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# RE-MARKINGS

A Biannual Refereed International  
Journal of English Letters

Purabi Roy  
Cyril Wong  
Nibir K. Ghosh  
E. Ethelbert Miller  
Jonah Raskin  
Shanker A. Dutt  
Abdul Shaban  
Mohammad Asim Siddiqui  
Santosh Gupta  
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# **RE-MARKINGS**

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Re-Markings, a biannual refereed international journal of English Letters, aims at providing a healthy forum for scholarly and authoritative views on broad sociopolitical and cultural issues of human import as evidenced in literature, art, television, cinema and journalism with special emphasis on New Literatures in English including translations and creative excursions.

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## EDITORIAL

Way back in 1964, V.S. Naipaul created a huge furore in private and public discourse when he unabashedly pronounced in his *An Area of Darkness*: "Indians defecate everywhere. They defecate, mostly, beside the railway tracks. But they also defecate on the beaches; they defecate on the hills; they defecate on the river banks; they defecate on the streets; they never look for cover." Though Nissim Ezekiel quickly countered Naipaul's stance in his brilliant essay, "Naipaul's India and Mine," by underlining the fact that "the hypersensitivity of the writer ought not to trample on the sensitivities of other people," he did not refute the hard reality that Naipaul exposed. Naipaul's statement remained a cause for national embarrassment even half-a-century later as is evident from a World Health Organization (WHO) report published in 2014 that stated that more than half a billion people in India still "continue to defecate in gutters, behind bushes or in open water bodies, with no dignity or privacy." Nothing had changed and it appeared nothing would change. Then descended on the despairing scenario a mortal called Narendra Modi who created a sensation by declaring in his 2014 election campaign, "Toilets first, temples later." I do not know whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi was aware of Naipaul's observations with regard to sanitation in India but his election promise, backed by concrete and resolute action under his direct leadership, became a rallying point for creating an unprecedented movement for rural sanitation. The result of his ability to combine vision and mission for the uplift of the 'common man' is there for all to see. In this context I would like to recall the lines from a poem entitled "Seeds of Dreams" penned by none other than Modi himself:

You may have dreams, or you may not  
But these seeds of dreams  
That I sow in my land  
I drench with sweat and await  
Their sprouting, become a banyan tree.

Modi's phenomenal triumph in the Lok Sabha elections and his emergence as an icon of world-wide popularity has brought to the forefront his exemplary charismatic personality. Walking with Kings and yet being able to retain his 'common touch', Modi commanded such awe and respect that even the internationally known powerful magazine *Time* that had used the epithet "A Divider in Chief" on its cover in an issue before the Elections were over had to retract its pronouncement

and acknowledge, in an article published immediately after the election results were declared, that “no Prime Minister has united the Indian electorate as much in close to five decades.” In one of his poetic utterances Modi has written:

The sea roars and striving  
Takes the sky in its arms  
This is my inspiration,  
My strength, my youthful energy.

– “We Merge as One,” *A Journey: Poems* by Narendra Modi.

If one looks at these poetic statements of Modi in the light of his aspirations and dreams and what he has been able to achieve as an individual as well as the head of the world’s largest democracy, one can easily understand how what we write from the inner recesses of our heart and soul may shape what we ultimately become.

Thus, while conveying our heartfelt felicitations to our worthy Prime Minister for creating laudatory landmarks with his words and deeds, I am optimistic that, under his dynamic leadership, India will not only become an economic and political super power but also a “heaven of freedom” in a vibrant democracy where each one of its citizens, dedicated to the motherland, can proclaim, without the fear or anxiety of any Big Brother watching him or her, what Walt Whitman envisaged for true democracy in his *Song of Myself*:

One’s-Self I sing, a simple separate person,  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,  
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the  
Muse, I say the Form complete is worthier far,  
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,  
Cheerful, for freest action form’d under the laws divine,  
The Modern Man I sing.

These are times of great upheavals and changes where we are a witness to inherent contradictions between the ideals we cherish and the ground

reality that we confront in our day-to-day existence. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had once remarked: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." I can say assert with all humility, how In a span of eighteen eventful years, through over one thousand essays, interviews, articles, poems, short stories, critiques and reviews, Re-Markings has consistently provided a healthy forum to academics, scholars, researchers, writers, critics, intellectuals, literary and social activists to break their silence and articulate forcefully their authoritative views on broad sociopolitical and cultural concerns of human import in India and various parts of the globe.

It gives me immense pleasure to place in your welcoming hands this celebratory issue marking the 40<sup>th</sup> milestone in our eventful journey together since Re-Markings embarked on its mission in March 2002. This issue is 'celebratory' not because it marks a certain number on the graph of time but because it showcases an amazing variety of responses to "things that matter." My heart rises in pride and thankfulness to acknowledge with deep feelings of gratitude the measure of affection and esteem displayed by so many friends in associating themselves with Re-Markings in general and with this landmark volume in particular.

Even a cursory glance at the list of contents in this volume shows the range and variety of responses to issues and concerns of abiding universal interest. The conversation with Dr. Purabi Roy reveals the missionary zeal of a fearless crusader engaged in a lifelong quest to unravel the truth about the disappearance of the immortal legend of India's freedom: Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. In his interface with Re-Markings Cyril Wong, the young iconoclast from Singapore, reaffirms, "I don't subscribe to an "art for art's sake" type of philosophy. If a poet is going to kill a tree to print a book, surely the poems printed should count for more than just acrobatic performances." E. Ethelbert Miller, in coming to terms with the events in his home country, the USA, narrates with agony, "What begins to shut down over a short period of time is our tolerance and love for 'the outsider' and stranger." In his inimitable style, Prof. Jonah Raskin from California shares his reasons for writing Murder Mysteries. Prof. Shanker A. Dutt's poignant response to historical calamities like the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and the Riots of 1984 painfully reminds us how "the outcome of divisive politics can often be an archival reference for history's shame." Prof. Abdul Shaban emphatically brings out how Urdu, the language of *Ganga-Jamuni Tehjeeb*, became the instrument of politics related to divisive politics. Prof. Asim Siddiqui's piece on Shahryar's ghazals and nazms

succinctly celebrates “virtues of rationalism and man’s progress in the world.”

Dr. Tijan M. Sallah’s masterly tribute to Chinua Achebe, the “Teacher of Light” and the undisputed founder of African Literature, tells us that we desperately “... need patriots like him,/ Whose rich thoughts and acts energize our people.” Dr. Sanjukta Sattar’s views on Women entrepreneurs introduces a new dimension to the discussion on questions of women empowerment. Dr. Aparna Lanjewar’s reflection on Buddhist Dhamma from both marginal and mainstream perspectives offers a unique view into a seminal area of contemporary human concern.

