



Indian Association for
Commonwealth Literature and
Language Studies

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 4. 2016

Compiled on behalf of IACLALS by Nilak Datta
Layout Designed by Risabh Mehra (BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus)

EDITORIAL

Literary Agencies, Taste, and the Reading Public

In Ishmael Reed's novel *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down* (1969), one finds an interesting "showdown" between the cowboy hero Loup Garou and an evil cattle rancher's henchman named Bo Shmo. While most audiences/readers familiar with westerns (or novels that westerns are based on) would expect an altercation involving an exchange of gunfire, this episode surprises readers because the showdown results in a debate between the two horsemen. The "villain" Bo Shmo has his boys surround the lone hero and then subjects him to a literary harangue. Bo Shmo's grudge against Loup Garou is that the latter's artistic credo is "esoteric bullshit", a "blur and a doodle" because his work isn't realistic at all. For Bo Shmo, an artist should be a liberator of the masses. The artist should not confuse audiences with do-it-yourself narratives. All good art, the henchman maintains, should decisively guide the readership towards a moral end, if you will. Art should be realistic. Art should evoke particular locations till "every gumdrop machine is in place" and the reader knows exactly what to think and how to think. I won't tell our readers what happened next. But I will tell them that I am reminded of this remarkable episode when I think of the way many react to the current literary "ephemera" that various literary agencies have been releasing in the Indian book market for the last 7-8 years.

India's burgeoning literary marketplace has thrown up a large body of work. Its appearance has been made easy by the presence of literary agencies. I am reminded of the extraordinary exchange of words between the two horsemen because that is exactly the sort of concern many editors voice when they mention the staggering book sales figures for India each financial year: Are we, in our hurry, producing trash? Is it necessary for us to read about a college student's personal narrative of love, longing, failure, desperation, and ultimate triumph? Or is the Chetan Bhagat style of romance novel a sign of a new artistic credo we ought to bow down to? Does the accelerating output of "English" works (both fiction and non-fiction) in the Indian market, through agencies like Red

Ink, Purple Folio, Siyahi, and others, show that we are on the threshold of a new print revolution? Are we witnessing first-hand a sort of postmodern Gutenberg revolution in India? Quite frankly, I don't know. Right now, I could be persuaded either way.

If Arundhati Roy made literary news with a half a million pounds advance for her novel back in 1996, her literary agent Pankaj Mishra (Harper Collins) made it happen. So too, in recent times, Anuj Bahri of Red Ink made Amish Tripathi famous with a 40,000 print run for the first part of the now famous Shiva trilogy. So, what does that tell us? To me, it means that in order to get published (at least, for a first-time writer of fiction these days), one ought to ensure the manuscript reaches the right literary agent with the right connections. This is not to deny that the book needs to have some "intrinsic quality" to it (whatever that means). This is to say that a literary agent has a big hand in bringing the author to the readership. Unfortunately, not every budding writer will meet Pankaj Mishra. So, where does that leave us? It leaves us with a wide spectrum of literary agents many of whom will offer you advice on how to tone up your manuscript and offer suggestions that will make the first book saleable.

Since the literary agency's activity is a relatively new practice in India, or at least, its role wasn't too well-known to most writers till recent times, Indian agencies aren't known for that sustained level of professionalism one finds in literary marketplaces of advanced capitalist nations. They don't offer the kind of systematic professional spit-n'-polish that literary agencies abroad do. Instead, our scene is a bit more "jugaad" oriented. For instance, *Writer's Side* offers to connect you to the right publishers, gives you fair writing advice, negotiates deals with well-known publishers on your behalf, and even auctions your manuscript (a competing publisher interested in your work) to the highest bidder. In other words, the budding writer gains visibility. In the west, no publisher will touch your work with a forty-foot pole unless you've been represented by a good agent (read, they're "dead posh"). The Indian agents' approach gives the aspiring writer more breathing space. A good literary agent in India will be an editorial consultant and also watch out for your interests.

Knowing the complex terrain of the publishing industry, the Indian literary agent will work on loyalty issues and contracts, auction issues, even movie rights, if he/she feels your manuscript has enough juice for a good shooting script. A good agency like Writer's Side will also assess your manuscript. This might come with a small price tag, but if you're willing to go for an "accumulated investment" (as they say in banking parlance) you might, if you're moderately successful with your first book, end up with a fair amount of "cultural capital."

