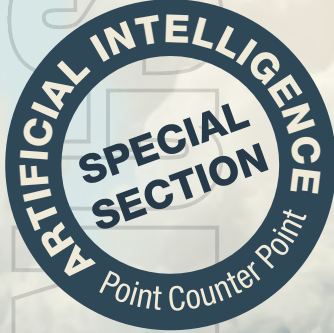


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EDITORIAL

Once upon a time, around 3500 years ago, Pythia – the priestess at the Oracular shrine of the Greek God Apollo in Delphi – uttered her divinely endowed prophecies about the future of her suppliants and answered the questions they came to her with. The visitors to the Delphic Oracle included one and all from Emperors and kings to common folks. Lovers of Greek literature may be aware of the power of the Oracle at Delphi as portrayed by Sophocles in his immortal play, *Oedipus the King*. The opening words of the Chorus in the play refer to the ominous situation the plague had plunged Thebes into:

Zeus!
Great welcome voice of Zeus, what do you bring?
What word from the gold vaults of Delphi comes to brilliant Thebes?
... Apollo, Healer of Delos
I worship you in dread ... what now, what is your price?
Some new sacrifice? What will you bring to birth?
Tell me, child of golden Hope
Warm voice that never dies.

Herodotus also mentions in *The Histories* the reassuring words of the Oracle of Delphi: "I know the number of grains of sand and the extent of the sea; ... I understand the deaf-mute and hear the words of the dumb."

The prophecies of the priestess were highly influential in deciding issues related not only to war and peace, life and death, but also to the day-to-day problems faced by the populace. For centuries, people made pilgrimages to the shrine in the hope of finding out resolutions to their pressing problems and to know what the future had in store for them.

In contemporary times, the ruins of the Oracle at Delphi (in central Greece) – excavated by the French Archaeological School during 1892-94 – is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that figures among the popular tourist destinations worldwide. People throng here to see the breathtaking landscape reminiscent of the divine glory that the place had enjoyed in ancient times. For those interested in the prophetic voice of the Delphic Oracle, the ruins offer no solace.

However, with the outbreak of the AI revolution, one need not travel back 3500 years in time riding either on the wings of poesy or getting aboard H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* or travel hundreds of miles to visit any oracular shrine. All one needs to do to seek answers to questions pertaining to any issue anywhere in the world today is simply tap on an app on the cellphone or click on the mouse on a PC.

The significance of the AI revolution and its impact has startled and bewildered the world as never before. The lightning pace of technological changes in the current era has moved far beyond the domain of 'Future Shock' that Alvin Toffler

had talked about in the 1960s while engaged in research at IBM. Imagining the landscape of the future, grossly different from what the homo sapiens had been inhabiting for so long, kept creative minds deeply engrossed in contemplating what man could do with machines ever since Mary Shelley created her fantastic tale of 'the creature' designed by the scientist named Victor Von Frankenstein in her epoch-making novel titled *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* (1818). Following on the footsteps of Mary Shelley, writers like Edgar Allan Poe, H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, Douglass Adams, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury, Roald Dahl, Issac Asimov, Ursula K. Le Guin, Arthur C Clarke, J. G. Ballard, Jack Finney, Diana Wynne Jones, Alan Moore, Margaret Atwood, Peter Cawdron, Daniel Suarez, Martha Wells, David Walton, among others, engaged their creative energies in strengthening the genre of science fiction with focus on futuristic scientific societies. Even a cursory view of the fictional creations of the above writers reveals an intricate working of the human mind in applying what we have come to recognise as Artificial Intelligence to societies of the past, present and the future for the purpose of human enhancement, transformation or transcendence through technology. In fact science fiction showed the possibilities of predicting and facilitating future innovations by providing a creative and critical lens to explore the potential implications of scientific and technological change.

If we look at the world today in terms of the way Artificial or Machine Intelligence is impacting lives, we can easily see that utopian as well as dystopian ideas, characters, images, instruments, gadgets, objects, metaphors, machines etc., that had hitherto been circumscribed to the pages of science fiction, have leapt out of their wordy confinements to occupy significant space in the realm of gross reality. What had appeared to be a dream or figment of imagination even ten to fifteen years ago has become tangible reality now. With the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence, predicting the future requires no oracular or mythological magic.

It is significant to note that the divergence of opinion expressed by stalwarts of the AI revolution about its utility or futility casts a shadow of ambiguity on the shape of things to come. While Twitter (now X) owner Elon Musk considers artificial intelligence as "the most disruptive force in history," theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking talked of dangers like "powerful autonomous weapons, or new ways for the few to oppress the many" posed by artificial intelligence that could "spell the end of the human race." Hawking anticipated, in November 2017, that "AI could take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate" ...since "Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded."

On the positive side, Sam Altman, CEO OpenAI, says with utmost confidence that "the technological progress that AGI will bring in the next 100 years will be far larger than all we've made since we first controlled fire and invented the wheel." Bill

Gates, computer visionary and co-founder Microsoft, holds a balanced view as is evident from his statement:

The risks created by artificial intelligence can seem overwhelming. This is not the first time a major innovation has introduced new threats that had to be controlled. In a moment like this, it's natural to feel unsettled. But history shows that it's possible to solve the challenges created by new technologies We've done it before.

It is natural to have great expectations from AI and its capacity to address pressing issues like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, diseases, climate change, war, famine, drought, privacy, security etc. that confront the inhabitants of planet Earth. Bill Gates rightly suggests that there is no need to despair. There always have been, and will always be, sensitive and committed human souls who will strive with commitment to harness the power of artificial intelligence for the betterment of humanity at large in harmony with enduring values of life.

In this context it is worthwhile to mention the momentous arrival of ChatGPT on the current revolutionary AI scenario. What had so far been the ultimate domain of Lord Google and similar search engines in bringing the vast repertoire of knowledge and wisdom from time immemorial to the immediate present seems to have taken a back seat when compared to the promise of ChatGPT in transforming human lives. We all are possibly aware that ChatGPT is a chatbot developed by OpenAI and launched on November 30, 2022. When a friend shared his experience of what one could do with this new marvel, I decided to give it a try right away.

As I opened the Chatbot on my laptop, what instantly appeared on the screen were the words: "Hello! How can I help you?" I was a little startled because the willingness of a machine to offer its services to man seemed to be in sync with Gandhi's idea that machine was made for man and not man for the machine. In a spirit of playfulness, I placed my wish on the screen with the words, "Give me a poem on Re-Markings, please." Pat came the response on the screen before I could count 1 to 10:

"Here is a poem I wrote for you inspired by Re-Markings":

Re-Markings is not just a name
But a vision of a world aflame
With the fire of words and ideas
That challenge the norms and fears

Re-Markings is not just a journal
But a platform for the eternal
Quest for truth and beauty
That transcends all duty

Re-Markings is not just a publication
But a celebration of creation
That showcases diverse voices
And offers multiple choices

Re-Markings is not just a mosaic
But a symphony of the mystic
That harmonizes the discordant
And makes the mundane brilliant.