It is significant that Prof. Santosh Gupta’s essay on Amitav Ghosh features in this volume at a time coinciding with the award of the 54<sup>th</sup> Jnanpith to Amitav Ghosh, the relentless activist against environmental degradation. Amitav Ghosh created history when he became the first recipient of the award as a writer writing in English. His statement in this context is a befitting testimony to the value of Bhasha literature: “Even though I write in English, I draw constantly from Bangla and its vast imaginative resources.... Communication between languages and across different habits of mind, always require, humility, patience and a willingness to listen.”

In addition to the above contributions, the offerings by our guests from the USA and the U.K. – Iris Jamahl Dunkle, Lindsay Adkins and Samiullah Khokhar – are truly invigorating. To all these writers, poets and critics, I am hugely grateful for responding so spontaneously and warmly to my invitation for this special collection.

I am no less grateful to our regular member-contributors whose valuable forays into a variety of themes like Mental Health, Russian Revolution, Ismat Chughtai, R.K. Narayan, poems, short story and review essay etc. have qualitatively added to the discourse in question. For the immeasurable graphic and ideational support that helps us present Re-Markings in ever new forms each time, I remain deeply thankful to our Executive Editor, Sandeep Arora. I am also thankful to Prof. A. Karunaker and Mr. Sudarshan Kcherry for their interest in our ventures. Last but not least, I am happy to put on record my everlasting gratitude to Dr. Sunita, my partner in life, for always being there to ensure I am able to give my very best to the journal.

**Nibir K. Ghosh**  
Chief Editor

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## **THE TRUTH ABOUT NETAJI: A CONVERSATION WITH PURABI ROY**

*Nibir K. Ghosh*

Professor Purabi Roy, a veteran researcher and historian, taught at the Department of International Relations under Jadavpur University for more than two decades. A Ph.D. from the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow, she is an eminent scholar in Russian language and history. She has been visiting Professor at Moscow State University and St. Petersburg University, Russian Federation. She is acknowledged as one of the foremost Netaji Researchers. As a research Professor of the Asiatic Society, she published volumes on Russo-Indian Relations XIX Century, Indo-Russian Relations XX Century Part-I and Part-II and *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Commemoration Volume* of Scottish Church College, Kolkata. She is the author of many articles on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Her contribution as member in the Indian Council of Historical Research has been phenomenal. Prof. Roy happily acknowledges Netaji to be her guiding light, her only inspiration. She has a promise to keep — to gift the country an authentic Indian version of Netaji and the INA. In this conversation, Prof. Purabi Roy shares, uninhibitedly, her continued commitment and passion to unravel the truth about the legendary Icon of India's Freedom: Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

**Ghosh:** While congratulating you on the publication of your epoch-making book, *The Search for Netaji: New Findings*, I find it quite natural to ask about the factors that motivated you initially to undertake the challenging project of unravelling the mystery of Netaji's disappearance?

**Roy:** Throughout the Soviet History, Soviet scholars were either ignorant or deliberately remained silent on Subhas Chandra Bose. Glasnost and Perestroika could melt the seventy-year-old iceberg of the Soviet archives which made accessible many documents and information related to Bose and Comintern like the reports on Bose from Soviet Tass agency, Second World War and Bose and many more besides the Soviet Foreign Intelligence along with the Soviet Military archives and other related interesting documents that have unfolded a new line of research.

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**‘COSMOPOLITAN COMMUNION OF  
PERSPECTIVES’: A CONVERSATION WITH  
CYRIL WONG**

*Nibir K. Ghosh*

Cyril Wong is the Singapore Literature Prize-winning author of poetry collections, *Unmarked Treasure* and *The Lover's Inventory*. He has also published *Ten Things My Father Never Taught Me and Other Stories*, and a novel, *The Last Lesson of Mrs De Souza*. A past recipient of the National Arts Council's Young Artist Award for Literature, he completed his doctoral degree in English Literature at the National University of Singapore in 2012. His poems have been anthologised in *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia and Beyond* (W. W. Norton 2008) and *Chinese Erotic Poems* (Everyman's Library 2007). Wong served at various times as a creative-writing instructor for the Singapore Association for Mental Health and the Ministry of Education's Creative Arts Programme, as well as a books and performing arts reviewer for *The Straits Times*. He appeared at the Edinburgh International Book Festival; the Singapore Literature Festival in New York; the Hong Kong International Literary Festival; the Sydney, Melbourne and Byron Bay Writers Festivals; Vietnam's first Asia-Pacific Poetry Festival; the Utan Kayu International Literary Biennale; and the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival. His poems were interpreted through dance at the 2004 Queensland Poetry Festival and his verse monologue, *Still Flight*, was presented at the 2005 Magdalena International Festival of Women in Contemporary Theatre (USA). In this conversation Cyril Wong generously shares his views on diverse issues and concerns that have contributed to his poetry and other writings.

**NKG:** Greetings from Re-Markings. You have expressed your delight in being a part of Re-Markings' special number entitled *A World Assembly of Poets*, an anthology you found "both enriching and cathartic, as well as an overall beautiful and life-affirming experience." What role can such efforts to bring together poets from various parts of the world play in contending with a conflict and crisis-ridden world?

**CW:** Idealistically, by making the world feel like a smaller place, at least to a small community of people and only for a small moment in time; a cosmopolitan communion of different perspectives meeting symbolically across the page, comparing notes.

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## REFLECTIONS

*E. Ethelbert Miller*

### OUR LIVES ARE TOUCHED BY SPORTS

Our lives are touched by sports. It begins when we touch a bat, ball or glove.

It begins when we touch water and swim or touch earth and run.

Many of our heroes are sport figures. Cities define themselves by teams.

Could anyone find Green Bay on a map if it wasn't for The Packers?

At times it seems sports is almost a religion. For many years one could understand Buddhism by listening to a Cubs fan. Sports is a poor man's nationalism and a rich man's attempt at ownership. Our history is often defined by men and women beating the odds. Our fantasies now revolve around sports the way it once revolved around sex.

Talk about race and sports and it can be ugly and beautiful.

How does one explain the "sport" of American lynching or the racist chants at soccer games in Europe?

What makes us proud to be human are those pages in history that introduce us to Joe Louis, Jessie Owens, Jackie Robinson or Muhammad Ali. What encourages us to change history is Hank Greenberg, Jeremy Lin, Billie Jean King or every young woman who emerges on the world stage during the Olympics.

