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**Postcolonial
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Figurative Speaking

**CHIEF EDITOR : NIBIR K. GHOSH
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EDITORIAL

“A University should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning,” stated Benjamin Disraeli. I would like to examine this statement in the context of an event of considerable importance that took place two centuries ago at Oxford University, “the oldest university in the English speaking world [that] has been educating world changing leaders for over 800 years.” Inspired by intense love for scientific reasoning, a beautiful and effectual angel, hailing from the protected precincts of an aristocratic order, dared to sing hymns unbidden in praise of “atheism.” Yes, the reference is to P.B. Shelly and his (in)famous “The Necessity of Atheism,” the thirteen-page tract that led to his expulsion from Oxford University on March 25, 1811.

The pamphlet argued the lack of evidence for the existence of God and suggested that God was just a projection of human ideas. The title page of the tract displayed his avowed purpose in writing it: “love of truth.” Far from being impressed by his innocent demand for qualified reasoning, the presiding dons at Oxford – “the men who had made Divinity the study of their lives” – found his reasoning reprehensible and asked him in an abruptly summoned summary trial, “Are you the author of this book?” The impetuous one curtly replied: “If I can judge from your manner, you are resolved to punish me if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence; it is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a court of inquisitors, but not free men in a free country.”

In a letter written to William Godwin, his future father-in-law, Shelley recorded his complaint of college tyranny in no uncertain terms: “Oxonian society was insipid to me, uncongenial with my habits of thinking. I could not descend to common life...I became in the popular sense of the word ‘God’ an Atheist. I printed a pamphlet avowing my opinion, and its occasion. I distributed it anonymously to men of thought and learning wishing that Reason should decide on the case at issue. It was never my intention to deny it.” Perhaps Shelley was unaware how, even in the heyday of the Romantic age, when to be young was very heaven, such thoughts were blasphemous.

Strangely coinciding with the bicentenary year of Shelley’s expulsion from Oxford University, we may shift our gaze to an event located in the capital town of the world’s largest democracy. Showing scant regard for the ideals of “light, liberty and learning,” the Vice Chancellor

and the Academic Council of Delhi University brazenly removed A.K. Ramunjan's brilliant and insightful essay, "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation," from the B.A. (Honours) History course. The controversy came to the fore in the year 2008 when some activists, inspired by their concern for saving "Hindutwa," attacked teachers in the Delhi University's history department and demanded that the essay be removed from the B.A. History syllabus. The matter finally landed up in the Supreme Court which sought the opinion of an academic expert committee on the issue. Surprisingly, three out of four members on the said committee voted in favour of the essay. The lone dissenting voice was that of the fourth member who, while praising the essay's scholarship, came to the conclusion that "it would be difficult for college lecturers to teach with sufficient context, especially those who weren't Hindu." It may be pertinent to mention here the remarks of Professor Michael Shapiro, University of Washington, Seattle, who, responding to my "Editorial" in the March 2012 issue of *Re-Markings*, stated: "I enjoyed what you had to say and agree with you totally. By the way, your article made me reflect on all the nonsense that's been taking place at Delhi University with regard to A.K. Ramanujan's old article on the various versions of the *Ramayana*. There seems to be no end of craziness."

Such craziness, however, is not a rare instance in the general atmosphere of intolerance that prevails in our groves of academe. In very recent times Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* was removed from Mumbai University's literature syllabus simply because it allegedly contained some "disparaging" comments about "Shiv Sena and the Marathis." No less absurd is the logic forwarded by the powers that be in removing the sixty-year old Ambedkar cartoon from NCERT books. The price paid by Professor Ambikesh Mahapatra of Jadavpur University for circulating a cartoon featuring Trinamool Congress leaders is common knowledge now. Robert Frost's candid confession that he left Harvard "to be educated" does make a lot of sense.

Disturbing events that threaten to destroy the very rationale of intellectual autonomy in democratic societies do urge us to reformulate Benjamin Disraeli's statement to accommodate the express views of Doris Lessing, the Nobel Laureate: "In university they don't tell you that the greater part of the law is learning to tolerate fools."

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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**ALLEN GINSBERG:
UN-PARALLELED PERIPATETIC POET**

Jonah Raskin

He traveled by air, car, bus, boat, train, and even on foot thousands of miles every year for fifty years. Wherever he traveled he wrote poems beginning in the 1940s and continuing until his death in 1996. He was the most peripatetic, popular American poet in the twentieth century and he wrote in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, North America and Australia. The only continent where he didn't write was Antarctica. Poetry was in his blood and if any one American boy seemed to be destined to grow up in the twentieth century and to become a famous poet it was Allen Ginsberg.

I knew him briefly. We met in New York in 1971 and became acquainted with one another in 1985 and again in 1990. I invited him to Sonoma State University where I taught and where he performed before a live audience. Generous with his time and truly caring, he reached out to undergraduates, gave them writing exercises, encouraged them to "quarrel with themselves" and make poems from those quarrels. Good advice! Challenging to do.

A virtuoso artist, he performed his poetry as much as 300 times a year all over the world year after year. From the time he was a boy, he learned to appreciate the power of the spoken word from his father, and later from William Carlos Williams, the modernist and imagist, who emphasized the importance of regional and local roots and who read his poetry in a genteel way.