I reflected on the content and style of the machine-created poem and felt flattered for a moment. Without being misled by any mistaken impression of greatness, I began to wonder, though not without some measure of anxiety, at the amazing creative capacity of AI to appropriate human thought and expression to an incredible extent. Consequently, it led to the decision to create space in the current issue for showcasing diverse approaches to understand the nuances and far-reaching ramifications of AI. Subtitled "Point Counter Point," after Aldous Huxley's 1928 novel, the special section offers narratives related to man-machine interface from the perspective of lived experience as well as study of literature and humanities. While the legendary Satyajit Ray's short story "Anukul" sets the ball rolling, the distinguished presence of Dr. Amar Gupta, eminent Computer Scientist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA, makes the section extra special. Other contributions included in the section have also enhanced the range and scope of the AI discourse.

Consistent with the journal's aim to provide an effective platform for dissemination of authoritative views on sociopolitical and cultural dimensions of national and global import, the general section presents a rich array of reminiscences, essays and discourses that address the human predicament not only in the present era of turmoil and conflict but also through the exploration of ancient myths and wisdom of the ages. The agonies of those living on the margins of society in different parts of the globe figure here as prominently as the ecstasies of poets engaged in painting the portrait of life with variant forms of colour and emotion. In fact, be it artificial intelligence or human wisdom, in order to make our lives sublime, we would do well to remind ourselves of what the inscription on the entrance to the Delphic oracle tells us: "know thyself."

While thanking all our readers and contributors, I deem it an honour to dedicate this unique edition to the creative genius of Sandeep K. Arora for his unflinching love in enriching each issue of Re-Markings with his exquisitely beautiful cover design and graphic support. THANK YOU, Sandeep.

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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NOTE FOR READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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SPECIAL SECTION ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ANUKUL

Satyajit Ray

Translated from the Bengali by Manas Bakshi

The above short story, written by the internationally acclaimed filmmaker, director and author, Satyajit Ray, brings forth into sharp focus the idea of man's relationship and dependence on robots for a life of comfort and ease. Though a product of science and technology, Ray's protagonist Anukul is endowed with human feelings and emotions. While he is all admiration and helpful for those who treat him with love and dignity, he is least hesitant in harming those who deny him these basic rights. Written in 1976 and published in the Bengali magazine, *Anandamela*, in December 1986, the story brilliantly anticipates an interesting dimension of what we have come to know today as Artificial Intelligence. The popularity of Ray's story in the contemporary context inspired Sujoy Ghosh to create the memorable 2017 short film by the same title, *Anukul*.

"He is called by a name – I think?" – queried Nikunja Babu.

"O yes, definitely"

"What's that?"

"Anukul."

It is nearly six months that a shop in the name of Robot Supply Agency has come into existence at Chowringhee in Calcutta (now Kolkata). Nikunja Babu had long cherished the desire of a robot-servant. Recently, his business has flourished, and now he is willing to fulfil his desire.

Nikunja Babu glanced at the robot. This is called android – though a machine but resembles largely a human being. Good looking, age between 22 and 23.

"What type of work can it perform?" Nikunja Babu questioned. The man at the other side of the desk, lighting up a cigarette, asserted: "All that an ordinary servant can do except cooking. Household jobs – from cleaning, washing and serving – all are within his capability but he has to remain indoors. He can't go

**TRANSFORMATION OF LIVES AND
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:
A CONVERSATION WITH AMAR GUPTA**

Nibir K. Ghosh

An Engineering graduate from IIT Kanpur with a Ph.D. from IIT Delhi, Dr. Amar Gupta joined the MIT Sloan School of Management in 1979 where he distinguished himself in several capacities through his consistent engagements in innovative projects that led to widespread adoption of new techniques and technologies worldwide. As Founding Co-Director of the Productivity from Information Technology (PROFIT) initiative and in allied roles at MIT Sloan School of Management, Dr. Gupta initiated and managed major multimillion dollar projects related to information technology and automation of business processes. As Director of the Research Program on Communications Policy at MIT School of Engineering, he coordinated the establishment of the Internet Telephony Consortium, subsequently renamed as the Internet and Telephony Convergence Consortium, and played a pivotal role in the commercialization of the Voice-over-IP technology. He has spent the bulk of his career at MIT. In addition to his MIT career, he has served as Phyllis and Ivan Seidenberg Endowed Professor and Dean of the Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems at Pace University, US, and as the Thomas R. Brown Professor of Management and Technology at the University of Arizona, US. In 2015, he rejoined MIT to work at the Institute for Medical Engineering and Sciences (IMES), Department of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science, and the Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Lab (CSAIL) on innovation and entrepreneurship related to Digital Health and Globally Distributed Teams. He serves as Principal/Co-Principal Investigator and Coordinator for "Telemedicine" and "Enhancing Productivity of Geographically Distributed Teams" areas. Prior to joining MIT, Dr. Gupta contributed significantly while engaged with the Department of Electronics, Government of India, New Delhi and High Commission of India, London. His publications include 12 internationally acclaimed books besides over 100 pathbreaking research papers in international journals. He has served as advisor to a broad range of multinational corporations and international organizations on technology, innovation, and strategy issues.

He has also served as Advisor to United Nations Industrial Development Organization on innovation and entrepreneurship. He is credited with leading a UNDP team to plan and implement a national financial information infrastructure in Brazil, a Latin American country where 40 per cent of the banks had gone

IS ORWELLIAN 'BIG BROTHER' WATCHING US?

Deepa Chaturvedi

The *Yajurveda* is a text which concentrates on the resolution of the problems which beset the being in its options of the right and the wrong. The text emphasizes that the conscious knowledge or the knowledge enlightened by consciousness is clearly to be used to gather momentum in the various spheres of life – something which is not possible through the non-conscious. All humans should weigh Yoga, Science and Dharma on this parameter i.e, all questions be researched, enlightened with this consciousness and resolved thereafter. Advancement throughout history has impinged on two levels: Physical-Material and Spiritual-Transcendental – often leading to a collision and giving birth to several questions: Is there a ceiling to the level of knowledge aggrandizement? Is there an ulterior motive in restricting this fleshing-out in all directions? Can this undivulged rationale be unearthed? Can our ancient wisdom guide us? These are very generic questions that have become more than dominant in the present century and need a simplification. This paper intends to touch upon these questions to unlock this cacotopic engineering of a Utopia and its ripple effect, if any?

Contextualizing the modern predicament of the great confusion of the times we live in, of the dilemmatic times which present two alternatives, two binaries which always appear to be equally commended, it is only relevant that the paper be begun with the quotations from the ancient *Yajurveda* – the texts which will eventually take us to the near resolution of our muddled up situations.

Anyadevāhurvidyāyā'anyadāhuravidyāyāh.