Sports however is how we make money. Sports is a business and not just a game. Sports destroys our bodies and winning can become a cancer even while we might believe losing is a disease.

Sports is how we measure manhood and how we are forced to open our eyes to womanhood and sisterhood. We change the rules of sports because sports for many is simply entertainment. We want our sports fast and not slow. We want our sport figures to shut up and dribble. We support prayer but don't want players to kneel.

All my life I've struggled to understand cricket. Even my love for C.L.R. James didn't help.

- **E. Ethelbert Miller** is a writer and literary activist. He is board chair of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, DC.

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## WHY I WRITE MURDER MYSTERIES

*Jonah Raskin*

I was 17-years-old and an undergraduate at Columbia College in New York when an English major named Michael Strong introduced me to George Orwell's "Why I Write." That essay was not required reading in any course, and had not been assigned by any teacher at the college where almost no American literature was taught, and where my profs wished they could be at Oxford or Cambridge.

"Shooting an Elephant" had been assigned to me and my classmates because, as the teacher explained, it "symbolized the plight of the White Man in the East." At the time, I was so backyard I didn't know what a symbol was, though Michael Strong explained, and then asked me to read Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and *Down and Out in Paris and London* which I did.

By the time I poured over Orwell's "Why I Write" I had been writing and publishing for two years in *The Long Islander*, the newspaper in my home town that had been founded in the mid-nineteenth century by the poet, Walt Whitman. At 15 and 16, I did not think about why I wrote. I just did. Writing seemed as natural and as inevitable as breathing.

When I read Orwell's essay, "Why I Write," I realized that I wrote for many of the same reasons as he: to express myself, see my name in print, tell the truth as best I could and to have some kind of impact on the thoughts and the actions of my peers.

At about the same time that I read Orwell, I began to watch a lot of movies late at night on television and during afternoons at the Thalia, a small theater near the campus that showed black-and-white Hollywood movies made in the 1940s and 1950s, and that often featured tough-talking fictional detectives named Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe, both of them played by Humphrey Bogart who perfected those roles and those characters.

- **Jonah Raskin**, former chair of the Communication Studies Department at Sonoma State University, U.S.A., is the author of fourteen major books.

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**THE WOUNDS OF VIOLENCE IN  
*TRAIN TO PAKISTAN* AND *AMU*:  
INTERFACING TEXT AND FILM**

*Shanker A. Dutt*

Stories have always been an inalienable part of every human culture; they help us to make sense of our thoughts and actions, individually and as community and enables understanding of our significance in the world that we inhabit. Film, while it may be influenced by written work, is a unique piece of art and the purpose of this paper is to explore the complex mediation between literature and film. I have selected two texts/films Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Shonali Bose's *Amu* to try and explore the verbal structure on the one hand and audio-visual structure on the other to gain an understanding of the representations of the erosion of pluralism, otherisation, naming of the enemy, state complicity, individual acquiescence, violence and its consequences. In other words, this paper is a textual and cinematic witness to wounds.

The outcome of divisive politics can often be an archival reference for history's shame. When Cyril Radcliffe drew the territorial borders, hurriedly partitioning the subcontinent, the mass exchange of population was accompanied by mobilized hate, unprecedented violence and genocide in which a million men, women, and children were killed and ten million were displaced from their homes. While two nations awoke to freedom, humanity died. The Pamela Rooks film based on Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is, as the closing declaration states, "dedicated to the memory of the millions displaced and rendered homeless and those who died during the partition of India." Singh's *Train to Pakistan* has become a classic for the sensitive treatment of the subject refined by the entanglement of perplexity, paralysis caused by enormity of circumstance, cowardice of contingency over the courage of morality and the authorial abstention from designated or insinuated culpability. Inhabited, mostly by Sikh farmers and their Muslim tenants, the rather anonymous village of Mano Majra had remained relatively untouched by the brewing violence of the past months.

- **Dr. Shanker. A. Dutt** is Professor & Head, Department of English, Patna University, Patna & former Chairman, Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi.

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**URDU AND POLITICS:  
THE NEGLECT AND DECLINE OF A SYNCRETIC  
AND MODERN LANGUAGE OF INDIA**

*Abdul Shaban*

**Introduction**

India is forged by confluence of many people. Since pre-history to very recent time, it has received stream of migrants who brought their own languages, dresses, food habits, religion, socio-cosmological outlooks, architecture, etc. The mingling of these cultures created Indian syncretic culture and gave rise to Gods originating from two or more sets of belief and religions, cuisines, and dresses. In language, the words from different origins mixed together and gave rise to new dialects and languages. For instance, today we have a large number of words from Persian in Bengali, Hindi, Marathi and other languages and so we find mixing of English vocabulary in many languages. A new language born out of intermingling of cultures in India in medieval time was Urdu. This language was born in India and is one of the modern Indian languages. It developed out of mixture of Sanskrit, Turkish, Khari Boli, Prakrit, Persian and Arabic and emerged as the most syncretic language of the country. It is said that about 75% of Urdu words have their etymological roots in Sanskrit and Prakrit. Urdu was earlier known as Hindi, Hindustani, Hindavi, Dehlawai, Gajari, Dakhani, Lahori (Rahman 2018:196) and before that from 13-18<sup>th</sup> Century it was known as Hindi (Tariq 2001).

It is said that Urdu name for this language was first used by Ghulam Hamadani Mushafi around 1780 (Faruqi 2003). Urdu is a Turkish word meaning camp or army. It has also been called by many as *Lashkari jabaan* (the language of army) as it was used by army in northern India in medieval time for communication among the soldiers of different cultural origins. It is said that this language carries with it the sweetness, the tenderness and the expressions which give respects to all and it is difficult to hurt or abuse in Urdu. However, in India, the language is going through a difficult phase and has been communalised, discarded by some political ideologues while appropriated by some other ideologues.

- **Dr. Abdul Shaban** is Professor in the School of Development Studies at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Deonar, Mumbai.

