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RE-MARKINGS

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Jonathan Swift

Sister Nivedita

Alfred Tennyson

Charles Dickens

E. M. Forster

Nilakantha Das

Rohinton Mistry

Jonah Raskin

Lucinda Roy

Ian McEwan

Edouard Glissant

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Gita Mehta

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar

Baul Shah Abdul Karim

Sampat Pal Devi

Language Debate

A World Assembly

of Poets

CHIEF EDITOR : NIBIR K. GHOSH

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EDITORIAL

For readers, writers, academics and scholars closely associated with *Re-Markings*, the year 2017 will be remembered as a very important milestone in the seventeen-year-old history of the journal. In addition to two of our regular issues (March and September), two special numbers – *Bose: Immortal Legend of India's Freedom* and *A World Assembly of Poets*, published in January and November 2017 respectively, contributed immensely in enhancing the extent of international outreach that *Re-Markings* has been enjoying since its inception in 2002.

The launch of *Bose: Immortal Legend of India's Freedom* at Agra on 18 March, 2017 by Harvard Professor Sugata Bose (grand-nephew of the legendary hero, Subhas Chandra Bose) in the presence of numerous contributors to the volume and dignitaries from various parts of the country created an awe-inspiring aura of patriotic fervor in this historic city of Agra. Professor Sugata Bose's unforgettable address made the packed Agra Club auditorium resonate with the undying spirit of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The initiative taken by *Re-Markings* in addressing multi-dimensional aspects of Bose's life and work in the volume did not end with the historic launch of the special number. The flame of love, 'entire and whole and perfect', for mother India, kindled by Netaji's magnificent vision and revolutionary zeal, as reflected in the volume, continues to inspire us to rise above petty selfish motives and prioritize the welfare of the nation with unquestionable devotion, whatever may be the calling of our life. It is significant that the impact of our tribute to Bose on his 120th birth anniversary impressed the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi to grant Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Agra and *Re-Markings* the permission to organize jointly a National Seminar on "Subhas Chandra Bose: Life, Work and Legacy" in Agra in 2018. I am thankful to Professor Sugam Anand for his initiative in this context. The proposed seminar (the details of which will be on our website www.re-markings.com soon) will provide us another great opportunity to come together to be motivated by the iconic hero who changed the fate of India with his sterling leadership of the Indian National Army (INA).

The adulations and accolades that have come to *Re-Markings* from poets and poetry lovers of various countries in the globe by virtue of the publication of its mega-volume *A World Assembly of Poets*, guest edited by my intimate friend and celebrity Gambian poet, Dr. Tijan M. Sallah, have been a truly humbling experience. The extent of its

popularity can be ascertained from the statement made by Jonah Raskin at the end of his Huffingtonpost.com review (included in this issue): “If you read one anthology of poetry this year, make it *A World Assembly of Poets*. I can almost guarantee that you won’t be sorry. I can almost guarantee that you will be saddened, elated, provoked and delighted.” Elaborate comments and reviews of the volume are available on www.nibirghosh.blogspot.in.

Appreciative felicitations from both friends and strangers on reaching new milestones doubtlessly provide a deep sense of fulfillment and cheer but they also place upon us the enormous responsibility of heading for new destinations to meet the expectations of all those who have faith in the journal’s carrying out its avowed commitment and obligation to social responsibility.

Having always been at the forefront in highlighting local, regional, national and global issues, *Re-Markings* has decisively registered its indelible imprint on the social, cultural and literary map of the world with erudite critical and creative renderings.

Cutting across barriers and boundaries of time, clime and space, the current issue of *Re-Markings* illuminates the spirited engagement of its contributors in challenging the *status quo* in every sphere of human existence through narratives and counter-narratives of resistance and protest to create a better world for us to inhabit. On the one hand, this volume takes us into the amazing insightful experiences of Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver and, on the other, it tells us about the miraculous transformation of Margaret Noble to Sister Nivedita under the spiritual influence of Swami Vivekanda. If the volume foregrounds the plight and predicament of women in contemporary Indian society as reflected in literature, it also shows how the daring initiative of a semi-literate woman like Sampat Pal Devi, hailing from a remote hamlet in Uttar Pradesh, can make her rise in heroic splendor to change the rules of the gender game. It is equally heartening to see the transformative potential of creativity in bringing even adivasis living on the margins of society to the centre of our conscience as well as consciousness.

I deeply thank the members of the *Re-Markings*’ fraternity for the unalloyed love you all have shown for the journal in its eventful journey and for continuously enriching it with your erudite contributions and unstinted support.

Nibir K. Ghosh
Chief Editor

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**‘LEARNING TO ACCOMMODATE SPACES’
A CONVERSATION WITH LUCINDA ROY**

Nibir K. Ghosh

Lucinda Roy, Alumni Distinguished Professor in Creative Writing, teaches in the MFA program at Virginia Tech in the U.S. Her books include the poetry collections *Fabric* and *The Humming Birds*, the novels *Lady Moses* and *The Hotel Alleluia*, and the memoir-critique *No Right to Remain Silent: What We’ve Learned from the Tragedy at Virginia Tech*. Her poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction have been published in numerous journals and anthologies, including *American Poetry Review*, *Callaloo*, *North American Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Poet Lore*, *River Styx*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian* and *USA Today*. She has appeared on many TV and radio programs. Among her awards are the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Outstanding Faculty Award, the Virginia Press Women’s Association’s Newsmaker of the Year Award, and the Baxter Hathaway Poetry Prize for her long slave-narrative poem “Needlework.” She is working on a novel about slavery, and a series of oil paintings depicting the Middle Passage.