As I look at the vast output of literature today, I notice that first-time writers tend to be rather young, sometimes barely out of their teens. A large percentage of this work tends to follow the "what-if" formula, which if you look at it one way, characterizes a lot of "high-brow" literature taught in college/university curricula. What if one could predict the questions in a board exam might (and I think, has been) be the plot of a youngster's first novel. I suppose the "what-if" premise works well, when one looks at the Harry Potter series. What if there existed (unknown to most folks) a world of magic with its own rules, history, and cultural geography? Isn't that the Harry Potter series in a bland nutshell? "What-if" one could cross the boundaries of space-time and be transported into the past? That is the operative premise of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s postmodern novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). I am trying to underscore a simple (but not simplistic) point here: Indian literary agencies are allowing us to re-think the categories of the "serious" and the "ephemeral".

Every so often, the older generation develops a tendency to scoff at the accomplishments of the new and the emergent. For instance, I have often been told (as I am sure everyone else has heard it too) that the younger generation is somewhat "spoilt" or that it didn't climb the proverbial mountain and cross the barren desert to become successful. I hear the same plaintive note when I am told that the Y2K generation has a greater sense of entitlement and demands more from life. So it is with the ready publication opportunities for *their* new fiction. A large number of newly published Indian writers are in their teens; literary agents forward their work to interested publishers with an eye to target audiences in India. This is a deviation from the older trend where a writer

had to work at his/her craft for years before the Nine Muses smiled. The complaint is that literary agents are merely pandering to the younger generation's authorial narcissism: the published author "status" is a sort of hard copy version of the quick "selfie" by the mountain. I think that we ought to withhold such judgment. Let us not surround these new riders on the range and subject them to older standards of scrutiny.

Literary agents are more than an outlet for the new fiction. They are arbiters of taste and judgment. As scholars invested in expanding canons of judgment and taste we continue to insist on breaking boundaries between "high-brow" and "low-brow", between art produced for commercial reasons and art that sends some sort of broad social message that is valid for at least more than one generation.

And here I have a question to ask. And I'm thinking about the new fiction, *not any particular age group* that seems to be producing a bulk of it. If the works of the new cultural producers like J. K. Rowling and George R.R. Martin and older generation writers like J.R.R. Tolkien are somehow evocative of the role fantasy/mythology plays in situating the life-world of the mainstream Anglo-European, does Amish Tripathi's Shiva trilogy do the same for us in India? Honestly, I don't have an answer to such a broad question like this right now. But I am hoping that we will have reason to look back at this period's cultural production with some pride, not anger.

Nilak Datta

Editor, IACLALS Newsletter

June 5, 2016

PUBLICATIONS

Criticism:

1. Meenakshi Bharat, *Troubled Testimonies: Terrorism and the English Novel In India*, Routledge. ISBN: 1138962570. Hardcover: 208 pages. 2015.
2. Ajay K Chaubey, "V S Naipaul: An Anthology of 21st Century Criticism", Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi. ISBN 9788126919048. Rs. 995.
3. Ajay K Chaubey and Bishun Kumar, "Transnational Passages: An Anthology of Diaspora Criticism Vol 1" and "Discursive Passages: An Anthology of diaspora criticism Volume 2", YKing Publishers, Jaipur.
4. Afrinul Haque Khan, "Test, Representation and Revision: Re-Visioning Partition Violence in Khuswant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*." *Indi@logs*. 3(2016): 81-97. DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.5565/rev/indialogs.46>
5. Basavaraj Naikar, (Ed) *Perspectives on Fall of Kalyana*, Bengaluru: CVG India Publications, 2015. Pp.251. Rs. 395.
6. Basavaraj Naikar, *Representation of History in Indian/English Drama*, New Delhi: Authors Press, 2015. Pp.490. Rs. 1900.
7. -----, "Anglo-Indian Community in Ranchi: Issues of Culture and Identity." *International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies*. 16.1 (2016): 21-38.
8. Sachidananda Mohanty, "Periodical Press and Colonial Modernity: Odisha, 1866-1936", Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780199461479. Hardback. Rs. 595.
9. Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer and Rahul K. Gairola's edited *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics*, Lexington Books (Rowan & Littlefield). 978-1-4985-3104-7, Hardback, June 2016. \$110.00.