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## SHAHRYAR'S SPOTS OF TIME: POETRY AND POETICS

*Mohammad Asim Siddiqui*

Kunwar Akhlaq Mohammad Khan, better known by his nom de plume 'Shahryar', winner of India's highest literary award Jnanpith in 2011, has written lyrics for a number of Hindi films. His lyrics '*In aankhon ki masti ke mastane hazzaro hain*', '*Dil cheez kya hain aap meri jaan lijiye*', immortalized by the voice of Asha Bhosle and '*seenein mein jalan aankhon mei toofan sa kyon hai*', sung soulfully by Suresh Wadkar have made him too famous for most people to know that he is one of the most important Urdu poets of the Indian subcontinent after independence. Beginning with *Gaman* (1978) Shahryar wrote lyrics for *Umrao Jaan* (1981), *Faasle* (1985), *Anjuman* (1986) and some incomplete ventures like *Daman*, *Zooni* and *Noorjahan* but rarely a thought is spared by a English reader to realize that he has six remark-ably well-received collections of poetry. Gulzar, one of our important contemporary poets who edited a book of Shahryar's poetry, aptly places him very high in the canon of modern Urdu poetry: "Firaq, Faiz and Faraz were the great poets of great poetry; And there is Shahryar" (13).

All important Urdu critics who include Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Gopi Chand Narang, Shameem Hanafi and others, have written critical essays on Shahryar, recognizing his worth and analyzing his ghazals and nazms. Prem Kumar, a Hindi critic, has published a very useful book of Shahryar's interviews titled *Baaton Mulaqaton Mein Shahryar* (Vaani Prakashan, 2013). In this respect the editorial work of Sarvarul Huda, an emerging critic of Urdu literature, who has put together in one voluminous book all important criticism on Shahryar, reviews on his work and his interviews, with a long and insightful introduction cannot be praised enough. For English readers Rakhshanda Jalil's literary biography of the poet, *Shahryar: A Life in Poetry* (HarperCollins, 2018) neatly does the job of introducing to the English reader the poet's life and the context of his poetry, apart from offering a translation of some of his selected nazms and ghazals.

- **Dr. Mohammad Asim Siddiqui** is a Professor of English at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

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## IMAGINING A DIALOGIC ECOLOGICAL PROTEST: AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE GREAT DERANGEMENT*

*Santosh Gupta*

Amitav Ghosh enters with his *The Great Derangement* (2016) the environmental and ecological debate more as a literary writer than as a scientist. How excessive carbon emission has brought about unprecedented and unexpected climate changes in the physical world are widely known issues, now being studied by different disciplines; predictions of the extinction of all forms of life, the life of earth itself are being made with supporting scientific data. As Ghosh accepts these arguments, facts and threats, he views the strange silence in the literary world about these urgent issues and looks for reasons for the seeming lack of concern and evasiveness. This paper looks at Ghosh's analysis of the failure of modern artists in grappling with this crisis of great magnitude, how he as a postcolonial South Asian writer makes important connections between these problems and colonial exploitation in South Asia, the multiple forms of displacement, migrations and cultural subordinations which continue till today. Shifting the discourse's concern with consideration for the lives of those living on margins – of society, state, land and history, he relates the environmental changes and its problems with cultural, economic and political dimensions looking at the human life in a totality, as he says, "the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, thus of the imagination" (Ghosh 2016:12).

Amitav Ghosh builds up his own discussion using the findings of physical scientists, geologists, environmental scientists as he connects the use of fossil fuel with recent political and cultural developments in the West. These material conditions, he argues, have governed and controlled political and social structures and behaviours of these societies. Scientists of factors like the rising sea levels, which are posing threats to lives of people living in cities or villages existing on the edges close to sea, have connected these phenomena with excessive fuel consumption and new economic powers.

- **Professor Santosh Gupta**, formerly Chairperson in the Department of English and Dean Faculty of Arts at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

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## **MAKING OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: JOURNEY TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENTS**

*Sanjukta Sattar*

### **Who are Entrepreneurs?**

The word entrepreneurship signifies the desire as well as capacity to launch, organise a business venture and also accept the challenge to cope with the risks accompanying it. An entrepreneur always ventures for something new and innovative. “Entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risk-taking” (Business Dictionary, n.d.) and “it isn’t something which you are taught, it’s something you must develop within yourself” (Ehrlichman, 2015). The entrepreneurial identity shows five phases “the perceiver, the action taker, the traction gainer, the sustainer and the strategist/egoist. So being an entrepreneur is a journey of growth, self-awareness and discovery” (Berk, 2017). The economists see the three main functions of entrepreneur as, first the bearing of risk and uncertainty, secondly innovation and third is the organization and management of a business enterprise (Harbison, 1956). “Frank H. Knight is of the view that entrepreneurs are a specialized group of people who bear risks and deal with uncertainty. Schumpeter argued that innovation is the primary function of entrepreneurship and that one is an entrepreneur only when he carries out new combinations of factors of production and distribution” (Harbison, 1956). “To Adam Smith the entrepreneur was a proprietary capitalist – a supplier of capital, and at the same time a manager who intervenes between the labourer and the consumer, while Alfred Marshal assigned to the entrepreneur all three functions: risk-bearing, innovation, and management” (Harbison, 1956). Encouraging and developing entrepreneurship is an essential part of nation’s ability to succeed in an ever changing and increasingly competitive global marketplace. Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by United Nations (September 2017) goal number 8 aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” (Bagnall, 2015).

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## **EMANCIPATORY BUDDHIST DHAMMA: REFLECTIONS AND CHALLENGES**

*Aparna Lanjewar Bose*

We, as nation today, are facing multiple challenges that are not necessarily economic, social, religious, cultural or related to disparities, injustices, atrocities but these apart what is perceivable is every human being for some or the other reason is broken and uprooted one way or the other. The relentless efforts of some alleged so-called religious supremacists of this country are squarely responsible for this. They have tied the Indian philosophy within narrow religious confines and have made the Indian society purely superstitious. Even as we head towards material progress and change, it's largely the same contorted mentality still operational.

### **Society in Buddha's Times**

Some 2500 years ago when democracy as word or concept was not even in the offing, it was the Tathagtha Gautam Buddha who had spoken about equality of all humans: of caste and class as arbitrary barriers erected by the society; of social cooperation and active participation of all individuals in society. He had challenged the Vedic Brahminical religion of his times and established the Dhamma and Sangha. The Buddha was deeply affected and motivated for the moral advancement and betterment of the woeful lot around who were discriminated, tortured, and suppressed.

This Dhamma had a solid foundation on humanistic and hermeneutic principles that negated injustices, oppression, fate, karma, destiny, idol worship, concept of God and philosophy related to it. It had even unheeded the rebirth myth and formulated a revolutionary way of making one's life sublime in the same birth. The Dhamma meant a new code of living – an emancipated route that could emancipate one from misery and sorrow. It was thus the simplest yet most beautiful invention and a deeply ennobling analysis of human life which ruptured the age-old concept of holiness and sin. It was a philosophy born out of unselfish turmoil for oppressed/despised people and their elevation. The Dhamma became a way of life.