Allen Ginsberg's father, Louis, was also a poet, as was his older brother, Eugene; mother, Naomi, was an artist and a storyteller though also mentally unbalanced. Louis Ginsberg introduced his younger son to popular American poets of the 1920s and 1930s such as Vachel Lindsay and Edwin Arlington Robinson, as well as to Milton and Shelley, and, by the time he was in high school, Allen Ginsberg was publishing his own verse and writing enthusiastic essays about Walt Whitman and Carl Sandberg.

- **Jonah Raskin**, a frequent contributor to Re-Markings, is the author of 14 books. *American Scream*, his study of Allen Ginsberg, has just been translated into Chinese and published in China.

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SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY

Sushil Gupta

Of the various figures of speech the most popular among the writers are simile and metaphor. A simile is an expressed comparison, while a metaphor is an implied one. "She is as beautiful as a rose" would be a simile, "She is a rose" is a metaphor. Both draw upon a comparison of two things of two different categories. Thus "Sonu was as tall as Monu" is not a simile, but "Sonu was as tall as a lamppost" is.

Analogy, too, uses comparison to make a subject accessible in terms of a familiar example. "The relation between husband and wife is very like that between lord and vassal..." (John Stuart Mill). Whereas simile and metaphor are employed as embellishments, analogy is used in an argument to explain or clarify a point. If they were attending a fancy ball analogy would be masquerading in a jazzy costume as simile, while simile with a hand-held eye-mask would be trying to pass off as metaphor.

Embellishment is often, if not always, the intent behind a simile. It enhances the original and makes it more vivid. It almost functions as an illustration. The subject of the simile is called the tenor, and the image to which it is compared is called the vehicle, terms coined by I.A. Richards.

When the *Bible* proclaims, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," one visualizes a huge creature trying to squeeze his way through a narrow aperture. The utter hopelessness of the venture is obvious and yet this would be easier than a rich man gaining entry into heaven. Indeed, poverty was looked upon as a great virtue in biblical times!

Don Marquis thinks "publishing a volume of verse is like dropping a rose petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo." The ingenuity of the simile, invoking a rich visual image of a soft petal floating down the yawning abyss of the Grand Canyon waiting for the futile prospect of hearing an echo, conveys the poet's despair at the tepid response to poetry.

- **Professor Sushil Gupta** taught English at P.G.D.A.V. College, Delhi University. He is the author of *The Fourth Monkey*.

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SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN* AND THE WORLD OF IMAGI-NATION

Abraham P. Abraham

Nations are 'imagined.' - Benedict Anderson

History is a favorite theme for postcolonial writers who often find the need to negotiate, understand, and recover from their traumatic past. In order to depict their concerns, these writers usually refer to the idea of a nation. Reclaiming history and retaining certain memories are important for the postcolonial condition. Postcolonial writers like Rushdie do this task by taking their readers to a world of make-believe or of imagination where history appears to be true. The narrative is often like our thoughts – leaky, uncertain and digressive, neither organized linearly, nor do they claim any originality.

Benedict Anderson's thesis that nations are 'imagined' points out that literature is at the center of 'imagining.' The novel is a literary form for 're-presenting' a kind of imagined community that eventually becomes the nation and it is a process of imagination. This does not mean real places and people do not exist. It only means that we can 'connect' to people from the unexplored parts of the territory only by imagining them. The present paper will focus on how Rushdie has done this task in his Booker winning novel *Midnight's Children* by a masterful blending of fiction, politics, magic and memory. According to Rushdie, the birth of the Indian nation is "an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate...a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will – except in a dream we all agreed to dream....India, the new myth – a collective fiction, in which anything was possible, a fable rivaled only by the two other mighty fantasies – money and God" (111). He further writes in his essay, "Imagined Homeland": "After all, in all the thousands of years of Indian history, there never was such a creature as a united India. Nobody ever managed to rule the whole place, not the Mughals, not the British.

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REWORKING DISRUPTIONS INTO HARMONY

Mini Nanda

The golden rule of conduct...is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall always see Truth in fragments and from different angles of vision....The only possible rule of conduct in any civilized society is, therefore, mutual toleration. – M.K. Gandhi

Friendship governed the conduct between the Hindus and the Muslims for generations as Mumtaz Shah Nawaz in *The Heart Divided* (1957) and Attia Hosain in *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) depict. Hosain writes about the Taluqdar Baba Jan in Lucknow and his Hindu, Muslim and British friends. Thakur Balbir Singh, called "Hastey Dada" by Laila the narrator, never ate any meals with Baba Jan, but as his name signifies he enjoyed a cheerful, warm relationship. As did Raja Hasan Ahmed of Amirpur called "Motey Dada" and the Englishman Mr. Freemantle¹ – the third part of the troika of friends, called "Gorey Dada." He was a successful lawyer, a great scholar of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. These people reflected the *Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb* of the times and shared a syncretic relationship. There was celebration of Eid, Holi and Diwali.

Ashiana (home or nest) symbolises the space which graciously provides a home and shelter to each one. Nevertheless, there is hierarchy in Ashiana, as well as in the world outside. The drawing room which united the two wings of the house had a mirror in it. Laila the fifteen year old narrator would look into the mirror and the mirror image was important for she lived on two levels, the inner and the outer. Her inner world would always be crowded with questions and in the outer world sometimes she would mingle with joy and at other times she would be detached. She would inhale the perfume in the air and hear the jingle of ankle-bells which others could not.

As a quiet observer Laila perceives her school teacher Mrs. Martin as an imperialist anti-thesis to Freemantle. Martin refers to England as 'Home'; though she had been there only once, she finds Indian people "primitive" and longs for 'European' company.