In this exchange with Nibir K. Ghosh, Lucinda Roy sheds insightful light on issues and concerns related not only to her abundant creativity but also on her role as a citizen of the world’s most powerful democracy.

Ghosh: It is a pleasure to greet you on behalf of *Re-Markings*. Equally delighted to have your poems in the *Re-Markings’* Special Number titled *A World Assembly of Poets*. How does it feel to be a part of an international community of poets brought together by the collaborative initiative of a journal from India?

Lucinda Roy: I think it is very important to hear voices from around the world. One of the many strengths of this special global issue is that it provides readers with work by a wide range of writers. These diverse voices shed light on exciting developments in the genre of poetry. They help us understand how much we all share with each other.

Ghosh: How do you feel writing in multiple genres: poetry, fiction, nonfiction, memoir?

Lucinda Roy: I love writing in multiple genres, though I have to say it can be extremely challenging.

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GULLIVER’S TRAVELS: VEXING AND MENDING

Jonah Raskin

Who could or would ever forget Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* that was originally published in Dublin in 1727 as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*? Swift was then sixty-years old, a bit late in life to write a masterpiece. Born on November 30, 1667, he would have celebrated his 350th birthday in 2017, not impossible for an author who brought to life the strangest and most wonderful of creatures both big and small, young and old. Dublin, Ireland was not a center of the literary world in 1727, but publication there did not prevent the book from traveling far and wide. Almost immediately, readers linked the narrative to its main character who quickly grew to be as famous as Hamlet and Lear, and so the book became known as *Gulliver’s Travels*. Surely every reader who has discovered it and who has been lured inside its pages remembers Mr. Lemuel Gulliver’s first-person accounts of his fictional adventures in Lilliput, the land of tiny people with tiny minds or in Brobdingnag, the land of giants who make him feel very small, indeed. Then, there are his extraordinary voyages to those strange and yet familiar countries with preposterous and nearly unpronounceable names, including Glubbdubdrib and Luggnagg, and then finally to the land of the Houyhnhnms, where the intrepid voyager seems to become disenchanted with humanity itself.

“I have ever hated all nations, professions and communities and all my love is towards individuals,” Swift wrote in a letter to his friend, Alexander Pope, in 1725, as he was getting ready to write *Gulliver’s Travels*. “I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love counselors,” he insisted. He added, “I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas and so forth. Upon this great foundation of misanthropy...the whole building of my travels is erected.” What he might have said and that he took for granted was that he didn’t write for money or for fame, but rather to tell the truth as he saw it, painful as it might be to that “animal called man.” Almost all of Swift’s works were published anonymously; only for *Gulliver’s Travels* did he receive any payment: £ 200, a considerable sum in the 1720s.

- **Jonah Raskin**, a frequent contributor to Re-Markings, is the author of 14 books, including literary criticism, reporting, memoir, and biography.

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**SISTER NIVEDITA:
150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE**

Swami Sujayananda

On a plaque at the memorial raised to her in the lap of the Himalayas in Darjeeling, where she breathed her last on 13th October, 1911, is written, "Here reposes sister Nivedita who gave her all to India."

Born in Ireland, brought up in England, her field of activity was in India but through her life and work she belongs to the whole world. Her idealism and spirit of dedication have lifted her to the ranks of the eternal. The saga of transformation from Margaret Noble to Nivedita is, on the one hand, fascinating and, on the other, inspiring.

Among the westerners who played essential roles in the life of Swami Vivekananda, there were six who, following their different paths of life, found themselves drawn into the divine orbit of Swamiji. To think of them is to think of the great Swamiji and as long as Swamiji is known to the world thinking of him will call them to our minds as well. They are i) Sara Bull ii) Josephine Macleod iii) Goodwin iv) Sister Christine v) The Seviars and vi) Nivedita. They each felt that their meeting with Swamiji was God-ordained; it was their destiny, the meeting that not only gave meaning to their birth but which seemed to be the very purpose of their birth, the goal towards which their early lives had guided them. And each of them was an individual in their own right, so finely chiseled personality. Among them Sara Bull, Josephine Macleod and Nivedita became very intimate to each other.

As Macleod said, "It was to set me free that Swamiji came; that was as much a part of his mission as it was to give renunciation to Nivedita." As for Nivedita, there is no doubt that she was a disciple. Her name given by Swamiji at her initiation means, "The Dedicated." Discipleship became the central fact of her life. But she was far more than just a disciple. She is not one more of the many interesting people that met Swamiji. She is not just an early interpreter of India to the west and to India herself or, she is not primarily a pioneer in girl's education in India nor one more figure in the stirrings of Indian Nationalism. Yes, she was all of these, but those roles are merely her ornaments.

- **Swami Sujayananda** is a Senior Monk at Ramakrishna Mission, Kolkata.