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## **MENTAL HEALTH: A CHALLENGE IN TODAY'S WORLD**

*Priti Verma*

The contemporary world is witnessing an ever increasing relevance of mental health. The common saying that “a healthy mind dwells in a healthy body” seems to be a very limited aspect now as vast factors like upbringing, surroundings, social environment and circumstances tend to lead a person’s mind in different directions; sometimes even in a very perverted manner – as in the case of terrorists. Can we call the cruel mind of a terrorist a sound mind? Though he may be enjoying a healthy body, but does his brutal mind – which is full of hatred, violence and bloodshed – of any use to society? The ghastly terror attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001 or the recent gruesome Pulwama attack on February 14, 2019 have left the whole world grief-stricken. What is the use of such mind that causes only destruction?

Moreover, in this materialistic world where everyone is running after money and physical comforts, there is hardly any time to share one’s feelings, emotions, sorrows, stress and disappointments with others; and hence there is no way left out for the mind to get healed naturally in a healthy manner. As Coleridge in “Dejection: An Ode” (1802) says:

A grief without a pang, void dark, and drear,  
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,  
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,  
In word, or sigh or tear ... (364).

The outcome is very much similar as expressed by Shelley in one of his poems, “Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples” (1818):

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,  
Nor peace within nor calm around,  
Nor that content ...  
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure; (Shelley 386).

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## **RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: A COROLLARY OF COMMUNIST SUPPRESSION**

*Divya Gupta*

*Remember, remember*

*The fifth of November.*

*The gunpowder treason and plot. - V for Vendetta*

It is not another Guy Fawkes vendetta since 1605 or even a silver jubilee of "November Rain" of Guns N' Roses that this paper intends to discuss. The focus is rather on the collective proletarian *Vendetta*: October Revolution centenary. Russian Revolution of 1917 is a tale off told but a centenary never been awaited. It was a revolution which dused the Tsarist autocracy and brought the spectacular dawn of Soviet Union in Russia. The Bolsheviks not only revolted against Czar Nicholas II but also paved the way for proletarian's fight for economic equality. The revolt in December 1825 was the precursor of Russian Revolution.

Karl Marx's influence of the classless Communist plateau inscribed the great vision on Vladimir Lenin, Stalin and Leon Trotsky. But the degree of inspiration differed owing to differing socio-economic situations and so-called rigid principles and applications of theorizing Marx, seventy years later (The Communist Manifesto being a product of 1848). The Publication of Marxist periodical "Iskra", — "The Spark" became an integral part in promotion of Communist ideas in Russia. Marx believed that the whole world should participate in Communist revolution. Lenin followed his principles and theories although he felt contented with Communist revolt on a small scale in Russia. Lenin strongly believed that Proletariat should once dictate the society before completing Communism.

The Communist party was founded and later on led by Vladimir Lenin with the help of the Bolsheviks which was a major bloc of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in the year of 1898.

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## **PRAFULLA CHANDRA RAY: CONSTRUCTIVE NATIONALIST, HUMANIST AND SCIENTIST**

*Shashi Sheikh*

In the present era of turmoil and caste divide when humanity is confronted with various challenges, it is worthwhile to highlight Prafulla Chandra Ray who had steadfast devotion not only to science but also to the motherland and her people. Along with other luminaries in Bengal in the last half of the nineteenth century like Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh and the spiritual preacher Swami Vivekananda, Prafulla Chandra Ray also deserves to be mentioned for his distinguished contributions to India. Science, nationalism and humanism coalesced into a new philosophy which guided and helped him inculcate a spirit of altruism in his character. It is exigent to highlight his perspectives and practices, philosophies and human values because his distinct philosophy of life is relevant to combat the present crisis which thwarts our social fabric of composite culture. Endowed with the attributes of scientific attitude, rationality and humanity, he appeared in the firmament of science as a great scholar at a time when Bengal saw many young people like Khudiram Bose, Bhagat Singh and Subhas Chandra Bose, fighting for freedom with their revolutionary blood, indomitable spirit and valour. P.C. Ray was one of the torch bearers of scientific progress, trying to induct a scientific and rational spirit into the hearts of the people for the sake of humanity. He remained unaffected by any parochial and irrational idea which confront humanity. Science always examines reality. So, as a scientist he never accepted a life not examined through the prism of science and philosophy. He was like Socrates who boldly heralded: "an unexamined life is not worth living."

Ray, born on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1861, in Raruli Katipara, Bangladesh, was a student of Alexander Pedler under whose supervision he reached the pinnacle of pharmaceutical industry of India. After 1879 he was seen actively engaged at his research works in the lab of Presidency College and his work on mercury nitrite and its derivatives made him globally known and recognised. He played a seminal role in creating a scientific atmosphere for the country which confronted with many odds and malaise plaguing the people.

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## ISMAT CHUGHTAI: A BOLD FEMINIST VOICE

*Satyendra Prasad Singh*

Ismat Chughtai is a prominent figure among the third world feminists. She bears the powerful feminist voice. She was the prominent writer of Urdu language in the twentieth century. She, like other writers such as Rashid Jahan, Wajeda Tabassum and Qurratulain Hyder, possessed a fierce feminist ideology. Ismat has significant influences of feminist voices of Nazaz Sajjad Hyder, Hijab, Imtiaz Ali etc. She is described as a born rebel. The Muslim middleclass allowed little freedom to girls. They considered education unfruitful for girls. Ismat had to struggle for her education. She confronted her father and expressed a keen desire for education and wanted to study like her brothers.

Her works such as *Angarey* and "Lihaaf" consisted of reformist and feminist content. Ismat put forward her idea that the Niqab, the mask worn by Muslim women, was oppressive and feudal and so the purdah system should be discouraged. "Lihaaf" describes the insulted and suffocating life of a neglected Muslim wife in the feudal society. Begum Jaan spends a depressing life after marriage as her husband, the Nawab, is engaged with the same gender. So, Begum Jaan has developed lesbian relationship with Rabbu, her maid servant. The land owner's beautiful wife greets her maid servant on the bed and she is not daunted by the young narrator's amazement. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita comment: "The female protagonists in Ismat Chughtai's most brilliant stories, some of them written in the fifties and sixties, may be broken by poverty, but not by patriarchal oppression or male chauvinism, for the latter appear there as pompositities that may be ridiculed out of existence" (89).