Iti śūsruma dhīrāṇām ye nastadvicacakṣire. - Shloka no.13.
(*Yajurveda*, Chapter 40: 318)

The consciousness that emanates out of the knowledge is clearly to be used to gather momentum in the various spheres of life – something which is not possible through the non-conscious. What can be achieved through consciousness cannot be achieved otherwise. All humans with their intellectual counterparts should weigh Yoga, Science and Dharma on these parameters and use them. (translation mine)

Now a question arises as to how is this consciousness to be determined? What is its nature? To which the text answers:

THE HUMAN TEACHER V/S EdTECH: PROACTIVE STRATEGIES FOR RELEVANCE AND SURVIVAL

Urvashi Sabu

In a world that is increasingly being dominated by digital technology and Artificial Intelligence, can the incursion of technology-led educational platforms on the internet throw the human teacher into redundancy, if not extinction? This article, essentially an opinion piece, seeks to explore the ramifications of digital technology in the field of education, technology that presents itself in the form of virtual learning platforms and 'EdTech'. It maintains all the while that the human teacher can, and must engage proactively in rethinking pedagogy and critical enquiry in order to stay relevant in the face of this behemoth. It focuses on the Humanities, primarily Literature, as a way of exemplifying how and why this change should be manifested in live educational settings, particularly the classroom.

We live today in a highly digitised world. Every aspect of our lives is now permeated, no, *dominated*, by the digital devices and services that are available for us to carry out our day-to-day tasks of communication, memo-rizing, reflection, invention, learning, or knowledge seeking. In the last few years, education has conclusively and decidedly moved from its conventional space of the physical classroom to the virtual space. To a great extent this move has been motivated not only by the pandemic from which the world has just recovered, but also by the equalizing mantra of 'education anytime, anywhere and for anyone'. Virtual educational platforms (VLPs) offer flexibility, ease of access, wide reach, global content in a globalised context, and a learning environment that is in the control of the learner rather than the provider. Never has education (or EdTech) been such a marketable, 'user friendly' commodity as it is today. The virtual educational platform works on software programming, content creation and a comfortable interface where the user/'student' and the provider/'teacher' can transact the *business* of learning. The teacher on the virtual platform is now a disembodied voice on a computer screen or a smiling video recording. Given the popularity and exponentially increasing user base of practically all online education platforms, we, the teachers in conventional chalk and board class rooms, in brick and stone educational institutions begin to wonder, and to genuinely and somewhat fearfully ask ourselves: Are we needed any longer? Are we on our way to extinction? Have we become the endangered species that no sanctuary has the desire or the will to protect?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LANDSCAPES OF IMAGINATION

Tanya Mander

The present paper explores some selected narratives and the discourse based on AI, foregrounding the evocative power of such narrations and how they have shaped the prevailing understanding and visualization around the idea of AI. The narratives offer AI as 'technological sublime' as it possesses the power to excite, re-shape and re-imagine the matrix of human reality. The present paper also examines the world of AI narratives and studies the trope of the fear of superordinate structures and draw out our collective unconscious dread of dictatorships, colonial and tyrannical regimes. The leaping progress of technology is being framed by the genre of science fiction and has added way more to the idea of AI than the actual state of affairs.

We are experiencing the reality of Artificial Intelligence in the contemporary times: images of German Chancellor Angela Merkel meeting humanoid Sophia for a conversation event (2018); software Alpha Go defeating Lee Sedol, world champion of the board game Go (2016), 'depict the birth of a superior intelligent being'. (Bory 628) Framed in science fiction, which is now being looked at a starting point, it evokes a fear and a thrill; it appeals to our idea of adventure and our anxiety for the future. The discourse and narratives based on AI have shaped the prevailing understanding and visualisation around the idea of AI. Theorists have underlined the role that popular cultural images and texts have played when it comes to deciphering the presence of Artificial Intelligence in our world. The present paper explores some selected narratives and foregrounds the evocative power of such narrations. The narratives offer AI as 'technological sublime' (Nye 1994, Mosco 2004) as it possesses the power to excite, re-shape and re-imagine the matrix of human reality. Stories are considered 'cultural artefacts' and they transmit not only points of view but certain sets and subsets of values that mark our knowledge systems (Bal). The texts include the subtexts of socio-political issues as well themes delineating the shape of society. The AI narratives configure both the need of human imagination to tell stories designing drama between humans and humanoids, and offer metaphorically conflicts related to social issues.

Royal Society in 2018 defined AI narratives as narratives that feature intelligent machines, and their analyses offers a reflection of human hopes and fears. (Cave and Dihal, 74). The AI narratives also explore the dramatic intersection of humans, humanoid robots and pertinent social issues. AI is portrayed as anthropomorphized with super human qualities. Narratives exploring AI have

**ETHICAL AND MORAL DILEMMAS OF AI IN
ISAAC ASIMOV'S *I, ROBOT***

Saurabh Agarwal

The recent innovations have promised to transform our lives for the better but they come with ethical and moral dilemmas that will not be resolved by the present-day structure of the laws and regulations that govern society today. The Faustian scenario where technologies like Robotics and Artificial Intelligence may eventually be at loggerheads with the creator are the background for Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* (1950). This paper considers how these conflicts, if not tackled and resolved through the renewed framework of humanitarian laws and philosophical principles upon which our social norms stand, may disrupt society or emerge as a potential threat to life on the planet. Works of Asimov and the recent turn of events in the real world are worth studying as the reference point for redefining the barriers to technology to ensure that life-changing scientific breakthroughs do not turn into life-threatening ones.

Isaac Asimov, world maestro of Science Fiction, a part of 'the big three' and a prolific writer, has written works that are regarded as prophetic, holding the key to the future of scientific development. *I, Robot*, his work under consideration in this paper, is a collection of the stories that were published between 1940 and 1950 in *Science Magazine*. This anthology of connected stories, the first in the four-part Robot series has remained a masterpiece of Asimov. Robots created by Asimov have evolved beyond mechanical devices designed to do menial and repeated tasks that would keep the machine in servitude. These robots are the production of fictional US Robots and Mechanical Men. The calculating machines have got endowed with "positronic brain-paths. The miles of relays and photocells had given way to the spongy globe of platinum iridium about the size of a human brain." (2) This development is equivalent to Artificial Intelligence where machines have knowledge acquisition ability to learn in the process of performing. Though Isaac Asimov never uses the term Artificial Intelligence the present-day reader realises the resemblance. Though *I, Robot* is a work of fiction, it makes a deep study of human-machine interaction, the areas of perceived conflicts, the impact of these conflicts and the necessity of urgent resolution to minimize or negate the harm that could come to humanity.

From the perspective of the anthology, scientific progress has taken over fifty years and Dr. Susan Calvin, a 'Robopsychologist', has "watched the direction of human progress change and leap ahead." (2) When Calvin joined U.S. Robotics, she was considered a robot herself and held that "they're a cleaner, better breed than we are." (3) Her career, narrated to us in the form of nine

LITERATURE-TECHNOLOGY INTERFACE

Pallavi Sharma Goyal

Even before the theory of Evolution propounded by Charles Darwin, the human civilization was flourishing by leaps and bounds amid the waves of scientific explorations and Literary outcomes. This article seeks to examine the voyage of English Literature in the hefty sea of technological advancements since the commencement of both streams and their interface with each other.