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**COETZEE'S *LIFE AND TIMES OF MICHAEL K*:
AN ECO-CRITICAL APPROACH TO
EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS**

C. Kannammal

Realization comes through the physical experience of matters in life; revelation happens when an individual involves in the process of living through intuition and inner urge. An individual's involvement is possible in any field when there is a harmonious interrelationship between the individual and the society, both human and natural. The core of every being is vibrant with an unquenchable thirst and quest of human spirit seeking its genesis: may it be one's native soil or one's own society or family. It is this spirit that dignifies the individual soul with pride and prestige and sustains it with the power of resilience. J.M. Coetzee juxtaposes two different patterns of life in his fiction *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) that helps to substantiate both 'realisation' and 'revelation' in the light of Eco-critical study.

Before dilating into the problem and the character, it is important to understand the underlying principle of eco-criticism. The terms 'Nature' and 'Ecology' are analogous. The great scientists of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking, construe nature as the whole universe including the earth and its creatures and all the stars, planets etc., in space. In Sanskrit, the word 'nature' is referred to as "Brahma+Ananda" meaning *Panchamaha Bhutani* i.e. five primary elements of creation: earth, water, fire, air and sky. Nature can also be represented as "Prakriti" (the primal matter or substance) from which the physical and mental universe evolves under the influence of "Purusha" i.e. "self."

The term 'Ecology' originates from the Greek word 'Oikos' meaning 'house' which accommodates everything. Thus ecology deals with the relations and the interactions between organisms and their environment including other organisms. Hence eco-critical approach refers to the study of the interrelationship, the interactions and the close bond between man and nature. The term 'human ecology' stands for the relationship and interactions among human beings.

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BEYOND BELIEF: V.S. NAIPAUL'S SECOND ISLAMIC JOURNEY

Prakash Chandra Pradhan

V.S. Naipaul's *Beyond Belief* deals with complexity of governance of four non-Arab converted Islamic states where the leaders, while sticking to Islamic faith largely, are also influenced by late twentieth-century political and economic ideas. They cannot reject these ideas outright even if they follow the medieval religious beliefs. They have to implement some of these important trends to take the country forward like other modern nations. Even the deprived and marginalized people understand that their conditions can only be improved when the political and religious leaders sit together to integrate the policies of governance with human values rather than merely practicing/following the irrelevant, obsolete religious beliefs.

Beyond Belief deals with Naipaul's firsthand experiences and interactions during his visit to Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. He diagnoses complex cultures of these Islamic countries. It is the sequel to his earlier travelogue *Among the Believers*. Naipaul finds Islam as imperialism because it destroys all the past of 'converted' cultures. For Muslims, their faith is more important than anything else. This seems to be a self-acclaimed truth for them. Through his long interviews with Imaduddin, Naipaul understands that Islam and science are contradictory and incompatible. He attempts to present a disturbing image of the Muslim world. Followers of Islam are repeatedly referred to as violent, irrational, void and confused.

Naipaul's emphasis on the loss of identity of Muslim converts is noteworthy: "A convert's world-view alters. His holy places are in Arab lands; his sacred language is Arabic. His idea of history alters. He regrets his own; he becomes...a part of the Arab story. The country has to turn away from everything that is his"(1). The four sections in *Beyond Belief* are integral and continuous to form a whole. Through the lively interactions with a number of characters, a deeper insight about the state of a particular country emerges. All the sections together bring out a clear vision of Third world Islamic countries.

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INTERROGATING THE SELF: DORIS LESSING'S *THE SUMMER BEFORE THE DARK*

Supriya Agarwal

The Summer Before the Dark takes up the narrative of a woman who is at a phase when her children have grown up and now resent being mothered. She is at a midpoint of her life when everyone else has individual plans for the summer while she finds herself at a loose end. For more than twenty years she has given herself up to her marriage, putting aside all her native talents for a career of performing motherly and wifely roles. Kate Brown is on the verge of growing old when she begins her journey of self-discovery, which leads to an acute searching of her lost self and personality. She gradually sheds off some of the masks, disguises, roles, attitudes and customs, which she had adhered to in life, laying bare the crucial issues of feminism. In the character of Kate Brown, the writer has identified femininity with a number of undesirable attributes like passivity, dependence, indecisiveness and a propensity for excessive self-sacrifice, which are viewed as a kind of disorder or mental illness and for which women need treatment. From the very beginning we sense conflict in the protagonist's personality that is torn between the expected role model of a mother and wife and her desire to understand and identify her own individuation.

Doris Lessing consistently refuses to follow a prescribed line or to become a spokesperson for any kind of movement but the swing in her novels emphasizes a social and critical evolution. It seems that her principal interest lies not in any specific ideology or empirical truth about any section of society but in the nature of change itself. Ruth Whittaker, who has analyzed a few of her novels, says: "she has never been a feminist rather she is a woman novelist whose antennae sensed the crucial issues of feminism and wrote about them long before they were common currency" (Whittaker 9). Contrasting the nineteenth-century options for a woman to get married, have children and live happily thereafter, Lessing has looked at woman's personal identity from a changed perspective; questioning the old values of dying for love and romanticism, she has focused on the evolution of consciousness and various psychoanalytical issues.