In her play *Phisaddi* (The Laggard), Ismat Chughtai describes a girl sexually assaulted by her cousin during the summer holidays. She has also written a story about a young servant girl. The girl becomes pregnant by her employer's son. She is beaten severely whereas the boy is secretly driven away to Delhi. Ismat Chughtai discusses the oppressions of family life and the sexuality in the middle class homes. As a novelist, she captures the very soul of women. Her feminist fictions include *Ziddi* (The Stubborn one) and *Terhi Lakir* (The Crooked Line).

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## **MENTORING OF THE SOUL IN R.K. NARAYAN'S *A TIGER FOR MALGUDI***

***Bijay Ketan Pattanayak***

Mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger, but he/she should have a certain expertise to understand the concept of mentoring.

In the ancient Greek mythology when Odysseus went to war, he entrusted his son Telemachus into tutelage of his friend Mentor who tutored him successfully to be a great archer and hero. Since then the word 'mentor' has been used as the synonym for a person who helps to build up the character and professional expertise of a younger individual. This term is also traced to Lord Krishna who inspired Arjuna to do his duty on the battlefield of Kurukshetra and the "*Guru-Sishya parampara*" is celebrated in the cultural histories of ancient India. It is based on encouragement, constructive comments, frankness, mutual trust and respect and willingness to imbibe and inspire. It is really an enabling process in which the experienced mentor represents a storehouse of knowledge and experience and the less experienced mentee represents a yet-to-emerge/evolve human capital.

Anglophiles have also traced the term 'mentor' in Christology. For them, Christ is the mentor's mentor as the *Bible* is the Book of Books. The Indian spiritualists trace this term in the life and legacy of Buddha, the Enlightened, Mahavir Jain, the Teacher Immaculate, and Ramakrishna Param Hansa, the mentor of Swami Vivekananda. An Indian traditionalist in the truest sense of the term, Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar Narayanaswamy, ubiquitously known as R.K. Narayan (10.10.1906-13.05.2001), has appreciated the Indian concept of effective mentoring and valued the dyad between the guru and disciple.

R.K. Narayan's Malgudi is a bipolar world, at once tradition-bound and norm-violating, rigid and patient, traditional and modern. So, in it, one finds hundreds of non-secular institutions like temples, *ashram*, *math*, etc.

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## ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

*Natabar Jena*

An eco-critic expresses concern over the decaying environmental setup around us. Many Indian writers have dealt with this issue in their writings. Novelists like R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Anita Desai and Amitav Ghosh bring the picture of deteriorating and changing environment to the reader's attention and response. These literary artists have yoked the task of addressing perennial questions concerning the relationship between man and his environment. Like the geographical setup of 'Wessex' in Thomas Hardy's novels; 'Malgudi' in R.K. Narayan's novels and the Sundarbans, the beautiful forest, an archipelago finds elaborate expression in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. This paper aims to explore the conflict between Man and Nature, Animal and Man, Government and Man and the settlers and the government, and how the environment is made a victim of such struggles.

Today the academia is involved in examining the deep concerns of the sensitive artists for their environment in order to evolve a sustainable development model that ensues from an eco-friendly society. The analysis is termed as eco-criticism. In the *Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) the term 'Ecocriticism' is defined as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, Ecocriticism takes an earth centered approach to literary studies (Glotfelty xix).

The novel is set in the Sundarbans, the delta in the northern parts of the Bay of Bengal, stretching across coastal India and Bangladesh from the Bhagirathi (Ganga) in West Bengal to the shores of Meghna in Bangladesh. The region, a natural habitat for the Bengal tigers, is declared by the government as a reserved area for the endangered species and some of the islands are demarcated as prohibited areas. Dominated by the mighty tides, this dreamy, dreadful land is a fascinating chimera where "every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of this dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles" (8).

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## POETRY

*Tijan M. Sallah*

### TEACHER OF LIGHT

(for Chinua Achebe)

After all is said and done,  
After all the fanfare is gone,  
We must remember Achebe, this wise soul,  
Who gave us novels to fill our rice bowls.

We must remember his words,  
This teacher who told us where rain shards  
Began to beat us. This sage,  
Who never lets ideas end in a wriggle,  
On stage or on page.

We must remember him  
For giving us Things Fall Apart.  
We must praise him to the brim  
For a tragic tale told smart.  
For Okonkwo is unbending Africa,  
Heroic for defending the old order,  
But shortsighted to his downfall, needing no replica.  
We want an open Africa, strong and sober.

We must remember him,  
For our continent is No Longer at Ease.  
We need redemptive Arrows of God; not arrogant military teens,  
To rescue our betrayed hopes from this trying unease,  
To avoid Anthills of the Savannah; to steer us into better dreams.  
To avoid the cult of the gun; to steer us into mightier streams.

We must remember him,  
For we no longer need false Men of the People.  
We need patriots like him,  
Whose rich thoughts and acts energize our people.

After all is said and done,  
We must remember this Teacher  
Did his job well, from dusk to dawn.  
That he was simple in his art, clear, but no preacher,  
Yet the whole world learned from his wisdom.  
Now, Earth, join us to celebrate his wisdom.

### **THE RED-BILLED HORNBILLS OF COCO OCEAN\***

First, I thought they were burglars,  
But they can't be so daring at midday.  
The sun was at its peak-climb, peering  
Radiantly like a giant light bulb.  
They kept assaulting my hotel-room window  
With that strange repetitive constancy  
That only robots or creatures of habit  
Know how.

Initially, I was hesitant to open the curtain,  
To see the culprits behind the screech, the pecking.  
But if not burglars, were they monkeys?  
The hotel grounds were teeming with monkeys, tiny ones, with long  
tails like meerkats. They were a bundle, adept at little mischiefs.  
They climbed the Moroccan domes, the ornate hotel towers.  
They chased each other's tails, fawning, frolicking.  
Or were they simply  
Doing courtships like humans?

But the strange peckers at my window were not monkeys. After a  
curtain pull—  
The surprise of their large, colorful beaks.

They were red-billed, white-breasted, with ashy wings, pied black.  
How aggressive they can get—the window  
Became a mirror to them.  
And they could not stand their self-reflection.  
Bird awareness  
Is still corralled in instinct and habit.

The hornbills have not learned the lesson of mirrors.  
Their outsized bills made them brave.  
Birds with tiny beaks would have died  
In an instant from such relentless pecking.  
And it seemed they became more aggressive when they saw me.  
Perhaps, in their tiny brains,  
My presence made their self-reflection real.