The eternal yearning of human beings to perceive knowledge is nowhere else more discernible than in the opening sentence of Aristotle's "Metaphysics," where the great father of philosophy proclaims that "All human beings by nature desire knowledge." (9) The adulation of the beginning statement of "Metaphysics" states Aristotle's understanding of what it is to be human and indicates the fundamental premise of human civilization. Aristotle also points out this as evidence for his claim that we take pleasure in looking at things and assimilating information through our senses.

The commencement of worldly civilization and its appropriate understanding could not have been attained without the accompanied records of immediate occurrences. Besides, this recollection of events could not be initiated due to the lack of pertinent technological innovations. The documentation of discoveries, scientific explorations, historical affairs, and literary scenes incorporates the inevitable interface of Literature and Technology.

The contemporary globe of scientific adventure displays the mysterious but jubilant deeds of our predecessors in both fields, Literature and Technology. The emergence of literary output and the commencements of scientific tools since the beginning of civilization has now reached such a pinnacle that the whole of humanity is perplexed, worried, and struck with awe on looking up and beholding the mark of disproportionate technology, now more distinct than ever.

The primary scenario of Literature was different, where, in the abject lack of technology, literature was merely a vocal expression. These unwritten sagas gradually took the shape of manuscripts and eventually made visible with the assemblage of words in the form of poetry. This was the first interface of Literature and Technology.

The earlier attempts were the results of the systematic synchronization of human aptitudes and impulses. The scholars and philosophers were more interested in generating the sublime outcome of any solemn writing and for it philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle articulated varied ideas and propounded many theories to accomplish the main motive of writing poetry, drama, or prose.

**THE AI RENAISSANCE AND THE URGENCY FOR
REVIVAL OF HUMANISM: A STUDY OF
KAI-FU LEE AND CHEN QIUFAN'S *AI 2041***

Samapti Saha

AI is creeping fast and we are struggling to accept it. According to experts, humans can gain abundant productivity and time for creativity and critical thinking to cope with the void of human emotions, feelings, empathy, compassion, and morals created by the AI Revolution and analyze or revive humanism freshly. In these globally evolving technified times we cannot avoid techno phobias. The ten stories by Chen Qiufan set in 2041 in different countries present global AI impact in teaching, health care, transportation, and warfare affecting socio-cultural systems and personal lives. The scientific analysis by Kai-Fu Lee makes these scientific/sci-fi stories dive into future imagination balanced with positive reality. Children may have AI Playmates and teachers. We may run on AVS (Autonomous Vehicles) like robo taxis or robo cars or lead war with autonomous weapons achieving eudaimonic happiness but to rule over automatons (neo/post) humans need to keep alive the moral ethics of humanity.

We are well aware of the humanoid robot Sophia, Eren Kartal—virtual boyfriend, Xenobots, and AlphaGo which defeated a human Go (ancient Chinese game) world champion.

AI is the most celebrated topic nowadays. Brainstorming questions form our utopian as well as dystopian views. The futuristic non-fiction writers are speculative or exaggerated in their depiction and it mainly presents the dystopian views in the posthuman times. *AI 2041* by Kai-Fu-Lee and Chen Quifan is scientific fiction comprising ten stories by Quifan and a scientific analysis by Lee. Even though pointing some negativity they mainly present a more constructive and hopeful view of AI revolution. The stories are fictitious but balanced with positive reality. Tech companies are in a hurry to launch AI-enabled sets and Samsung beats Apple behind, as it announced the launch of Gauss, named after Johann Carl Friedrich Gauss, one of the most influential mathematicians in history. Samsung Gauss is a ChatGPT-like generative AI model that will help users write and edit emails, answer queries, and generate images and text.

We are blessed that AI solved a fifty-year-old riddle of protein folding and we are hopeful it may unfold more mysteries. Now the questions are—should we remain techno (phobic/phobic)? Shall we be living in the world of robotic humans or humanistic robots? Do the automatons take over the humans? Can the revival of (past) humanism save us? What should be our take on the changing times?

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Deep Priya Pabbi

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterised by industrialisation, innovations, and advancements in various fields of science. This resulted in the First World War becoming the first war to practice modern warfare at a gigantic scale, so much so that it became difficult for the witnesses, artists, and public to fully grasp and make sense of the reality of war and its aftermath. Technology and War share a dialectical relationship; advancements in technology keep changing the warfare and warfare paves the way for the development of new techniques and technology in order to conquer the enemy. An attempt has been made here to explore how this dialectical relationship has long term impact on society and its social structures.

Warfare is not something entirely new so far as the history of humanity is concerned. It is only time, space, and people that change, the elemental human condition—loss, love, friendship, food, humour, pain, suffering, death, trauma, destruction, and realisation of its futility in the end—remains more or less the same. And technology always remains a key factor to any warfare. Alex Roland makes the following observation: “Technology and warfare are essentially material. They are communal processes for manipulating the physical world to serve human purposes. Technology seeks to bend the material world in pursuit of human goals. Warfare seeks to bend human behavior by the threat or application of physical force.” (1)

The First World War saw the use of technology by those in power to serve their purpose(s). It was used to manipulate the minds of the masses so as to spread propaganda and control the flow of information, and, at the same time, the war also paved the way for such innovations which ultimately helped humanity.

The First World War had the elements of old warfare, but it was different: it was the first internationally fought war and was the first to fully use the techniques and weapons of modern warfare. Every participant nation was invested in strengthening the military and advancing the techniques of warfare to overwhelm its enemy. Or, as Will Rogers once said, “You can’t say civilizations don’t advance . . . for in every war they kill you in a new way.” (qtd. in Roland 69) The war was marked by innovations in weaponry and technology, and a large-scale production of machine guns, long-range artillery, submarines, airplanes, tanks, and other industrial goods. This war even saw the use of flame throwers and chemical weapon which was the poison gas. Because of the heavy use of

VIEWPOINTS FROM CALIFORNIA

Jonah Raskin

THE FRAUD: ZADIE SMITH'S NEO-VICTORIAN NOVEL

A review essay that explores Zadie Smith's bold new novel that reexamines the past and that invites scrutiny of the present, even as it also tangles with the nature of fiction, reality, the truth and the legacy of the ubiquitous Charles Dickens. No artificial intelligence could write a novel that pulses, as *The Fraud* (2023) does, with a large body of diverse and complex characters who illuminate Victorian society.

At some point in life, nearly everyone who studies, writes about and enjoys English literature surely reads at least one Victorian novel and probably more than one. They are inescapable. Many of the novels written by George Eliot, Emily Bronte, Charles Dickens and the maverick, Lewis Carroll, certainly have proved to be inescapable for me and for many others in my generation, and the generations that came before and after mine. They are called "Victorian" because they were published during the reign of Queen Victoria which lasted from 1837 to 1901, a time when the British Empire was at its height and the queen herself was known as "the Empress of India."