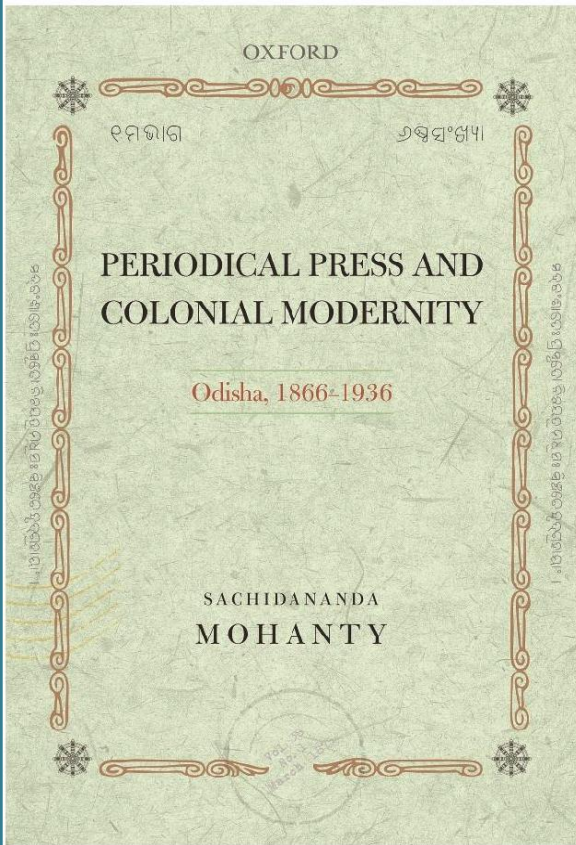
Translation:

1. Basavaraj Naikar, *Fall of Kalyana*, English Translation of M.M.Kalburgi's Kannada play, *Kettittu Kalyana*, Bengaluru: CVG India Publications. 2015. Pp.188. Rs. 295.

Creative Writing:

1. Basavaraj Naikar, *Bird in the Sky*, Bengaluru: CVG India Publications, 2015. Pp. 208. Rs.295. It is a hagiographical novel about Sri Siddharudha Bharati, the super-saint of Hubballi who is said to be an avatar of Sri Nijaguna Sivayogi.
2. Basavaraj Naikar, *The Rani of Kittur*, Bengaluru: CVG India Publications, 2015. Pp.160. Rs. 250. It is a historical play about Rani Chennamma's struggle with the authorities of the East India Company around 1824.
3. Basavaraj Naikar, *Jakkana, the Architect Divine and Other Novellas*, Bengaluru: CVG India Publications, 2015. Pp.360. Rs. 495. It contains four novellas about Jakkanachari, Raja Mallasarja, Rayanna of Sangolli and Kanakadasa.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED



9780199461479 Hardback `595

Highlights

- Chronicles colonial and alternate modernity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Odisha
- Explores the role two pioneering Odia magazines, *Utkal Deepika* and *Utkal Sahitya*, played in colonial Odisha
- Draws heavily on archival research

PERIODICAL PRESS AND COLONIAL MODERNITY

Odisha, 1866-1936

by Sachidananda Mohanty

About the book

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the emergence of colonial modernity in Odisha through the genre of the periodical press. How did the modernity project evolve in colonial Odisha? What were its contours? Was this modernity entirely consensual, or was it contested in the pages of the periodicals through an alternative modernity? This book addresses these and other questions about a forgotten chapter of India's intellectual history.

Tracing the growth and decline of the Odia periodical press, the book studies its interface with colonial/alternative modernity in the region. It explores various aspects of two pioneering Odia magazines – the newspaper journal *Utkal Dipika* and the literary journal *Utkal Sahitya* – their economic and political bases, their patronage systems, the cultural and ideological backgrounds of their editors, and the role these journals played in shaping the Odia literary sensibility and identity. It shows how the periodical press shaped ideas and the material culture of the region and, in turn, got metamorphosed by the play of contemporary cultural and ideological forces.

About the author

Sachidananda Mohanty was formerly Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Hyderabad. He has done pioneering work in archival research and published extensively in the fields of British, postcolonial, gender, and translation studies. He is the recipient of several national and international awards. Currently, he is Vice Chancellor, Central University of Orissa, Koraput.

