltern in India. Even in India also, if it is Aligarh, Hindus become subaltern while if it is Ahmedabad, Muslims become so. Literature is also replete with such examples. Hence in order to bring in peace and harmony in our lives, we need to understand this problem of religion in a wider context. Hindu-Muslim bhai-bhai during peace times and then becoming blood-thirsty for each other during riots shall remain a fact forever.

Three writers - Khushwant Singh from India, Bapsi Sidhwa from Pakistan and Taslima Nasreen from Bangladesh have also projected the same situation of creating subalterns in their respective society owing to diverse religious beliefs. The present paper proposes to base its arguments through three novels of these three writers and find a solution to the problem of religious hegemony. The three novels are: Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* and Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja*. *Train to Pakistan* and *Ice-Candy Man* present the havoc of partition but the theme and its impact is very relevant even today with the scars having become deeper. Same is the case with Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja*.

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A WOMAN OF SHAVIAN VITALITY: ANANYA IN BHAGAT'S 2 STATES

R.A. Vats & Rakhi Sharma

Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation. She sacrifices herself to it... – George Bernard Shaw (330).

Ananya, the woman protagonist of *2 States*, is a woman of vitality because she is equipped with all the traits that a Shavian heroine possesses. It was George Bernard Shaw who promoted the theory of "Life Force" enumerating the vitality in a woman as a blind fury of creation in his novels. Like a Shavian heroine, Ananya submits to her vital force: "I am too ambitious and independent" (Bhagat 213). Krish Malhotra is stunned at her vital force and is intimidated when she publicly kisses him in the presence of her father in the music concert organized by Citibank Chennai. Krish delineates her vitality as of one out of control; she can not be controlled by any man; not even by her own parents who are all unable to resist her actions. She spits at the substandard quality food served in the college mess at IIMA. She speaks so confidently that the mess man first retaliates at high pitch but is later abashed by her strong assertions. It is her attractive personality that wins her the best 1st year girl accolade of the college.

Author of *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ The Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008) and *2 States* (2009), Chetan Bhagat, today, is a mentor to the youths who learn from his protagonists the tips to live life on their own conditions. It is not known whether Bhagat is influenced by Shaw's concept of Life Force but his women characters are full of vitality; they are iconoclasts who take delight in breaking age-old, conventional, conservative, rusted out customs and rituals. They are true Shavian heroines who believe in basic human rights of liberty and equality. The novelist believes that only a self dependent and brave woman can civilize a hitherto man-ruled society which has ever undervalued and tortured women.

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- George Bernard Shaw

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