In an essay titled "On Killing Charles Dickens," which appeared in the pages of *The New Yorker* in the summer of 2023, the novelist, Zadie Smith, describes her attraction to and her repulsion from the genre of the historical novel, and from Charles Dickens, who was, she explains, "everywhere" when she was growing up in England and a "gigantic influence." Smith is best known for her first novel, *White Teeth* (2000), which is often described as "postcolonial," though she is also the author of five other novels including *The Fraud*, her latest.

In her lively *New Yorker* piece, Smith writes that Dickens was, in her view "too sentimental, too theatrical, too moralist, too controlling." She vowed to avoid him in the long simmering novel she was writing, that was published in 2023 and that she titled *The Fraud*. Ironically, the more Smith tried to distance herself from Dickens, the closer he came, until he was inescapable.

In fact, Dickens appears as an intriguing character in *The Fraud*, along with William Makepeace Thackeray and William Ainsworth, the largely forgotten

INDIGENOUS: *THE KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON*

ON THE PAGE AND THE SCREEN

A review of a nonfiction narrative and a feature film that both explore the war waged against the Osage, a tribe in the American west that struck it rich and became the target of greedy whites. With comments on the western as a genre and the indigenous people of the world.

For the past 600 years and maybe far further back in time than that, indigenous people all over the world have taken a terrible beating, though they have also survived. Novelists, poets, painters, playwrights and filmmakers have told that story in its many iterations over and over again, and still the wars go on. David Grann tells a small part of that global phenomenon in his non-fiction book *The Killers of the Flower Moon*. Now, famed director Martin Scorsese has adopted parts of Grann's story for a long movie that describes the war that white settlers, businessmen and lawmen waged in the 1920s in the state of Oklahoma against a Native American tribe called the Osage.

The Osage owned oil-rich lands that made them wealthy, as wealthy as some indigenous people in the US today who have benefited from the money that pours into casinos across the nation. Grann's story isn't especially well told. There are too many individuals and too many killings to comfortably wrap one's head around. But the story of multiple murders carried out by greedy whites and the role of federal law enforcement agents who track down the criminals makes up for the unspectacular prose. So, too, there's nothing flashy about Scorsese's movie, though he elicits powerful acting from Robert De Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio, who play two conspiratorial white men who smile and say nice things to the Indians and go about murdering them with guns, poisons and bombs. Scorsese's movie takes place in the wild west against a backdrop of Prohibition and racism against people of color. It features cowboys and American Indians, but it isn't exactly a western by traditional Hollywood standards.

‘I VOLUNTEERED, TRANSPORTING SICK PALESTINIAN CHILDREN TO HOSPITALS — IT HARDLY SEEMS POSSIBLE ANYMORE’

Joanna Chen

In this moving narrative, the writer-volunteer wonders if her dream of coexistence has been destroyed forever after the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

I volunteer with The Road to Recovery, an Israeli NGO that transports sick Palestinian children from checkpoints around the country to hospitals in Israel. When possible, I drive from my home in the Ella Valley of Israel to the Tarkumia checkpoint, close to Hebron, a mere 15-minute journey, to pick up children. I have always felt that small acts of empathy go a long way towards healing the decades-long hatred, that person-to-person contact helps bridge the gap between the two nations. Additionally, I have also always believed that Israelis and Palestinians can make peace, that we all want the same thing at the end of the day — to live quietly, to break bread with our families each evening around the kitchen table.

I was not born here. I arrived in Israel at the age of 16, because my parents wanted to live here. I knew nothing about Judaism, let alone Zionism. I learned about World War II in school. I had heard about Anne Frank but had very little idea what the Holocaust was. I knew nothing about the history of the Jews, or even the history of my own family.

As an adult, I worked with *Newsweek* in its Middle East bureau, and considered myself privileged to be able to speak to people on both sides of the conflict. When I say people, I am referring to those of us who are trying to go about our lives peacefully and respectfully, people like me and you who raise children, who care for our families. I spoke to Palestinians in Hebron, I spoke to Jews in Gush Etzion, I spoke to grieving parents on both sides. I once interviewed a woman in Nablus who had just been released from prison for assisting in a suicide bombing, and a teenager patrolling the barren hills of the West Bank with a gun in a holster. I thought I understood.

I don't attend demonstrations, nor am I affiliated with any political groups, but I did participate in an intensive three-month workshop organized by The Bereaved Parents Forum, an NGO that promotes understanding between the Israeli and Palestinians. The idea of the workshop was to both learn about and acknowledge each other's narrative, but I ultimately came out of those three months with a sense of gnawing pessimism. It was not enough. I met people from Jenin

MORAL CONFLICTS IN GIRISH KARNAD'S
BALI: THE SACRIFICE Mukesh Ranjan Verma

Based on the myth of the Cock of Dough, Girish Karnad's *Bali: The Sacrifice* deals with the moral conflict between an Orthodox Hindu belief in animal sacrifices to gods to please or appease them and the Jain religious belief in total nonviolence. The play explores some other moral conflicts such as adultery by an otherwise devoted and loving wife, male ego and female sexuality, and the conflict of approaches to religion and sex in polarized sections of society – the royalty and the working class. Karnad, as usual, has used a myth in this play to depict moral dilemmas in contemporary Indian society.

Girish Karnad, in his "Preface" to *Bali: The Sacrifice*, has quoted Professor Bimal Krishna Matilal who observes in his book, *Moral Dilemmas in the Mahabharata*: "Professional philosophers of India over the last two thousand years . . . have very seldom discussed what we call moral philosophy today The tradition itself was very self-conscious about moral values, moral conflicts and dilemmas, as well as difficulties of what we call practical reason or practical wisdom. This consciousness found its expression in the epic stories and narrative literature." (70)

Karnad, who has used Indian myths in his plays since his first play, *Yayati*, has explored these myths to show moral dilemmas and conflicts in contemporary Indian society. For *Bali: The Sacrifice*, Karnad has, as he himself admits, "drawn upon the thirteenth century Kannada epic, *Yashodhara Charite*, by Janna, which in turn refers back through an eleventh-century Sanskrit epic by Vadiraja to the ninth-century Sanskrit epic, *Yashastilaka*, by Somadeva Suri." (70) The central myth around which the plot of the play has been woven is the myth of the Cock of Dough with which Karnad, as he says, was familiar since he was in his teens. (70) He picked up this myth for a play several times but he was not fully satisfied with the drafts that he had made, even with the ones which were staged. He refers to one earlier version of this play which was produced on the stage by Satyadev Dubey in Hindi. The present play was written by him when Leicester Haymarket Theatre, London commissioned him to write a play for them in 2002. The play was staged in 2002 and published in 2004.

The myth of the cock of dough deals with the ideological conflict between the Brahmanical religious belief in making animal sacrifices to gods and the Jain creed of non-violence in any form. However, as we can witness in several plays of Karnad, he is never content with making the central conflict in his play a simplistic one. Rather, he weaves multiple conflicts in his central plot. Thus, we come across more than one moral conflict in *Bali: The Sacrifice*. The play also

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF LIFE IN THE POETRY OF JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

Sudhir K. Arora

Jayanta Mahapatra, the Sahitya Akademi award winner for *Relationship* in 1981 is a very reflective and serious poet who, by virtue of his poetic art, turned his local poetry into the global poetry. On 27 August, 2023, Death took him away from this mundane world. The poet is dead, not his poetry. Life has its dwelling in words. He attempts to decipher the mysterious script of life in his poetry. This paper explores the various dimensions of Mahapatra's poetry and reveals his contribution to the field of Indian Poetry in English through excerpts from almost all his poetry collections.