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FRENCH AND THE FRANCOPHONE WORLD AT CROSSROADS

Dipa Chakrabarti

The paper aims to focus on some writings by the francophone Diaspora authors of recent times such as Edouard Glissant, Yasmina Khadra, Léonora Miano and Alain Mabanckou. These authors are from diverse space and time but seem to show a convergence in their writings and thoughts though at different levels. They all talk of the narrowing down of the space between the North and the South, between the French and the Francophone world. Their writing exudes faith and positive feelings that in future better coexistence will be possible. As postcolonial authors they visualize the eventual transcendence of the hierarchical barrier between French and the Francophone world bequeathed to us in the aftermath of colonialism and Western imperialism.

Edouard Glissant, the Martinican poet, novelist, playwright and literary critic was born in 1928 in Sainte-Marie, Martinique. He left Martinique in 1946 for Paris where he studied ethnography at the Musée de l'Homme and History and philosophy at Sorbonne. His thinking seeks to interrogate notions of centre, origin and linearity and has influenced subsequent Martinican generation of writers. Hybridity as the bedrock of Caribbean identity sprung from his ideology. He himself talked of his closeness to two French philosophers, Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, and their theory of the 'rhizome' in the work *Mille Plateau (A Thousand Plateaus)*. Deleuze and Guattari use the terms 'rhizome' and 'rhizomatic' to describe theory and research as multiple or non-hierarchical in nature. The rhizome presents history and culture as a map or wide array of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis, for a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, inter being, intermezzo." The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization; in its place it favors a nomadic system of growth and propagation. In this conceptual model, culture spreads like the surface of a body of water, spreading towards available spaces or trickling downwards towards new spaces through fissures and gaps, eroding what is in its way.

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RESURRECTING GENDER ROLES: A CONVERSATION WITH SAMPAT PAL DEVI

*Reema Chowdhary, I Watitula Longkumer &
Nirmala Menon*

The post-economic-liberalization in India saw the rapid surfacing of women in socio-political milieu and their presence as leaders, activists, workers and professionals. An example of such visible activism is Sampat Pal Devi from Banda district of Uttar Pradesh, India. Sampat Pal Devi is the founder of Gulabi Gang, a group distinguished by their pink saris. The gang works against caste system, child marriage, dowry, domestic violence, and promotes women empowerment through literacy and concrete committed action in redefining stereotyped gender bias. She is the source of inspiration and strength to thousands of women associated with her in relentlessly correcting patriarchal inequalities inherent in the society we inhabit. Her popularity through films and media has brought her worldwide recognition. In this interface, conducted two years ago at her home in Banda, Uttar Pradesh, Sampat Pal Devi responds enthusiastically to the probing questions by Reema Chowdhary & I Watitula Longkumer to illuminate various dimensions of the origin, role and function of the Gulabi Gang she has been proudly leading since its inception in 2006.

Interviewers: Thank you for this opportunity to talk and interact with you. Can you briefly tell us about your personal life? How did you see yourself moving into social activism?

Sampat Pal Devi: Before forming this organization Gulabi Gang, I was a homemaker. Within the confines of my home I was aware of the female problems that were going around in my community. After I got married at the age of twelve I began to observe and disagree with many issues such as whether women should wear a veil, if they should be permitted to talk to other men and why meals should be served first to men. Few incidents which I observed and experienced, I will share with you.

- **Reema Chowdhary & I Watitula Longkumer** are Doctoral Research Scholars at IIT, Indore.
- **Dr. Nirmala Menon** is Associate Professor in the Discipline of English Language and Literature, Digital Humanities and Publishing Studies Research Group, IIT, Indore,

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LANGUAGE DEBATE: DIALECT AS SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY

G. L. Gautam

In this paper, while analyzing language as a social product and debating the issue of English versus indigenous languages, I shall base my argument on Marxian Critique of bourgeois culture and society. Secondly, I shall draw on Marxian literary criticism to demonstrate (a) The space a dialect enjoys in a literary text; (b) In what relation does a dialect stand to wide cultural acceptance a language enjoys? and c) What concerns were at the heart of Tagore, Marx and Gandhi for promotion of indigenous language versus English.

If we were to put the above situation in postcolonial construct of language being superordinate and subordinate we would put it this way: Imperialist language/indigenous languages; indigenous languages/dialect or tribal languages.

While introducing the central point in the following analysis, I must say, that since dialect resides on the periphery of wide cultural space, in terms of cultural dominance language enjoys, it exists in a sort of dialectical position. The strength of dialect lies in the fact that it enjoys autonomy and acceptance within its own cultural contours. This very existence of dialect against the bourgeois language constitutes a subversive activity. The dichotomy between bourgeois culture and folk culture has been shown in *As You Like It*. In the Forest of Arden, Touchstone, obsessed as he is with bourgeois culture consciousness, seeks to browbeat by his high upbringing Corin, who is a farm laborer, so that the latter may accept the superiority of city culture. Culturally, these two worlds are distinguishable from one another: "Those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of country is most mockable at the court" (Shakespeare, 1969:258). In the observation of Corin is implicit the fact that there arises a cultural conflict when two cultures, bourgeois and proletariat, meet by way of interaction. Among the bourgeois good manners would naturally imply a refined speech that will certainly be ridiculed in the countryside.