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CULINARY CULTURE AS SYMBOL IN SELECT NOVELS OF AMITAV GHOSH

Nazia Hasan

Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity. - Voltaire

A great deal of scholarly activities concerning food happening now-a-days marks an important juncture in the world culture. These studies relate to all the varied and nuanced aspects of food. If some discuss food shortage and scarcity, others bring out complete books on food varieties, food culture, food habits and of course, culinary recipes. India also boasts of Sunday supplements and TV channels dedicated to food tourism now as regular feature. We have come a long way from the 'Last Supper' ideologue and yet we can't be oblivious to the fact that food holds the magic "to unite all humans" (Counihan and Esterik 08) even today. We are living in the era of complex life style running on the pace of a devilish hurly burly where the Sunday has changed from Sabbath to that for the six days' purgatory and Saturday evening is a rewarding leisure to the level of a luxury. Yet still, the idea of dining tables filled with food remains an 'unchanged' ideal when it comes to a feast. Even a sumptuous and all embracing meal like *Biryani* becomes marginalized in the hoard of side dishes! The moralists will definitely interpret it as the burgeoning sin of gluttony! The previously private larder or the modern time 'cuisine' has definitely become a symbol – a powerful lens of analysing various facets and aspects of a society and the world at large.

Though this paper doesn't promise a full meal, my effort has been to study the various culinary choices made in some of the novels by Amitav Ghosh as symbolic, as obvious reflection of 'situations' as claimed Roland Barthes (Barthes 21), the great linguist and theorist. In this view, our common 'bread' of everyday life becomes a statement of culture, class, gender and power at the same time. *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh published in 1988 has a reference to "egg-omlette" and its prime position on the list of quick refreshments prepared for any unannounced guest in the lower middle class families.

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NATURE AS AGENT OF DESTINY IN A.K. RAMANUJAN'S POETRY

Gunjan Agarwal

A.K. Ramanujan paid attention to the realistic aspects of life. His poetry is really a beautiful piece of cynical criticism aimed at poets who force themselves to look only at the beautiful things of life and tend to ignore the unpleasant facets of life. Many of Ramanujan's poems in *Striders*, *Relations*, *Second Sight*, *The Black Hen*, reveal the fact that nature is akin to man and his life is very much affected by nature, an agent of destiny. His poems like "Army Ants," "August," "On not Learning from Animals," "Turning Around," "Christmas," "It Does not Follow," "But When in The Street," "Small Scale Reflections on a Great House," "Obituary," "Love Poem for a Wife and Her Trees" etc. present positive aspects of nature. "Elements of Compositions" throws light on the nature of human body. It is made up of five elements – fire, water, air, soil and soul and finally it merges into nature. Thus nature is a creator as well as a destroyer. Ramanujan mentions an image of a caterpillar in the poem "Elements of Composition." In the process of eating leaf, it ruins itself: "Caterpillar on a leaf, eating,/ Being eaten (CP 123).

Though maintaining his positive outlook towards life and nature, Ramanujan has given a graphic picture of destructivity through nature. His poetry reclaims man's evolutionary past and proclaims its kinship with the animal, vegetal, and mineral worlds. Parthasarathy recognizes nature as "an individual voice" in Ramanujan's poetry (194). Dom Moraes opines that Ramanujan represents a sensibility which is aware of the "world as it is" and an Indo-Anglian poet whose competence in the use of the English language is of a high order (Moraes 26).

Ramanujan observes with deep insight the natural phenomena that lies around him and in his poems one can find frequent references to various aspects of nature. He writes on trees, flowers, mountains, snakes, birds, ants, bees and many other objects. Showing no blind reverence for old myths and tradition, Ramanujan makes an effort to penetrate beyond the veil of illusion and unfold the grim truth behind the devastation caused by the river in the poem "A River."

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POSTCOLONIAL IMPERIALISM: 9/11 AND IRAQ II

Sanjay Mishra

Writing about the Anglo-American wars against Iraq and Afghanistan in his thought-provoking essay, "The Imperialism of Our Time," Aijaz Ahmad describes the current occupation of Iraq as post-colonial imperialism (Ahmad 233). It may not be a formal empire but empires without colonies have existed throughout history. Interestingly, this colonization is free of colonial rule and is ostensibly antithetical to it; it is, in fact, imperialism of the global capital. 9/11 gave an excuse to America to practise the policy of intervention in the affairs of other countries and thus further its capitalistic and imperialistic motives and plans. In this connection, it is relevant to read what John Stuart Mill, the renowned British economist and social philosopher, wrote in his essay titled "A Few words on Non-Intervention" in 1859. In this essay, he criticised the British Empire which was then the most powerful imperial force in the world and was obviously the product of active intervention in the affairs of the rest of the world. He wrote:

To go to war for an idea, if the war is aggressive, not defensive, is as criminal as to go to war for territory or revenue; for it is as little justifiable to force our ideas on other people as to compel them to submit to our will in any other respect (Brown 488).

Mill's advocacy of non-intervention as a principled policy is very pertinent in appraising the recent American war against Iraq in the wake of the terrorist attack on World Trade Centres and Pentagon in America on September 11, 2001.

No one can deny that the events of 9/11 were truly catastrophic and shook the human world with the most horrendous act of violence. The terrorists who perpetrated it have been and must be condemned in the harshest terms and they should be punished for their crime. On 9/11, America suffered; America was hurt; it bled; and, most crucially, given its acknowledged status of world's superpower with super-fortress security, America was humiliated most brazenly.

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PARSI IDENTITY IN THE NOVELS OF ROHINTON MISTRY

Hardeep Singh Mann

The Parsis in India have continually encountered the problem of orientation and positioning themselves. For them identification and aloofness have gone hand-in-hand ever since their migration to India. T.M. Luhrmann remarks about the Parsis that “the most remarkable character of this remarkable community is its intense ambivalence about its place in India”(46). On the one hand, Parsis have nurtured a sense of elitism and consider themselves superior to their fellow Indians. On the other, they are also aware of their position as a minority in decline in postcolonial India.