"I can't remember hearing anyone saying he will mourn for me when I am gone." (Life Signs 39)

This is what Jayanta Mahapatra (22 October 1928 - 27 August, 2023) wrote in his poem "Again, One Day, Walking by the River," published in *Life Signs* in 1983. What he writes here cannot be applied to Jayanta Mahapatra himself as every lover of poetry mourns for him. One can meet him in words of his poems. Mahapatra himself believes that life has its dwelling in words:

In words
our lives
dwell. (*Dispossessed Nest* 32)

Besides editing the reputed journal *Chandrabhaga*, Mahapatra penned poetry collections, namely, *Close the Sky, Ten By Ten* (1971), *Svayamvara and Other Poems* (1971), *A Father's Return* (1976), *A Rain of Rites* (1976), *Waiting* (1979), *Relationship* (1980), *The False Start* (1980), *Life Signs* (1983), *Dispossessed Nests* (1986), *Burden of Waves and Fruits* (1988), *Temple* (1989), *A Whiteness of Bone* (1992), *Shadow Space* (1997), *Bare Face* (2000), *Random Descent* (2005), *The Lie of Dawns* (2009), *Land* (2013), *Hesitant Light* (2016), and *Noon: New and Selected Poems* (2023). Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry collection *Relationship* makes him the first Indian poet who got the Sahitya Akademi award for English poetry. He also got the Padama Shri in 2009 but returned it in 2015 because of "rising intolerance" in India. The pages of his poetry collections bubble with the ingredients like myth, history, Indian sensibility, contemporary socio-political reality, human relationship, Orissian landscape, self and the other. Myths, symbols and metaphors colour the pages of his poetry collections.

**GENDERED AGEISM: A STUDY OF
SUNIL GANGOPADHYAY'S *THOSE DAYS***

Minakshi Lahkar

Sexism and Ageism make a potent cocktail in a society with institutionalised patterns of domination. Literature as a reflection of life and society often showcases the trauma faced by individuals at the intersection of interlocking systems of oppression. It is therefore a good site for the presentation of the working of gendered ageism. This paper examines two women characters in Sunil Gangopadhyay's *Those Days (Sei Somoy)*, translated from Bangla by Aruna Chakravarti. Gangopadhyay's epic portrayal of nineteenth century Bengal shows the life course of these two women as they move from adulthood to late middle age. While their trajectories of life are different, yet similar, their embodied fates reflect two turns of destiny – both typical of women's life stories.

I shall describe the position that is allotted to the old and the way in which they live; I shall tell what in fact happens inside their minds and their hearts; and what I say will not be distorted by the myths and the cliches of bourgeois culture. - de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age* (2).

Ageism may be defined as societal perceptions and attitudes towards older people which translates into certain patterns of behaviour towards them. It is based on social and cultural mores which are influenced by factors like industrialisation, urbanisation and technological development. It is further impacted by intersectionality as other axes of marginalisation, such as class, gender, race and caste, often operate concurrently and exacerbate the prejudices against old people.

The view of the old as redundant and a drag on resources is actually pre-modern and seems universal. In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, set in pre-colonial 19th century Nigeria, old Unoka is left in the forest to die after he gets the swelling sickness. There is a Chinese story about a middle-aged man who carries his aged father in a wheelbarrow to push him off a cliff. The old man artfully turns the tables on the son when he suggests that he can simply be pushed off the mountaintop, thereby leaving the wheelbarrow to serve for the next generation.

On a micro-level, ageism includes how the aged see themselves. They might internalise societal conceptions and see themselves as unproductive, weak, decaying and worthy of neglect. They might seek to embody socially accepted

THE MATERIALITY OF INDIAN THOUGHT

Dev Vrat Sharma

The established notion about the Indian thought, as envisaged, is all about metaphysics with little or no empirical reality about it. It is even seen to exist as a binary opposite to the western school of thought, sometimes going beyond the dynamics of eschatology. Contrary to this established canon, the present study reiterates that the Indian way of life, from the earliest recorded times, has striven to establish a conjunction with the external environment and has emphasized the need for the oneness of the external universe with the one existing within. It is not only within the fold of unorthodox sects like the *Tantric Kaulism* and U. G. Krishnamurthy's empirical experimentations with the subtle/physical body, the orthodox and more representative schools have shown a fair amount of affinity with the physically existing world.

The very essence of 'things' depends upon experiential simulacrum as projected by/on the perceiving consciousness. The idea that the world is made up of 'things' which are independent of the human consciousness is in conflict with quantum physics and also the symbolic transcription of the powerfully felt spiritual experience. The notion is also in conflict with the, not so manifested, anthropocentric viewpoint of the Indian Philosophical system. When we say that the 'things' assert their presence, their 'being-ness' upon us, the reflex question would be – How is such a phenomena observed? And, how is it recorded? It is surely the subject, the perceiving consciousness, which would differentiate, observe and register such subtle, and not so subtle, manifestations of 'things'. Abhinavagupta states: "without conscious apprehension even if a thing exists, it is as if it did not exist, just like leaves and grass and other things when riding in a chariot. The question is thus appropriate because contentment is not possible without a conscious realization." (Ortega183)

U. G. Krishnamurthy has his own dialectics in exploding the long established hermeneutics, in detonating the myths associated with religious experience. He seems to challenge and even dismantle a fixity of thoughts which had engulfed and subsumed the consciousness of mankind for ages: "it is not a change in the structure of your thinking, but a change in the structure of the whole of your physical being. That means every cell in your body – the ten billion cells in the brain and a hundred billion connecting cells – has to undergo a transformation." (Rao 8)

During the course of the paper I will try to bring home the point that the Indian thought has consistently, from the most ancient stages of recorded

**DEWDROPS ON EMBERS: DECONSTRUCTING THE
CHEQUERED TROPES OF EXISTENTIAL AGONIES IN
LISA SUHAIR MAJAJ'S *GEOGRAPHIES OF LIGHT***

Rakhi Vyas

The present paper aims to make an inquiry into the poetry manuscript, *Geographies of Light*, written by the contemporary Arab American poet, Lisa Suhair Majaj, the book for which she won the 2008 Del Sol Press Poetry prize. As the title suggests, the work charts the undulating terrain of geographies of ethnicities, culture and people, specifically in the Palestinian context, and the interplay of existential lights through these labyrinths of muddled living.