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**QUESTIONING HISTORY THROUGH INNER LIFE:
A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF
IAN MCEWAN'S *ON CHESIL BEACH***

Antara Bhatia

Ian McEwan's *On Chesil Beach* is, chronologically speaking, strategically placed at the turning point between the liberated radicalism of the 1960s and the sexual repression that was a feature of the previous decade. The action itself takes place on the titular beach which becomes a symbol throughout the book for the profound barrier between the two decades. The author uses the motif of a single moment in time that transforms the lives of its characters. This situation is presented from different perspectives and the recurring angle is that the two characters who are part of it occupy completely different mental spaces and realities. The entire action of the novella takes place in one single night, the wedding night of a newly married couple; and as the book progresses, the reader is forced to constantly realign his/her way of thinking and change interpretations to keep up with the dizzying shifts in perspective. The ironically-archaic named Edward and Florence are each representative of the 1960's decade and the one before that. By presenting varied thoughts about love, sexuality, coming to terms with a troubled past and so on, the author refuses to identify black and white, right and wrong and intrinsically keeps the message grey. Water and the seascape as a symbol are also used to represent the fluidity of the narrative and the problematic nature of interpretation. This paper seeks to identify the way in which the unreliability of language is brought about as well as history and past reconstructed through the psychology and inner life of the two characters.

The psychological aspect of *On Chesil Beach* is thus deep and constant. McEwan was greatly influenced by Freud whose theories have been deployed in many of the novels. In this one in particular, McEwan undertakes a psychological study of the human psyche. This is seen in detail through the effects of past experience on both the characters' responses later in life. The family histories of both are clearly dysfunctional.

- **Dr. Antara Bhatia** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Ambedkar University, Delhi.

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ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN E. M. FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

Pooja Joshi

Walt Whitman declares in his *Leaves of Grass*: "There can be no theory of any account unless it corroborate the theory of the earth,/ No politics, song, religion, behavior, or what not, is of account, unless it compare/ With the amplitude of the earth,/ Unless it face the exactness, vitality, impartiality, rectitude of the earth" ("A Song of the Rolling Earth" 223).

Since time immemorial, nature, or environment, or landscape has been a very potent area of investigation in all the major fields of study. In the light of this statement, E. M. Forster's masterpiece *A Passage to India* can be seen unveiling a significant probe into the study of ecology or eco-criticism. Those critics who have defined, studied, and applied concepts such as "pastoral," "romanticism," "transcendentalism," or "the frontier," or in American literature those critics who have pointed out that in the nineteenth century the land served as a determinant and symbol of the national character – weren't they all exploring the relationship between humanity and the natural world?

Simply defined, eco-criticism or ecology is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, eco-criticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. This school of criticism has focused more on the literary style of the text in order to place it into a canonical framework than on the human description of an actual landscape. Glen Love made a bold claim in his address "Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism" to Western Literature Association in 1989: "The most important function of literature today is to redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world. Why does nature writing, literature of place, regional writing, poetry of nature, flourish now – even as it is ignored or denigrated by most contemporary criticism? (Love 215).

- **Dr. Pooja Joshi** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Kanoria PG Girls College, Jaipur.

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GITA MEHTA'S *A RIVER SUTRA* AS A TRAVEL PILGRIMAGE

Ashoo Toor

Travelogues have been popular in the history of world literature. Literary travelogues generally exhibit a coherent narrative or aesthetics beyond the logging of dates and events as found in travel journals. Inspirational kind of travel writing takes the travelogue adventure or personal experience a step ahead by incorporating a spiritual message or the motivation for change as experienced by a writer/narrator or a character.

Gita Mehta's philosophical travelogue, *A River Sutra*, is a study of the conundrum of life through expedition stories offering authentic interpretations of Indian cultural values, music, art forms, heritage and a liberal dose of Indian metaphysics. It is a lyrical homage to one of India's holiest river, the Narmada, which as a cultural and religious destination becomes a space where different pilgrims throng, meet and interact while on a spiritual journey. They are thrown into the company of one another to form new perceptions and exchange ideas and beliefs.

The setting of the novel is on the banks of river Narmada amid constant traffic of pilgrims, archaeologists, policemen, priests and traders. The Narmada is the '*Sutra*' which threads together the diverse people who live on its shores or who come to worship at its banks. A colourful travelogue, *A River Sutra* is a series of interlocking stories told with a higher level of conscious story telling. Each bewitching tale reflects the depth and complexity of India's spirituality. Mehta follows the Narmada from its source at *Narmadakund* at Amarkantak Hill to the important *Ghats* and temples along the course of the river before it merges into the Arabian Sea; she uses the holy river as a means to ponder over religion, culture, ecology, myth, reality, desire, sorrow, passionate intensity, detachment, blind faith, renunciation, self-realization disappointment, love, pain and wisdom. Mehta religiously outlines the *ghats* along the river, namely, the Amarkantak (Neck of Shiva) or Teertharaj (the King of Pilgrimages), Omkareshwar, Maheshwar and Mahadeo temples – all named after Shiva.

- **Ashoo Toor** is Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Agricultural Journalism, Languages & Culture at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.