Legend has it that when Parsis sought refuge at Sanjan, after they fled Persia, the local monarch refused them asylum on the pretext of lack of space in the kingdom to accommodate them. He presented before the Dastūr leading the refugees an urn filled with milk up to the brim to symbolise the unavailability of space. The Dastūr, who was a wise man, took off a gold ring from his finger and carefully dropped it into the urn without letting the milk spill. Another version of the legend says that the Dastūr put a pinch of sugar into the milk urn.

Overt identification with the British during the colonial rule gave birth to a sense of superiority to the Parsis among the native Indians. They developed habits, tastes and mannerisms after the manner of the British. The proximity to the British resulted in automatic distancing from the natives. Luhrmann notes: “...they committed themselves thoroughly to a non-Indian sensibility”(1). The lighter tone of their skin, markedly better proficiency in English and tracing back of their Persian lineage further propelled the Parsis to view themselves as racially and intellectually superior. Added to this was their economic success during the British rule. The Parsis, thus, view themselves as the “gold ring,” placing themselves on a higher pedestal vis-à-vis the native Indians.

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NARRATIVIZING EMANCIPATORY GEOGRAPHY IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

Sanjay Solanki

When Hardy used Wessex – whose landscape soared to poetic heights when he mused about Casterbridge town, “deposited in a block on a cornfield” – or Emily Bronte used haunting rugged moors to lay her plots in, they certainly espoused and even corroborated the significance of the charm that topography of a locality works on the destinies of its inhabitants. But in contemporary literature this influence appears to have been majestically enhanced manifold. As Young puts it, “nomadism is rather one brutal characteristic mode of capitalism itself” (53). It is not irrelevant to add that this nomadism can be both forced and optional though any kind of permeating separation is illusionary. The pain of such routings is written across the landscape of our rich, enrapturing works of literature. It is the attempt the unsettled ones make to find meaning of/in their lives that evoke such critical insights: “How rich our mutability, how easily we change (and are changed) from one thing to another, how unstable our place – and all because of the missing foundation of our existence, the lost ground of our origin, the broken link with our land and our past” (Said qtd. in Young 11). Although Edward Said’s context here was Palestinian struggles, his thought is perforce true of every one uprooted from the soil. The ‘never never nest’ that they build invariably craves the tail of lost history on account of geographical disruption.

The Hungry Tide is a narrative of the categorical presence of nature and its casually neglected determinate influence in the narratives. The lack of human understanding of the same determines his response like the fluid boundaries of Sunderban landscape where one cannot long identify one or the other and the interaction between man and nature is an ontological nightmare; lack of understanding and communicatory foothold between them leaves the place a virtual deathbed, even statistically. Sundarban, the beautiful forest, is an archipelago.

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NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE OF MAILER'S *THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG*

Arun Soule

Among the many reasons for the acclaim of *The Executioner's Song* (1979), the most notable was the unique style of narration that Norman Mailer adopted for this book. In this book, Mailer has focused on the nine months between Gary's release on parole from the Illinois State Penitentiary and his execution by a firing squad for killing Max Jensen and Benny Bushnell.

The book is divided into two parts, "Western Voices" – in which the main characters are introduced along with the major events, and "Eastern Voices" – in which the characters that were acquainted with Gary are developed. The first portion of the book tells of Gary's release from prison and of his stay with his relatives, his meetings with friends including his meeting with Nicole Baker who plays a major role later in his life. Though Gary and Nicole are very happy for some time, their relationship gradually starts deteriorating and leads to Nicole's separation from Gary. A frustrated and angry Gary searches for Nicole all over the city and ends up murdering Jensen and Bushnell. This is followed by Gary's subsequent arrest and his demand for the death sentence.

The book then moves onto the next section, "Eastern Voices" which includes the appearance of the mass media people who come to Utah just before Gary's execution. There is excitement in this small peaceful town with the coming of journalists and people who are interested in making a profit from Gilmore's story.

In the beginning Dennis Boaz, a local lawyer, had Gary's confidence but when professional media men enter the scene, Boaz is forced to make way for them. The media people from David Susskind and Bill Moyers to Jimmy Breslin and from the networks like ABC, CBS and NBC to magazines like *Playboy* and *The National Enquirer* are all engaged in cut-throat competition to acquire rights to the Gilmore story.

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MALGUDI IN R.K. NARAYAN'S NOVELS

Mohammad Shaukat Ansari

R.K. Narayan is regarded as one of the three leading Indian English fiction writers along with Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. He is credited with bringing Indian writing in English to the rest of the world. His greatest achievement was in making India accessible to the outside world through his fictional works. In addition, he gave his readers something to look forward to with Malgudi and its residents. He brought small-town India to his readers in a manner that was both believable and experiential. Malgudi was not just a fictional town in India but one teeming with characters, each with his own idiosyncrasies and attitudes, making the situation as familiar to the readers as if it were their own backyard.

R.K. Narayan is a regional novelist par excellence. Malgudi is his magnificent locale. As the "Lake District" in Wordsworth, "Wessex" in Hardy, "Pottery Towns" in Arnold Bennett, Narayan's Malgudi has its own distinct individuality. It occurs and reoccurs in his novels and short stories with the remarkable changes, variations and sparks of development.