*Now we walk out into the tunnel of days
And a million memories rustle.*

– Lisa Suhair Majaj, *Geographies of Light*

Though the emergence of Arab American literature can be traced back to the 19th century with the exodus of the Arab immigrants into the American soil, the recent decades have proffered a palpable proliferation in their literature, and stamped it out as a significant and vocal literary genre on account of the shifting political and socio-cultural paradigms. Constantly grappling with exis-tential ambivalence while living in America, and while also somehow working out their own ethnic affirmations and diasporic sensibilities, the Arab American writers post-1967 brought out a polyphonic symphony of verses/poetry nego-tiating poetic spaces of ethnicity, nostalgia, rootlessness, identity crisis, mnemonics, racial prejudices, feminist concerns and more to weave a stunning tapestry of their lived experiences in a 'foreign' land. Poets like Mohja Kahf, Naomi Shihab Nye, Susan Abulhawa, Lisa Suhair Majaj, Nathalie Handal, Pauline Kaldas, Hedy Habra, Suheir Hammad, Elmaz Abinader are some among numerous leading poetic voices of the contemporary Arab American poetry landscape who are voicing out their existential bewilderment, pain, melancholy and sweet longings in the vast canvas of their poetic expression. Their work is characterized by "a particular focus on racialization, trans-nationalism, sexuality, citizenship and belonging, marked by an acute aware-ness of the struggles and challenges facing the Arab American community and its location vis-a-vis the United States and the Arab homeland. From fiction to memoir to poetry collections, these texts probe the distinctive character of the authors' communities and stress the importance of locating collective and individual struggles in national and transnational frameworks." (Harb 15)

**RESHAPING THE IDIOM: PROTEST MOTIF IN HANSDA
SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR'S SHORT STORY
"THE ADIVASI WILL NOT DANCE"**

Achal Sinha & Saurav Kumar Singh

Language is an instrument of communication. The multiple genres of literature have employed language, both subtly and explicitly in order to convey the intended suggestion and purpose to the reader/s. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's book, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015), reveals the angst and "otherness" that is deeply internalized in the minds of the Santali people of Jharkhand, owing to their uneasy interactions with the non-tribal communities and also the equivocal political establishments of the state. The present paper examines the last story in the collection titled "The Adivasi Will Not Dance" to show how Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar successfully deconstructs the political situation of Jharkhand using language as a viable tool of protest.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015) is a collection of ten short stories. The writer won the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar for this collection in the year 2015. As of now, this book has been translated into seven Indian vernaculars, which has evidently increased its readability. This collection draws its major characters and settings from the Santal community of Jharkhand. Hansda himself hails from the Santal community. "The Adivasi Will Not Dance" appears as the tenth story in this collection, and the collection owes its title to this story. The given story narrates the story of the troupe-master, Mangal Murmu, in first person. The first-person narration in the story allows readers to step into the shoes of Mangal Murmu, and empathize with him. Mangal Murmu becomes the mouthpiece of other members of his community and as we read through the story, we experience the characters therein, in flesh and blood. Hansda vividly depicts the situation of the native Santals with respect to the other non-tribal communities of the place, and also the exclusive political regimes which have inadequately acknowledged them. Hansda perhaps feels that the separation of Jharkhand from the state of Bihar in the year 2000 has not been very helpful in improving the quality of life of the tribes of Jharkhand; rather it has done otherwise. As a reader, one discovers distinctive notes of protest in the given story and sees how the writer has artistically used language as a medium to register that protest. A battery of rhetorical questions put to readers evoke a cerebral response on their part.

**INTERSECTION OF NEW MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS AND
MESOTOPIAN REALITY IN TONI MORRISON'S
*THE BLUEST EYE***

Vibha Bhoot

Since posing inquiries on the ways that Black women's lives are impeded by hegemonic behaviours have direct effects on an individual's life, this paper deals with a study of the arguments that undermine identity politics as they relate to womanism—both as a movement and as a collection of discursive practises arising from Black women's critical analysis of common histories of oppression. The objective is to support the womanist movement's attempt to subvert the normative gaze that portrays identity politics as essentialist and is supported by academic theories on both the liberal and conservative fronts through the example of Toni Morrison's text *The Bluest Eye*. Living in the liminal area between opposing moral philosophies, mesotopia employs philosophical speculation and creative narrative to reframe people's perceptions of certain places or occasions. The work is analysed in relation to the ideas of "New Mestiza Consciousness" and Mesotopian Reality, highlighting how identity and location are ambiguous and complex in the face of social and cultural obstacles.

Womanist scholars, whether deviating from ethical or religious frameworks, anthropological or sociological studies, or deconstructive methodologies related to Literary Criticism, enact individual and social processes of resistance against various types of oppression. Studies/Cultural Studies, or interdisciplinary orientations are constituted by the integration of more than one of the aforementioned approaches. In order to complete this project, Black women's experiences must be preferred. Additionally, a broader socio-economic analysis of the circumstances under which the Black community functions as well as an examination of how African American spirituality emerged as a source of liberation and a dismantling of all forms of oppression that restrict individual and group decision-making helps. The outline of the multi-layered cultural fracturings of raced and gendered subjectivities challenges the conventional academic understanding of the relationship between modernist essentialism and minority identity politics. Rather, the fragmentation of movements and identities points to a more intricate imbrication of the postmodern within the contemporary.

Essentialist claims reinforce Black women's place within the discursive spaces of political movements, artistic categories, academic discipline discourses, and nations, in addition to negating the dynamic and evolving processes of race, class, and gender formations of Black women. By highlighting the differences between Black postmodernism and hegemonic postmodernism, I seek to shed

INDIAN CINEMA: A NARRATIVE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Shweta Awasthi

Indian cinema has travelled a long way from its initial depiction of women as pure, pristine souls ready to sacrifice their happiness at societal altar. The indelible imprint of mythological women like Sita, Draupadi, Gandhari etc. is easily visible in the portrayal of female characters in the movies. The movies of the past (especially mainstream cinema) glorified and celebrated female sacrifice and her resignation to all sorts of violence and harassment. However, one can notice a perceivable difference in the depiction of violence against women in contemporary cinema. The heroines are no longer depicted as muted, suffering, hapless creatures; rather they are active agents in initiating change and challenging the tenacity of societal norms. The present paper addresses the women's take at violence targeted against women as represented in Indian Cinema.

Violence occurs and permeates every sector of society in diverse ways. Newspapers are replete with incidences of violence. In fact the very creation of this cosmos is rooted in violence. Since the inception of society, violent actions and incidents have been registered perennially. This makes one question the reason behind its emphatic presence. Noticing the perilous nature of violence, several researches have been conducted to comprehend the inherent nature of violence and how it could be abated. Freud discussed two basic instincts that initiate actions: "After long doubts and vacillations we have decided to assume the existence of only two basic instincts... the aim of the first of these basic instincts is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus, in short, to bind together; the aim of the second, on the contrary, is to undo connections and to destroy things." (Freud, 1949: 20)

The second instinct lies behind all malice, hatred, jealousy etc. that lead to violence. The perpetuation of violence can be due to several reasons: ideological, personal, social, religious, ethical, economical and racial etc. Sometimes it comes as a by-product of the act of survival; at times as an act of self-defence. We are aware of the violent consequences of the spread of imperialistic powers and racist ideology. Portuguese and Dutch created havoc on the islands of Indonesia for the sake of their material profits and trade. Hitler's cruel and barbaric attempts at the annihilation of Jews, is a dark phase of human history. Violence is often associated with power. The shifts in power, either naturally or being usurped illegally lead to violence. Human history is replete with cases where power shifts have led to crude violence.