Then I discovered a trick.  
I closed the curtain and hid behind, making  
Scratching motions like a mad man  
To scare them off. It worked.  
Perhaps their self-reflection then  
No longer made sense.

I had warded off a nuisance,  
Had I? The next day they returned.

But, at least now, I have a trick.

**\*Coco Ocean:** a five-star, beach-side hotel in The Gambia.

- **Dr. Tijan M. Sallah** is the Gambia's most famous living writer and one of Africa's most famous poets of the generation after Wole Soyinka, Leopold S. Senghor and Chinua Achebe. Author of over 10 books spanning poetry, short stories, biography, and ethnography, he was the Guest Editor of *Re-Markings'* global poetry anthology, *A World Assembly of Poets*. Most recently, he is leading efforts to build a Smithsonian-style World Museum and Library in The Gambia to tell the story of Africa and its Diaspora.



*Iris Jamahl Dunkle*

**GHOST SLUT**

(After Hearing Christine Blasey Ford at the Kavanaugh Confirmation Hearing)

I'm tired of hearing about the girl who  
society thinks has a body that  
is a weapon. Whose short skirt and red lips  
are read as flags of seduction. Whose voiced  
words: no or stop are erased from the air  
like smoke. When Christine Blasey Ford took the  
stand, spoke her story every woman  
I know understood her, could see themselves  
trapped in the same small room, terrified of  
what the two drunk guys would do. We'd been there—

Thing was, we never spoke about it. Not  
to you, America. Not to any  
figure of authority. We thought our  
words had no power, were still made of smoke.

**WHAT WE LEFT BEHIND WAS CORPOREAL**

Sometimes history is built from thousands  
of teeth left in the walls by previous  
inhabitants. Sometimes it is written  
over in bone. Palaeophatus argued  
that the ancient women warriors known as  
Amazons were likely just men in drag.  
Because how could an army of women  
found cities, and defeat even greater  
armies entirely comprised men.  
Luckily, his theory didn't take. Young  
girls can still dream of muscled, sword-wielding  
sisters. But he's not alone. Rewriting  
what past we see from here. Often times truth  
is tucked into walls (like those teeth), hidden  
in plain sight. Take Sulphia, Roman  
woman whose poems were neatly written  
into Tibullus's book because she

couldn't publish under Roman law. All  
but forgotten until some scholar found  
her hidden poems. And even then she  
was dismissed. Reader, it's our job to look:  
find secret passages between then and  
now. Insist that there were more voices than  
the ones who got to write the story down.  
History is a body we breathe life into.

- **Iris Jamahl Dunkle** teaches at Napa Valley College, California, U.S.A. and is the Poetry Director of the Napa Valley Writers' Conference. She was the 2017-2018 Poet Laureate of Sonoma County, California. *Interrupted Geographies*, published by Trio House Press, is her third collection of poetry. It was featured as the Rumpus Poetry Book Club selection for July 2017. Her other books include: *Gold Passage* (2013) and *There's a Ghost in this Machine of Air* (2015). Her poems, "Tolerance" and "Things Given Away" have appeared in the Re-Markings' Special Number, *A World Assembly of Poets*.



*Lindsay Adkins*

## **MELODY**

My father doesn't read music,  
just listens and plucks the guitar strings,  
each note a stone on the path he lays himself.  
He is deaf in one ear, but still he hears  
the chords and melodies,  
maybe with something else—  
the soul, if you believe in that sort of thing.  
Or, more likely, his other ear.  
Beethoven went deaf and still composed symphonies.  
I guess you don't always need ears to listen  
to the pulse of the world, especially when it can be

translated to vibrations, muscle-memorized—  
the closest thing to love.  
I used to get the croup once a year, when I was a kid.  
My father would wrap me in blankets  
and take me out into the cold.  
We'd sit on the porch, me in his lap,  
and say nothing—  
just look at the stars.

### **I WRITE YOU FROM THE BATHTUB**

Yes, you heard me.  
My notepad is getting wet.  
At any moment, the whole thing could fall  
into the water, the ink could bleed  
off the soggy pages and you will never know  
what I had to say. High stakes, this.  
And I have a green mud mask on my face,  
because the act of writing everyday  
has made me break out.  
Dorothy and that fucking dog  
would be real scared of me now.  
Soon my husband will walk in and scream.  
He's gone out to buy me tights for the thing tonight—  
isn't that just the best of him?—  
because I don't have time.  
I have to sit here and write.  
It isn't that I'm complaining—to speak to you  
from the past is some sort of magic.  
And the bathtub isn't so bad. Actually,  
aside from my husband, it is the best.  
I'm naked, but probably you figured that out.  
The water is scalding, itching my back.

It's just... Reader, do you ever think of us,  
or only the words? Don't worry—  
I won't be mad. In fact, I hope it's the latter.  
But it makes me a little sad, Reader—  
I know that isn't your name, by the way,  
but I can't be sure what your name is—  
because when you read this, I won't be  
in the bathtub. I like the bathtub.  
I like to sit in the bathtub and wonder  
what your face looks like now,  
which is in the future.  
How you hold your cup of coffee.  
Whether you squint while you read this or lift  
your eyelids wide against the daylight.  
Do you lean your chin on your hand?  
Are you wondering what to make for lunch?  
Are you chewing the inside of your mouth?  
Arching an eyebrow?  
Are you in the bathtub?  
Is someone calling to you from another room?  
Is it me?

- **Lindsay Adkins** is a filmmaker, writer, and poet living on the East End of Long Island, where she is pursuing her MFA at Stony Brook Southampton. She worked for 5+ years in the publishing industry, and currently teaches undergraduate creative writing classes at Stony Brook University. She is a recipient of the 2018 Amy Award from Poets & Writers and her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Sugar House Review*, *The Southampton Review*, *Typehouse Literary Magazine*, *Sequestrum*, *Muse/A Journal*, *The 2River View*, and others.





*Samiullah Khokhar*

**GODLINESS**

You in whose laughter lie radiant beauty and shy blossoms  
Devastation takes place in your name now

You who opened your arms to embrace the poor  
The poor lose livelihoods in your name now

Do these terror mongers presume  
That something is lacking in the Almighty's vision?  
Is true godliness an innocent woman's destruction?

In mosques they kneel and proclaim for you their love  
Do they not know?  
True godliness lies in loving your creatures, all else above.