During his long writing career of about fifty years, Narayan produced about a dozen novels, above a hundred and fifty short-stories, a few autobiographical works and condensed prose-versions of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in English. His career as a novelist started with the publication of his first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935). He sent the manuscript of the novel to his friend Purna at Oxford. Graham Greene who was approached by Purna was sufficiently impressed by it and recommended this to Hamish Hamilton who reviewed and published it. In this novel, R.K. Narayan discovered and created the unforgettable region Malgudi. *Swami and Friends* has had a universal appeal because in it India is seen through an Indian eye.

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LINGUISTIC CHOICES IN SARAH ORNE JEWETT'S "A WHITE HERON": A DIALOGUE BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE

Archana Parashar

Sarah Orne Jewett's work depicts close connection between man and nature. In "A White Heron" it is especially clear that this connection is but part of a larger, truly transcendental vision uniting man not only with green nature but with animal life as well, the past with the present, and one human sensibility with another. The harmony with nature that Jewett has successfully expressed in her stories appears to suggest that she used the material in order to recognize her own inherent tendency of closeness with nature. The woods and fields and beaches of coastal Maine gave Jewett a refuge from urban conventions and companionship.

Richard Gary, speaking of Jewett's work in general, observes her thematic use of nature, her use of analogy and symbol and adds that she "does not hesitate to commit the pathetic fallacy when she wishes to emphasize the oneness of man and nature."¹ A closer look at Jewett's linguistic choices reveals an underlying strategy for the rich variety of ways in which she projects her vision. The surprising correspondences and unities she forges between plant, animal and human life, between past and present, and between the consciousnesses of different human beings, are basic to the dilemma of the tale. Briefly, Sylvia the nine-year old heroine who lives in the country with her grandmother and an assortment of wild and tame animals, is tempted by an engaging young man to tell him where the white heron nests that he might shoot and stuff the bird, a particularly coveted specimen. When the time comes to tell the secret she has worked hard to learn, "Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away."² Jewett's narrator refrains from explicitly applauding or criticizing the girl's decision and makes it clear that long afterward Sylvia misses the handsome young man perhaps she has lost her one opportunity to experience love in the wider world.

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SPATIAL PRACTICES AND CERTEAU'S *THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE*

Navleen Multani

Michel de Certeau¹ brings out the significance of the everyday phenomena which otherwise seem to be superficial. As each individual is an incoherent plurality of the sociological, economic, psychological and other determinants and ostensibly a passive "consumer" in a globalized order, Certeau analyzes the everyday practices and reveals an operational logic in the practices of the passive consumers who by poaching in countless ways are capable of creating a space for themselves. His analysis of these practices aims at empowering the marginalized as he explains how the passive consumers could resist the dominant order by using the practices of speaking, writing and reading to bring desired changes in the system oppressing them. By drawing analogies to different disciplines of knowledge, Certeau proves the inherent strength of spatial practices to transform minority into majority, thereby restructuring the social, economic and political order.

The Practice of Everyday Life outlines the ways individuals unconsciously navigate from city streets to literary texts, poach on the territory of others to recombine rules and products of the established order, and use "tactics"² to create a space for themselves in environments defined by "strategies" or manipulations/calculations of power relationships. When tactics are used by the passive consumers, "consumption" leads to hidden production. These passive users are the ordinary people who resist the order by being a part of it and bring changes through everyday practices from utilitarian objects to street plans, rituals, law and language in order to make them their own. Because these everyday practices manifest the tactical methods of the ordinary – helping them to resist conformity (and uniformity) and reclaim autonomy from the all-pervasive forces of commerce, politics and culture – Certeau calls them spatial practices.

He asserts that the everyday practices are ways of operating which involve a way of making, a way of thinking and a way of acting capable of reorganizing a given social order.

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**SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS IN TAGORE'S PLAYS:
*RED OLEANDERS AND THE POST OFFICE***

Madhabi Sen

Rabindranath Tagore's creativity rose to its zenith between 1881-1933, though the poet was prolific till the end, writing poems, novels and renovating his dramatic works. He did not remain confined to Indian thought and style. As he travelled around the world, he became acquainted with the then contemporary authors and painters. The contemporary 'isms' which dominated the compositions of the Western artists and writers i.e. expressionism, impressionism, symbolism appeared in various forms in his writings. In India, he was the first artist to use the Western modernistic outlook of expressionism in his works.

Being well aware of the symbolic movement, Tagore wrote symbolic plays. He expressed his spiritual realization through symbolic figures and incidents. His dramatic work is the vehicle of ideas rather than expression of action. He watched the abrupt change in style during and after the First World War but he could not adopt the crudeness and ugliness of mere reality. Though he tried his hand at various mediums with modern expression, beauty remained an indomitable agent in the delineation of poverty and oppression.

Tagore's plays are generally symbolic. Sometimes they are allegorical as they give form to some abstract ideas. His plays extend towards the infinite. Symbolic plays give form to abstract ideas. There are rare events in the materialistic world. Loud and boisterous activities do not take place often; rather silent symbols carry out the action. In such plays more emphasis is laid on situations than on activities. Through structure, expansion, light and darkness a real situation is projected.

Tagore's *Red Oleanders* is a symbolic drama; the Communistic idea which was hovering through European and Oriental countries also penetrates the plays. The dissatisfaction of labour that was brewing in some parts of the world also caught his attention. The playwright of *Balmiki Pratibha* and *Chandalika* metaphorically described the contemporary injustice and distraction in *Red Oleanders*.