CINEMATIC VARIATIONS OF VICTOR HUGO'S *LES MISÉRABLES*: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Jatinder Kumar

This research paper conducts a comparative analysis of two cinematic adaptations of Victor Hugo's renowned novel, *Les Misérables*. Examining the many cinematic interpretations and delving into the unique narrative strategies and directing perspectives, the study sheds light on how the characters, themes, and overall storyline are portrayed.

The present paper is a comparative study of the cinematic techniques of two movie adaptations of the novel *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo. One movie was released in 1998 and the other one in 2012. The story, in the novel, revolves around the lives of Jean Valjean, the on-run convict; Javert, the police Inspector; Fantine, the worker turned into prostitute; Cosette, her daughter; Marius, a revolutionary and lover of Cosette. The 1998 film is directed by Bille August and has Liam Neeson, Geoffrey Rush, Uma Thurman, and Claire Danes in main roles. The 2012 film is directed by Tom Hooper and has Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway, Eddie Redmayne, Amanda Sey-fried, Helena Bonham Carter, and Sacha Baron Cohen in the main roles. It is scripted by William Nicholson, Alain Boublil, Claude-Michel Schönberg, and Herbert Kretzmer, based on the musical of the same name by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg. It is about the rivalry between Valjean and Javert; a love triangle between Cosette, Marius, and Epinone; and the student revolution. The 1998 film is more of a love story, between Valjean-Fantine, and Marius-Cosette and has revolution as a sort of background. This version features neither Epinone nor other revolutionaries.

Béla Balázs in his book *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art* establishes film as a new art as it has different "groundwork of dramatic style and means of expression" than theatre. The film provides "varying distance between spectator and scene within one and the same scene" which results in "varying dimensions of scenes ... [that] can be accommodated within the frame and composition of a picture," "division of internal picture of the scene into sections or shots"; "changing angle, perspective and focus of 'shots' within one and same thing" (31) which was not possible in theatre. Another feature is "Montage" which is "the assembly of 'shots' in a certain order in which not only whole scene follows whole scene ... but pictures of smallest details are given" (31) which further helps the director "to place emphasis where he sees fit, and thus not only show but at the same interpret the picture." (32) It is, for Balázs, the space where "the individual creativeness of

Review Essay

HOWARD ZINN AS VOICE OF THE VOICELESS:

TEGINDER'S *LOKAI DI AWAZ*

Navjot Khosla

"Why do you live in this country?" [sic], a hostile young voice from the crowd called out to him as he finished addressing high school students at an event (Zinn 14). The speaker, however, remained calm, for, angry outbursts hardly startled him anymore. As a historian, Howard Zinn had often encountered such bitterness in the course of his career. In fact, there had been times when his very patriotism had been called into question as Zinn believed that it was essential for a historian to interrogate history so as to weigh the "government's self-proclaimed benevolence and devotion to democracy" against "its actual policies" and to lay bare "how bad things have always been for the victims of poverty and oppression" (Duberman 167). Such views were not easy to hold and came at a great personal cost. In his defence, however, Zinn explained that his "love was for the country, for the people, not for whatever government happened to be in power," since the government is "an artificial creation, established by the people to defend the equal right of everyone to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (Zinn, Introduction 3). Further, the historian rightly made the antithetical observation that "[w]hen a government betrays...[these] democratic principles, it is being unpatriotic" since "[a] love of democracy would...require opposing your government. It would require being 'out of order'" (Zinn, Introduction 3-4).

In a splintered world marked by hostilities of every kind, it has been tragic that the progressive voice of reason has—nearly, always—been muffled, spurned, or put to death. And in a world where xenophobia and jingoism are being increasingly defined as 'love for one's country', more and more dissenters—public intellectuals, political and social activists—are being branded, imprisoned and/or tortured. Thus, the show of hostile emotion before Howard Zinn was not new. In truth, it has been reverberating through the ages and it remains as relevant today as it had been in the time of Socrates.

Howard Zinn – teacher, historian, writer, activist and the voice of people – was born to Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, New York on August 24, 1922. *Lokai di Awaz* (The Voice of People: Howard Zinn), authored by Teginder, is a book based on his life. Whether through protest marches, picketing, sit-ins, lectures or through writing editorials, Zinn never stopped believing in the power of the people. Critics contend that Zinn's arguments, largely based on secondary

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN AMRUTA PATIL'S *KARI*

Richa

Amruta Patil's *Kari* is a serious intervention in creatively highlighting multiple contemporary issues through a combination of visuals and letters. Novels are the expansive narratives both on spatial as well as temporal levels and Patil's graphic mode does enough justice to such expansion. The range of contemporary issues it engages with is remarkable. In the world of memes, twitter and Instagram, it is a difficult task to sustain interest in anything for a long time and hence graphic novels can be a successful mode of serving a lot of thought-provoking issues that can be dealt with in limited time. *Kari* turns out to be a text situated in between multiple social realities.

Migration from small town to big cities is one prominent contemporary issue that is well dealt with in the novel. Migration is certainly not a new issue but the context of *Kari* is modern. It is the effect of urbanization that a girl coming from a small town in search of a job struggles to find her foothold in a city much bigger than her imagination. Such a context takes into account various allied issues like cultural shock, alienation and also the difficulty her parents face in accepting this new way of living. Both her parents and Kari are continuously struggling to negotiate their ways in between conventionally accepted ways of existence and demands of a modern cosmopolitan life. Kari's distance from her family can be noticed visually when two pages go almost without words on a telephone call. This migration is not fulfilling yet desirable for Kari. She is not a successful person as such but is constantly negotiating her way in her job, in her relationship with her family and her heartbreak with Ruth.

Sexuality is another dimension it sensitively deals with. The queer representation has neither been romanticized nor reduced but has been represented with balance and care as one of the multiple realities and not as a single reality of one's existence. Multiple dimensions of sexual relations are given space in the novel that also intersects with issues like class. In case of Ruth and Kari, it is not only their sexuality but also their class that plays a significant role. Their problem was not non-acceptance of their sexual orientation but rather a clash of ideology and behaviour which in a way normalizes the so-called queer. Apart from a lesbian relationship, there are other aspects of sexuality such as casual sex, changing partners, group sex that have been given space without any judgments or value burden.

Apart from sexuality, death and disease are the realities it gives a lot of space to with ample care yet without sympathy. Angel struggles with her cancer while also working in her office in order to arrange money for her hospital bills. She suffers and dies without any melodrama. The concerns are multidimensional

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By far,
the greatest
danger of
Artificial Intelligence
is that
people conclude
too early
that they
understand it.

— *Eliezer Yudkowsky*
American AI researcher and writer

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