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**BARREN WITCHES IN GITHA HARIHARAN'S
*THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT***

Sadia Hasan

Women's reproductive implication – their capacity to bear and nourish children – has to a very large extent defined a woman's role, her worth, her quality of life and the treatment meted out to her in and by the society. It has certainly come at a huge personal cost for women – subverting her identity and reducing her to just a womb. Her being a 'wife' also has its direct bearing on its essential counterpart of being a mother and carrying on the task of bearing and rearing children.

The patriarchal society has turned what could have been one of the most rewarding and procreative experience into a fearful trajectory. Blessed with the capacity of forwarding human race, motherhood could very well have been a symbol of utmost power and ultimate panoramic status of exaltation, but instead, in all its practicality, it is a major source of anxiety for women. It is this power of bearing children and producing another generation of family that leads to her suffering at the hands of her husband and in-laws. Her capacity to bear children and the gender of the children she bears has direct implication on her worth in the society. Krishnaraj writes, "... the normative glorification of motherhood in Indian religious traditions, poetry and prose rarely translates itself into reality in the lives of mothers" (Preface). Instead, the traditional concept of motherhood is synonymous with a willing or unwilling tolerance of a life of sacrifice, suffering and often, exploitation. Motherhood is considered to be an inevitable, natural destiny and ultimate aspiration of a woman's life and it is a commonly held belief that a woman's happiness and fulfillment can only come through it. In fact, the idea of completeness of a woman is strongly projected through motherhood. Society, in all its limited and limiting view, looks at her only in terms of her procreative faculty.

Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is a text heavy in women issues. It addresses a number of complexes resulting from various facets of being a woman – her preparation for a life of silent and silenced sacrifice...

- **Dr. Sadia Hasan** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

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**NILAKANTHA DAS'S *PRANAYINI* AND
TENNYSON'S *THE PRINCESS*: A STUDY IN
TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH TO ODISIA**

Pranamita Pati

This paper aims at making a comparative study in translation of two poems: one by an English poet laureate, Tennyson and another by a great Odia poet and philosopher, Nilakantha Das. It may appear a misadventure in literary criticism as both are far from each other. Of course, translation has the potentiality to cross the political, geographical and cultural boundaries. Nilakantha Das must have read many poems of Tennyson as he was a very popular poet of his time. Nilakantha Das was attracted by Tennyson's *The Princess*; it may not be a very powerful poem but, at the same time, it is an important and popular poem. Thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings do not obey frontiers. Naturally a sensitive mind was bound to be attracted by a passionate poem of the poet. In pre-independence era a translator was bound by some restraints: both psychological and emotional fear while translating from English to a native language. Such fear was not to be expected from Pandit Nilakantha Das as he was well-versed in English literature and language.

It is evident from his autobiography that Tennyson was a favorite poet of Das. He used to read and recite his poems. It is no wonder that he liked Tennyson's *The Princess* and translated it into Odia, his mother tongue. Translation, after all, cannot be done mechanically – to get rewards. It is a creation of passion like love. Nilakantha Das fell in love with *The Princess* and translated it as *Pranayini*. *Pranayini* may be read as Das's release of pent-up emotion and passion. In other words, it may be called 'katharsis' or what Freud would call "psychic economic expenditure."

The Princess is a passionate poem. Passion has no boundary. Grierson thinks that "a passionate understanding of the universe is the theme of metaphysical poetry." Tennyson and Nilakantha Das both were passionate poets in their own ways. Both had to work under a limited freedom. Victorian society was, after all, a "closed" society.

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MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE: THE STORIES OF HANSDA SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR

Namita Sethi

The Adivasi Will Not Dance (TAWND 2015) is a striking collection of stories by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar who is an indigenous Indian writer in English. Using Santhali, Oriya, Hindi and Bangla words without translating them, Shekhar offers a polyphonous prose that sings of degrees of dispossession and marginalization in recognizable literary modes, avoiding the anthropological style usually favoured in such narratives. His irony never misses its mark and at the same time the political concerns blend seamlessly into tales that appeal to the imagination. Resisting easy categorization, the writing gives insights into every day middleclass Santhali life as well as sensitive portrayals of characters who live at the margins of society.

In both *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey* (2014), his first novel, and *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, Shekhar explores the themes of Santhal aspirations and alienation. Both look back at Jaipal Singh the Adivasi leader who in 1946 expressed the hope for “equality of opportunity, where no one will be neglected” (Speech made to Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946 at the Constituent Assembly, Qtd. by Guha). However, as Ramachandra Guha has argued globalization and the postcolonial period has seen continued exploitation of the tribals of peninsular India in the name of democratic development by the wider economy and polity. He points out that they are worse off than other disadvantaged groups. While Dalits and Muslims have had some impact in shaping the national discourse on democracy and governance, the tribals remain not just marginal but invisible (Guha).

Shekhar’s characters often face discrimination not only from upper caste characters but also at the hands of Dalits and other marginalized groups. In the story “Eating with the Enemy,” Sulochana, who is a Ghaasi Harijan, shrinks back in horror from Adivasis. The situation is rife with comic irony because she does not realize that her employer and confidante is a Santhal, living as they do in a colony full of Bengali households.