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**‘FINDING MYSELF IN ANOTHER’:
Eskia MPHABLELE’S *CHIRUNDU***

Yashoda Kumari Verma & Deepa S.P. Mathur

African writers have delved deep into the reasons for being alienated. In this arena Eskia Mphahlele, a freedom fighter for Africans, posits a vantage point as how this concept of exile affects the individual as a whole even after the political independence and how they remain secluded in their homes. The focus of Mphahlele’s writings is evident from his statement: “It has been my fate to be a teacher and writer....I come from a country where for virtually two centuries the people of colour have, as a deliberate policy, been denied the freedom of association, assembly, thought, inquiry, and self-expression. For this reason I have treasured and savored every moment when I could snatch any one of the freedoms. We are still reeling from the nightmare life has been for the majority population – the oppressed and dispossessed” (Mphahlele 1993: 179). As a result, he constantly feels the need for self-renewal and self-creation in communion with people of his own kind.

Eskia Mphahlele’s *Chirundu* (1979) is a genuine story of bigamy that he came across during his stay in Zambia from 1968 to 1970. He read in the newspaper about a cabinet minister who was being prosecuted for bigamy. On this framework the fundamental keynote of the novel proceeds. It is all about the depiction of the plight of women that motivates a bold personality like Tirenje assert her self. It expresses the need to write about black abuse of power within dominant patriarchal societies. The novel deals with the experimental use of narration representing socio-ideological voices, diverse professions, classes, and generations. These elements come to the fore with the involvement of Chirundu, Minister of Transport and Public Works in Zambia, in bigamy. Tirenje who is the legal wife of Chirundu charges against him for bigamy as a crime. It brings to light Mphahlele’s effort to empower black resistance movements.

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POETRY

TWO POEMS

Muyeed Javeed

THEY NEVER CAME AGAIN

(Tr. P. Laxminarayana)

They never came again to meet me – my dear ones
They are now part of dust and merged with deep dust
The destination is far off
But my blistered feet never stops
O greedy city, how to quench thy morbid thirst
The body is wounded and my soul endangered
How truth has unique face of innocence
While falsehood displays many faces of fancy
O dear! Bestow mercy upon poverty-stricken masses
It is difficult to get even one morsel of food
Javeed tell me whom to ask
Why crystals surrendered their selves to the stones.

NEW AGE VISIONARY

(Tr. Aisha Mahmood Farooqui)

O, unwise and heedless soul,
In a concert of conceit and falsehood manifest
A flag bearer of truth achieves naught.
Heed – it's time
To truth and truthfulness bid adieu
Indulge in flattery and goods of life
Transform and recant old ways
Your meteoric rise – lo and behold!
Resolve and act
Whither this insinuation?
'Tis new age visionary
Guiding you to consciousness
Rooted in the new world.

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REVIEW ESSAY

‘EDUCATION OF MINGO’: CROSSING THE PASSAGE BETWEEN SELF AND OBJECT

Javaid Iqbal Bhat

In one of his interviews, Charles Johnson, an award-winning African American novelist, shares the content of his epitaph. There will be no words inscribed on the tombstone, just a “Taoist symbol” (100), of a person travelling on the Path, a symbol that is also present on the title page of his novel *Oxherding Tale*. In many ways this symbol is emblematic of the unique oeuvre of Charles Johnson. His fiction is not of the conventional style and substance. It is, to put it simply, philosophical fiction. It does remain faithful to the root meaning of philosophy, i.e., love of wisdom. That love has put Johnson on the Path, a continual search amidst the apparent chaos of ideas, perceptions and sensibilities. It has been one long journey of spiritual search which has drawn him towards Buddhism, wherein Gautam Buddha, long ago, laid out the Eight Fold Path toward self-realization or eventual Enlightenment. The symbol on the epitaph will take his admirers back to the ideas Johnson has sought to realize and propagate through his fiction as well as the way he has lived his life.

The book *Charles Johnson: Embracing the World* edited by Nibir K. Ghosh and E. Ethelbert Miller includes essays, interviews and poems, which, in their own ways, reflect on the life and letters of Charles Johnson. An important section of the book includes interviews with the author by Geoffrey Michael Davis and Shayla Hawkins. Then there are two conversations with the novelist recorded by the editor Nibir K. Ghosh and Chris Thomson. In these interviews and conversations, one can experience a direct contact with Johnson’s mind at work. He tells us about his life as a student in the Washington University at St. Louis, how he came under of the influence of John Gardner, how he had to negotiate among the roles of husband, father and son, and at the same time rise to the expectations of his readers, who early on experienced his special flair for novel writing. He shares his growing curiosity towards classical philosophy and wonders how such an important field of study is no longer a requirement for the Bachelor’s degree at most colleges. Philosophy, after all, is the field from which, in many ways, the disciplines of “Physics, psychology, ethics, biology, logic, political theory, religion, ethics, aesthetics” (123) are derived. He shares with Michael Davis his sensitivity towards the “interconnected-

ness of all life, how all things are interwoven, and you might say my oeuvre is on one level simply about revealing those threads that connect us all” (30).