**HYPOCRITE**

They sent you to the madrasa,  
In the hope that one day you would sit them down  
And in your sweet voice, recite Surah-e Yaseen for them  
Little did they know  
You'd be in your grave in the bloom of youth  
Your father whose heart swelled with pride each time you read the  
Morning Prayer  
What would he have gone through  
When he found your body, lifeless on the roof of the mosque?  
He who read Zainab's funeral prayer, and he who murdered her  
Was he the same 'protector'?  
He who spoke in my infant ears the first call to prayer, and he who  
assaulted me in the mosque  
Was he the same priest?  
Well, never mind that I was betrayed by the one I trusted; but O  
Almighty!  
Who should I believe?

*Who should I believe?*

The guardian of your faith turned out a hypocrite.

**Note:** Samiullah Khokhar's above poems have been translated from the Urdu by Urvashi Sabu.

- **Samiullah Khokhar**, a twenty-one-year-old poet, is a final year student of Accounting and Finance at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK. He belongs to an increasingly vocal generation of youth speaking out against the religious fundamentalism and violence that beset humanity today. A self-avowed feminist who has witnessed the suppression of women at close quarters, he is painfully conscious of gender inequities in the subcontinent. He grew up with a single mother and this made him aware of the dark side of his culture; of how patriarchy has transformed into a cultural practice, and how 'we've become oppressors of ourselves'. Writing for him is as much a spiritual endeavour as a political one.
- **Dr. Urvashi Sabu** is Associate Professor in the Department of English at PGDAV College, Delhi University, Delhi. She was a Charles Wallace India Trust Translation Fellow at the British Centre for Literary Translation, University of East Anglia, Norwich UK in Autumn 2018. She met Samiullah Khokhar during this fellowship. She has specialized in Pakistani Women's poetry, having received her doctorate on the subject from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi in 2014.



*Amol Raut*

## **MUSEUM OF HUMANITY**

Let us light the lamp of humanity in the country  
By discovering ways to help the harassed individual  
Not merely by building temples everywhere but

By performing acts of kindness  
Creating more and better things for people  
In the living museum of human nature.

Rich or poor, it will be filled with humanity,  
A precious element for better days to come!

## **TO SURVIVE**

To survive  
We must all see the peace within us.

To survive  
We must nurture a natural life of joy.

To survive  
We must create better humanity milieu.

To survive  
We must create our own identity.

To survive  
We must climb above to explore.

To survive  
We must deliver truth.

To survive  
We must generate joy and harmony.

To survive  
We must be ready to devote ourselves for the human race.

To survive  
We must uphold the promotion of human courage.

- **Dr. Amol Raut** is Assistant Professor and Head in the Department of English at Yashoda Girls' Arts & Commerce College, Nagpur. He is Executive Editor of *The Horizon*, a biannual interdisciplinary research journal published by The Universal Scholars' Association, Nagpur. He has co-authored a special issue on Teaching of English in the Cyber Age.



## SHORT STORY

### THE NON-VEG PRASAD

*Manoranjan Behura*

Udayanath, the self proclaimed richest man of Basantapur, looked very much busy though he did not have any work to do for the grand annual feast he had been arranging near the shrine of the village deity for a decade. He was a tall, whitish man having a big rounded belly which seemed an extra burden for him. His grey hair often stood straight. He often took the help of mustard oil to keep the unruly hair of his head in proper order. He felt smart putting on a new white dhoti. He put on a new dhoti and clad in a *gamcha* both ocher in color that symbolized sacrifice. Udayanath put a long and wide sandal paste that covered his entire forehead and he walked barefoot.

It was dawn but Basantpur was vibrating with the sound of DJ loud speakers so no one could sleep. Many people including men, women and children were going to the river Birupa for early bath to earn blessings because it was *Kartika Purnima*. The riverside also resounded with fire crackers. The young people threw fire crackers in the air to burst loudly whenever they saw the village belle enter the river water. Some firecrackers fell on the river water without bursting and some functioned partially emitting only a spark of light. The young boys immediately used unparliamentary language against manufacturers of firecrackers for cheating.

The Sun piped out emitting its red color. The river water looked red. Small boats made of colored paper and thermocol filled the river water. The candle twinkling in these boats began to mingle and some other went out failing to bear the stocks of the wind. The riverside was empty and the river water was filled with boats and fragments of half- burnt palm leaves.

The village Basantapur was quaking. What one said in his room the other could not listen. The DJ loud speakers set near the shrine of village deity Mangala were overpowering all voices. If anybody wanted to communicate on phone, he had to use the sms mode.

- **Dr. Manoranjan Behura** is Lecturer in English at Mahanga Puspgiri Mahavidyalaya, Erakana, Cuttack, Odisha.

**Note: For complete story contact remarkings @hotmail.com**

## REVIEW ESSAY

### SHASHI THAROOR'S HINDU VIEW

*Shweta Awasthi*

Shashi Tharoor's latest non-fiction entitled *Why I Am A Hindu* is a humble endeavor from a believer who wishes to vindicate as well as propagate the real soul of his religion. The book advocates plurality as the essential character of Hinduism and lays bare the intrinsic nature of the Hindu way of life. Tharoor is a prolific writer with sixteen books to his credit, both fiction and non-fiction, besides being an acclaimed critic and columnist. He is deeply in love with India and its diverse culture which he celebrates in his writings. According to him, if America is a melting pot then India is a thali containing different dishes, which do not necessarily mix with each other, but all are indispensable to get that authentic taste when we eat them. He opines that the rigidity of the religious bigots serves to tarnish the beauty of this culture and asks us to believe in the essential pluralistic nature of our country.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section bears the title "My Hinduism" and is further divided into four chapters: My Hinduism, The Hindu Way, Questioning Hindu Customs and Great Souls of Hinduism. This section explicates every aspect of the religion – its principal schools, tenets and teachings. It questions several dogmas that have crept within this religion with the passage of time. Tharoor feels pride in being associated with a religion which is one of a kind as it is an amalgamation of diverse doctrines and practices. In the present scenario, where Hindutva supporters have altered the perception of people who have started perceiving Hinduism as something rigid and dogmatic, this book is an eye opener. The book celebrates the pluralistic nature of Hinduism. Tharoor quotes Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi who gave almost similar definitions as to who is a Hindu. Unlike other religions there is no single religious text, or prophet, no compulsory Sunday. Our Gods (as there are 333 million), he writes, are not a distant entity, they are a part of our daily life. Unlike other religions which proclaim to be the only path to attain God and demean other faiths, Hinduism respects them as different ways to reach truth.

- **Dr. Shweta Awasthi** is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Modern Studies at Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar.

**Note: For complete essay contact [remarkings@hotmail.com](mailto:remarkings@hotmail.com)**

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- *Albert Einstein*

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