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CHARLES DICKENS' *HARD TIMES* AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Shiv Kant Mishra

Undesirable gases, particulate metals, carbon dioxide from fuel combustion, smog, fallout and many more such types of substances have been causing imbalance in our environment. These substances pollute the entire atmosphere and this polluted atmosphere causes many harmful effects on human beings and on our ecological system. The harmful effects are the source of several diseases in living beings. This effect creates numerous changes in nature in the form of Global Warming, melting of glaciers, floods, rains, droughts, shifting of seasons, unpredictable weather etc. They are sure signs of disaster. Similarly, the unjustified distribution of money, wealth, land, positions, jobs, resources (both natural and man-made) in any institution, or in any society, in any sphere in society causes serious imbalance in our social, political and economic systems. This imbalance may be called corruption. The practice of such acts makes the system corrupt and the corrupt system becomes the mockery of any nation; and no nation can claim to be great with these corrupt practices. It is interesting to see how Dickens' writings, though focusing on the England of his time, reveal the true picture of such corrupt practices in contemporary Indian society.

Charles Dickens, the greatest English novelist, has portrayed the exquisite sense of the Victorian era as William Shakespeare portrayed the Renaissance England of the Elizabethan era. Dickens' *Hard Times*, like other novels, is very much relevant in today's India as it was in England in the 19th century. *Hard Times* is significant because it depicts not only the real picture of the majority of people in England but is also reflective of today's India. It exposes the impact of industrialization on Indian life and culture. Dickens made his grim satire on inhumanity, commercialism and industrialism. In *Hard Times*, he attacked underlying concepts. India's major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Patna, Ghaziabad, Kanpur, Agra, and Ahmedabad greatly resemble Coketown in *Hard Times*. They are muddled, polluted and exhausted where people are unable to get even fresh air properly.

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ETHNOCENTRICITY IN THE NOVELS OF ROHINTON MISTRY

Megha Khandelwal

Rohinton Mistry's fictional world is bound with the exceptional caption of Ethnocentricity. The whole Parsi community passionately celebrates this exception which is like an icing on the cake. This is actually the cause which makes Rohinton Mistry an excellent author. He is considered as the "ethnic atrophy" and the most sincere Parsi writer who painted the crystal clear scenario of Parsi superiority. Superiority is the word which is quite trendy among the Parsis. Though they were eliminated from their homeland, Persia, and were also persecuted for religious conversion, yet they somehow originated the way for compensating their virtuous glory. Till today they are constantly endeavoring to keep alive their dying religion. Parsis are the followers of Zoroastrianism which is an ancient monotheistic religion founded by the Persian prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra. It announces the complete dedication for the eternal wise God, Ahura Mazda. This religion acquires a unique kind of life style; that's why the Parsis are classified as the unique earthlings.

The word Ethnocentricity asserts that it is actually "relating to or holding the belief that one's own culture, tradition or racial group is superior to all others" (Chambers Dictionary). This definition is quite applicable to the Parsis.

This paper seeks to focus on every superior habitude of the Parsis varnished by Mistry in his fictions. Moving from one panel to another, this paper will knit all the traits with a valid reason. Parsis are following their culture from their forefather's generations. After migrating from their homeland, there are some changes which took place in their rituals due to the lack of facilities, but still the place for rituals and cultural traits are duly respectable. This community celebrates several rituals and festivals. Their ceremonies can be divided into Seasonal festivals, Monthly festivals and Annual festivals. All such festivals take place individually accordingly to the Zoroastrian calendar. Other than these, festivals like the Behram Roje and one of the famous rituals the Navjote ceremony also comes under the Parsis' ethnic pride.

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Poetry

MYRIAD MOODS *Baul Shah Abdul Karim*

Translated from the Bengali by
Amitendu Bhattacharya

GLITTERS SPLENDIDLY THIS PEACOCK-SHAPED BOAT

What craftsman has made this boat
So astonishing it looks
Glitters splendidly this peacock-shaped boat

The sun and the moon fitted to its top
Using a telescope the boatman rows
Glitters splendidly this peacock-shaped boat
O what craftsman has made this boat

So many boats of various colours ply on earth
Singing colourful *Sari* songs they navigate the rivers
Glitters splendidly this peacock-shaped boat
O what craftsman has made this boat

Sings *Jari* songs, plies boat, and claps his hands
Boatman, your doppelganger is so wicked:
Drowns so many boats
Glitters splendidly this peacock-shaped boat
O what craftsman has made this boat

While sketching victory or loss who cares about whom
Boatman Madana, operate well the oars of faith
Glitters splendidly this peacock-shaped boat
O what craftsman has made this boat

Baul Abdul Karim says, it's so hard to understand
Wherefrom come the boats and where do they go
Glitters splendidly this peacock-shaped boat

TRAPPED INTO MARRIAGE

I was trapped into marriage
Without my knowledge
A normal man, I've gone mad
After bringing wife to the house

Knowing not what's good what's bad
To marry I sold my land
I've six daughters and five lads
The youngest one calls me 'dad'

Life has become one of constant jostling
Starving, wrangling and hurrying
Previously I was wayward and obstinate
Now I'm mostly obedient

When I was alone, all was well
What need was there then to wed?
Was I possessed by some spirit
That I fell prey to others' tricks?