The eight essays by Charles Johnson in this collection take forward the theme of Path and interconnectedness even further, even as they flesh out other important areas of interest of this eminent author whose novel *Middle Passage* won the National Book Award in 1990, being only the second African American after Ralph Ellison, who had won it in 1953. In his essay “The Meaning of Barack Obama” Johnson writes, quite presciently, how Obama is that “blank slate”(118) on which many visceral longings have been projected. He is the symbol of that interconnectedness through which the dreams of diverse institutions and groups can be easily telescoped. If viewed from a Buddhist perspective, Johnson is not so much as a revolutionary phenomenon as an evolutionary one who wants to nudge us towards the final dissolution of dualisms and binaries. In his brief essay on the relationship between M.K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., Johnson talks of the essentially Gandhian moment in King’s life when he heard of his house having been bombed during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956. His followers had gathered outside his ruined home. They were angry and would have let out their rage against the white policemen, but King true to the Gandhian ideal of non-violence, asked them to go to their homes without harming anyone. These essays by the author along with “Kamadhatu, A Modern Sutra” and “The Elusive Art of ‘Mindfulness’” guide us into Johnson’s ongoing intellectual interests and artistic ventures. His engagement with Buddhism is now three decades old. In the latter essay he writes about the Buddhist idea of “mindfulness,” that “delightful modulation of consciousness and temporality, experienced only in the here and the *now*, with no concern at all for the unrecoverable past or a future that never comes” (203).

In his conversation with Nibir K. Ghosh, recorded in 2003 in Seattle, Johnson speaks highly of the Harlem Renaissance. The Renaissance marked a break with the nineteenth-century experiences and representations of the Negro. A “New Negro” was born” (135) away from the images and experiences of the South. Though Johnson is optimistic about the transition that America and African Americans are making, he is not so optimistic about the racial relations. For the idea of race has to do with dualisms that have ravaged relationships across different cultures. Race is rooted in the binary of the Self and the Other; unless that is transcended it is impossible to vanquish the racial equations as they exist even today.

The scholarly essays on Johnson's work provide a rich fare of perspectives and analyses. The essay "The Black American Narrative Continued" by John B. Parks draws on similarities among Charles Johnson, the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla, and the author of the essay. Parks states that he shares with Johnson the idea of "epistemological humility" (215), an essential premise of which is that historical inquiry is based in individual subjectivities. Also, for Parks, this humility stems from the idea that there is nothing which cannot be subjected to questioning. The author terms these individual narratives, based in limited subjectivities, as "epistemological missions" (216), implying that he, Charles Johnson and the Italian humanist have their missions towards history or any other metanarrative. The author quotes from the slave narratives of James Albert Ukawsaw and Frederick Douglass to reveal a tension in their take on slavery. Further, Parks cites Charles Johnson's essay "The End of the Black American Narrative" wherein Johnson avers that the black American narrative "'has an epistemological mission' to explain the human experience and that the 'unique black American narrative emphasized the experience of victimization...'" (217). The essay mentions Johnson's idea of the language being "associated with consciousness, the grammar and the process of thought itself" (220) and urges the epistemological mission in this case to be precise with facts.

In "Philosophy Matters – Review of *Charles Johnson: The Novelist as Philosopher*" Ashraf H.A. Rushdy reviews the book edited by William R. Nash and Marc C. Conner. According to Rushdy, the essays in the book deal with Charles Johnson as a philosopher in two ways, first by seeing him as one who holds "particular philosophical positions within established systems of thought and belief..." (253), and secondly, as one who has produced philosophical fiction. Rushdy regrets the fact that the Nash-Conner volume contains only one essay on *Oxherding Tale*, Johnson's most challenging and "spirit-stretching creative chore," his "platform book" (254). In the afterword "Afterword: Charles Johnson's Quest for a New African-American Narrative and His Literary Genealogy," Amritjit Singh, recounts his association with Johnson. Singh notes how, in a handwritten note to Johnson, he had drawn a parallel between his engagement with African American Studies and Johnson's "life-changing interests in India's religious practices and philosophical precepts since 1962" (270). Singh's essay notes with admiration Johnson's willingness – in contrast to Wright and Ellison – to acknowledge his debt to his black predecessors like Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston, Wright, Ralph Ellison, Amiri Baraka, and Eldridge

Cleaver. Johnson recognizes their contributions made through “positive or negative example, to his own development as a writer and thinker” (274). If one is discussing Charles Johnson, it is only a matter of time that some philosophical question is mooted. In one of the longest, and a very deep essay, the engagement of Johnson with the question of Subject and Object is discussed threadbare. In “Master-Slave Dialectics in Charles Johnson’s ‘The Education of Mingo’” the author Linda Ferguson Selzer expatiates on the destabilization of Subject/Object relationships. It is a dialectical process though fundamentally invisible to Moses Green, who feels it is one sided in which only he is transforming the behavior of the slave. Mingo does not let the master realize the impact he is making on his behavior, of how the Object is shaping up the Self; he uses this self-imposed invisibly to indicate that he has no role in the deaths of Isaiah and Harriet. He ends up killing them in cold brutality, giving a hint that he misunderstood Moses’ order to “kill chicken hawks and be courteous to strangers” (81).

The book has some other fascinating essays by Charles Johnson’s students (such as Marc C. Conner, 110-14), some poems in his honor (David Ray, 251-52) as well as the enunciation of the trope of philosophy in his novels in “The Manichean Divide and Ontological Truncation: Charles Johnson on the ‘Black-as-Body’” (149-55) written by George Yancy. The book also has some essays on the novel *Dreamer* (1998), the only American novel about Martin Luther King, Jr. This collection of essays is, as Singh notes in his Afterword, both “timely and appropriate” and will serve a “valuable introduction...to an American Litterateur who has been building vital bridges of imagination to India, its traditions and philosophies, for nearly half a century” (269). While the book published in India has special value for South-Asian readers, it would make an important addition to all academic libraries in the United States.

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