Abdul Karim says, days past come to mind
Life was great when it was just the two of us
To the future I was blind.

I CAN'T ENDURE ANYMORE

Together we were once, you and I
Now I'm all alone
This earthly life and this torment
I can't endure anymore, O Sarala!

The world anyway is a difficult place
None to hear misery or complaint
So shed tears in private
This earthly life and this torment
I can't endure anymore, O Sarala!

With sorrow my life is made
Suffered miseries ever since birth

Now I'm indigent
And there's not much time left
This earthly life and this torment
I can't endure anymore, O Sarala!

How much more can the tender heart take
How much longer must I roam in the wilderness
How many more days the eyes should eject rivulets
This earthly life and this torment
I can't endure anymore, O Sarala!

You are gone somewhere far away
The life bird in me wants to fly away
The one I nurtured with bird feed throughout
This earthly life and this torment
I can't endure anymore, O Sarala!

Says Karim, misfortune's favourite
So many thoughts jostle in the head
Without you life's game is interrupted
This earthly life and this torment
I can't endure anymore, O Sarala!

WHERE'S ALL THE BRAVADO OF OLDEN DAYS NOW GONE

Where's all the bravado of olden days now gone?
While walking the feet don't abide
Every passing day makes me go numb during strides
Where's all the bravado of olden days now gone?

The hairs on the scalp are greying
The teeth have come loose at the jaws
The light in the eyes has diminished —
Think I should buy specs!—
The heart is not at ease in this pageantry
Sloth has entered the body
Often make mistakes while speaking
Become tongue-tied every once in a while
Where's all the bravado of olden days now gone?

Shrinking bit by bit
The guardian angels proclaim
My earthly life has been in vain—
Now I cling to that thought!—
Can't eat like in the earlier times
Overeating sets off indigestion
Don't speak like before
The jazz of colours is not sustained
Where's all the bravado of olden days now gone?

Was better off in boyhood days
Adulthood's got me stuck
Didn't accord value to time—
That's where I'm guilty!—
What had to happen has happened
Abdul Karim now wishes
A time should present itself
When I become a pure dervish
Where's all the bravado of olden days now gone?

- **Shah Abdul Karim** (1916-2009) was the pre-eminent Baul composer and singer of recent times. All his life he lived in Ujan Dhol village by the Kalni river in Sylhet division of Bangladesh. Born to poverty and hardship, he earned his living by becoming an agricultural help. As a shepherd he had enough time to jot down his passing thoughts and emotions. Nobody exactly knows the number of songs he had composed but it is estimated to be around fifteen hundred. He received his spiritual and musical training from Shah Ibrahim Mastan Baksh. In 2001, Shah Abdul Karim was honoured with the Ekushey Padak, the second highest civilian award in Bangladesh, for his contributions to folk music and culture.
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**REVENGE ON THE RAVISHER
(DRAUPADI'S VOW)**

Divyajyoti Singh

Like venomous snakes
they sting me
my luscious hair.
And till they are washed
In the ravisher's blood
I'll tie them not.

Can I hold the hurricane
Or show the limits to the dark clouds
Gathered over the horizon?

A weak woman mere
How can I?

Like doom's night they cover my body
And speak to me:
'Truth is bitter;
Taste it;
Night is dark;
Be draped in it.'

Is their esteem Born in the insult to a woman?
Is their pride Nursed in a woman's dishonour?
Is their religion Cradled in her shame?
Is their glory Bred in the ignominy of a woman?

Can I create another history
with the ink of this gloom?
End this era;
Close this story?

Why should I not spill the venom that I have drunk?
Why should I bind the scattered night?

They called themselves warriors.
In their presence
I sat holding my breath.

Till the day
I was dragged in their midst by my hair
As the council of great men looked askance
And knights threw many a furtive glance
To see my hair undone.

Bind them?
Like snakes
full of venom
They sting me
My luscious hair
Washed in the ravisher's blood I may tie them yet.

When I look back
I see Amba,
The fallen woman.
Abducted, returned and spurned
She burnt in the fire of her fury.

When I look forth
I see Shikhandi
The hermaphrodite
Sprung from Amba's ashes
mocked by the male warriors
firmly avenging her wrongs.

I tie them not
Not that my memory of that day may fade
But to remind you that it happened
And it happened when you were around.

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Review Essay

A WORLD ASSEMBLY OF POETS: IN THE COUNTRY WE CALL POETRY

Jonah Raskin

Geoffrey Chaucer was apparently the first English poet to be buried in London's Westminster Abbey. That was in 1400, before Gutenberg and his invention of movable type and before Columbus and his initial voyage across the Atlantic to a place he called America. Ever since 1400, dozens of poets have been buried there, some of them well known—as least to poetry lovers—like Tennyson and Browning, others hardly known as all—like Isaac Barrow and Adam Fox—even to scholars of poetry.

Lord Byron died in 1824 but was not given a memorial until 1969. The congregation of so many dead poets—and novelists and playwrights, too—in one place prompted, at some unspecified date, the use of the name “Poets' Corner” to describe it.

For thousands of years, poets have occupied a strange place not only in the pages of literature, but in the cultures and the societies they have memorialized in verse. As poet laureates, they're honored, but they're also treated as alien creatures that belong in a corner and not mixed in with the likes of ordinary men and women. And sometimes, as in the case of Chaucer, they're buried in unmarked graves. Fascists executed the internationally renowned poet Federico Garcia Lorca in 1936 in Spain. His body has never been found.

In an essay at the start of *A World Assembly of Poets*, Professor Nibir K. Ghosh wonders why Plato banished poets from his republic and why also ancient Athens condemned Socrates to death. The reasons are not as obscure as they may seem. Poets are inherently subversive, as the work in this new volume amply demonstrates. Poetry—real poetry and not drivel or doggerel—undermines power, wealth and authority. Or if they don't actually undermine kings, presidents and dictators they aim to unsettle the world. And sometimes as with T.S. Eliot in “The Waste Land,” they subvert language itself.

Indeed, poets pledge allegiance, if they pledge it at all, to poetry. Well they might because poetry is always in danger and in need of defending, though it's much beloved by school boys and girls who can recite from memory lines of their favorite verse.

They also dream about growing up and becoming poets. But somewhere along the line they decide, or are forced by circumstances, to become bankers, tradesmen, doctors, lawyers, midwives and teachers.

A great many of the poets included in *A World Assembly of Poets* are or were employed by colleges and universities, as their brief, fascinating biographies indicate. Tljan M. Sallah, the guest editor for *A World Assembly of Poets*, taught at several American universities before he went to work for the World Bank. The Ghanaian Poet, Kofi Anyidoho, teaches at the University of Ghana. Arun Kamal is a professor of English at Patna University in Patna, and David Ray was until his retirement a professor at the University of Missouri.

English departments in Asia, Africa and the Americas often house poet, though some poets such as the Brazilian Izacyl Gusmares Ferreira have worked as cultural attaché for their country's embassies.

As the California poet Ed Coletti likes to say, "there's no money in poetry." He might have added that there's poetry in money. (See, for example, Allen Ginsberg's poem "The Velocity of Money.")

In his introductory essay, Sallah makes a valiant effort to define poetry in terms of geography and nationality. "If American poetry is geared to the individual and the particular, the poetry of Asia is dominated by public and spiritual concerns," he writes. But what is one to make of the poetry of Meera Ekkanath Klein who was born in India and who has spent most of her adult life in California? In "Melting Pot" she writes that she is "Americanized on the outside/ with a south Indian core/ Indian as apple pie/ American as samosas."

Or, again, what does one make of the poetry of Ariel Dorfman, who was born in Chile, forced into exile after the coup that toppled the government of Salvador Allende, and then for many years served as a professor at Duke. Whether they have passports or not, poets are exiles and émigrés who belong to the country of poetry. Poets defy categories and labels.

Sallah is on firmer ground when he writes about individual poets and not on poetry and nationality. "The poetry of the Chinese poet, Liu Hongbin," he writes, "gives us the sad nostalgia of the involuntary émigré who wants to return but cannot because of inhospitable politics at home." Sallah also notes that Mao Tse Tung "scribbled brainwashing ideological poetry." But not all of Mao's poetry is propagandistic and ideological. In "Region of the Great Pines," from

1933, Mao wrote: “Red orange yellow green blue violet./ Who is dancing in the sky—holding the colorful ribbon/ of the rainbow?” As a dictator, Chairman Mao’s poetry declined in quality and quantity, but as a kind of bandit and rebel he wrote memorable verse. In 1972, near the end of the cultural revolution, Willis Barnstone, an American poet, translated Mao’s work. The original Chinese sits side-by-side with the English versions.

Most of the poems in *A World Assembly of Poets* could be described as “subversive,” but they probably would not be called “experimental” or “avant-garde.” On the page, they look box-like and boxed-in, though that’s not true, for example, of Stephen Symons “The Smell of the Sea (Or Losing My Country)” which takes liberties with its lines: “

A salted tongue of
memory, licking cloud
from the moon.

Hakri R. Madhunuti plays with form in “Denied Substantial and Fundamental Creation”

it is now in the
who
you love that may
determine that you
die

Only the word “God”—the very last word in the poem—is capitalized. All the others are lower case.

This volume ends appropriately with a poem by Joanna Chen titled “By the Time You Read This,” that goes, “By the time you read this/ it will be late/and I will be far away.../Or perhaps/ you will be far away/ and I will be here.”

The poems in *A World Assembly of Poets* are about separations and associations. They’re about coming together and moving apart, the linking of isolated experiences and the distance between lonely individuals.

In person the poets represented here might not be as cordial as one would them to be. Poets (at least in California, where I live) are notoriously competitive, perhaps because there is so little, materially speaking, to fight about. On the page, the poets cozy up to one

another, enhance one another's work and echo one another's sentiments.

If you read one anthology of poetry this year, make it *A World Assembly of Poets*. I can almost guarantee that you won't be sorry. I can almost guarantee that you will be saddened, elated, provoked and delighted.

REFERENCE

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- **Jonah Raskin**, a frequent contributor to *Re-Markings*, is on the Advisory Board of the journal. This review by Jonah Raskin originally appeared in www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/poets-corner (USA).



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is
like
drinking
poison
and
then
hoping
it will
kill
your enemies.**

- Nelson Mandela

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