GLOBAL ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

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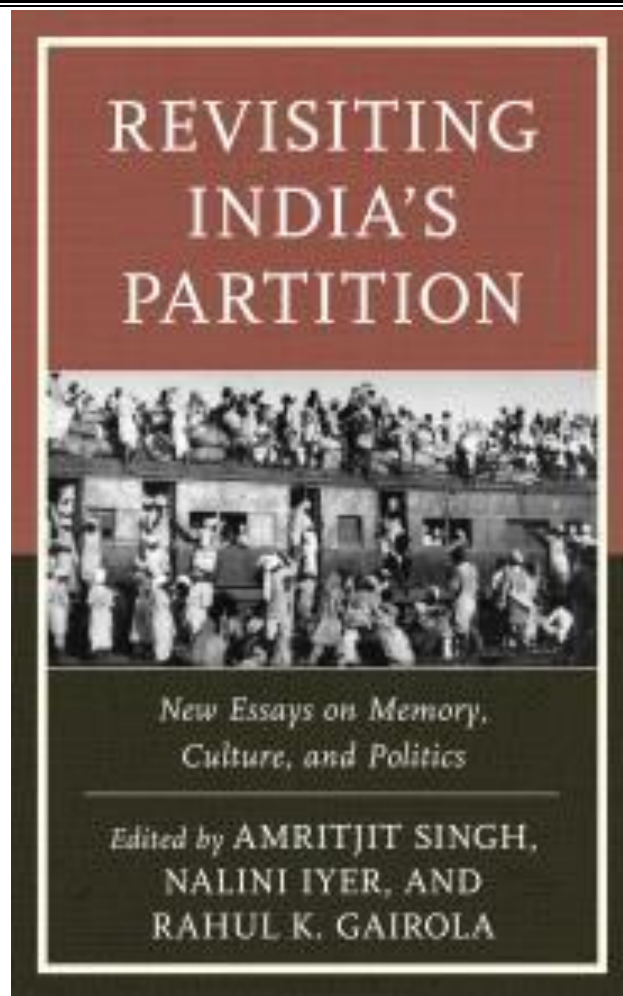
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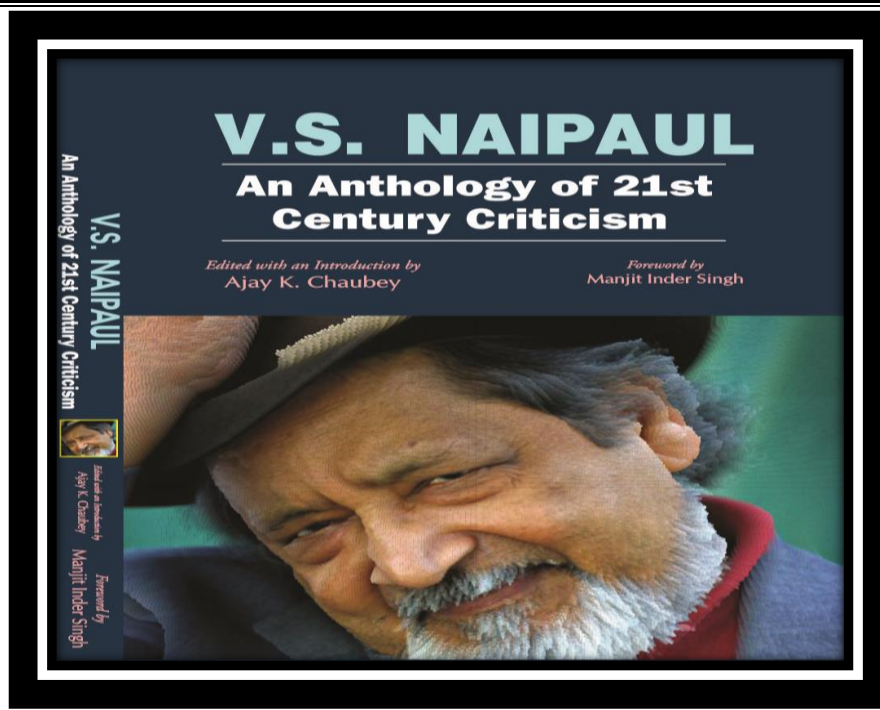
Since the 9/11 attacks, terror has established its permeating hold on society's psyche. Creative writing, a popular and visible cultural witness to the strain, has taken up this destabilization with remarkable regularity. *Troubled Testimonies* focuses on the Indian novel in English, deriving inspiration from these disturbances, to essay a unique grasp of the cultural make-up of the times and its reverberations on the sense of self and belonging to the nation. This first full-length study of terror in the subcontinental novel in English (from India) places it in the world context and analyzes the fictional coverage of the spread of terrorism across the country and its cultural fallout. The enigmatic coming together of the contemporary with the anguish of loss and betrayal unleashed by terror occasions a significant redefinition of the issues of trauma, conflict, and gender, and opens a fresh window to Indian writing and the culture of the subcontinent, and a new paradigm in literary and cultural criticism termed 'postterrorism'. Lucid and thought-provoking, this book will be useful to scholars and researchers of South Asian literature, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, history, politics, and sociology.

Meenakshi Bharat is a writer, translator, reviewer and critic and teaches at Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi. She is President of the International Federation of Languages and Literatures, FILLM (UNESCO), and Treasurer of the Indian Association of Australian Studies. Her interests include cultural, postcolonial and English studies, children's literature, women's fiction and film studies – areas which she has extensively researched and written about. Among her publications are *The Ultimate Colony* (2003), *Desert in Bloom* (2004), *Filming the Line of Control* (2008), *Rushdie the Novelist* (2009), three volumes of Indo-Australian stories entitled *Fear Factor: Terror Incognito* (2010), *Alien Shores: Tales of Refugees and Asylum Seekers* (2012), *A House for Mr Biswas: Critical Perspectives* (2012), *Only Connect: Technology and Us* (2014), and a children's book, *Little Elephant Throws a Party* (2014).



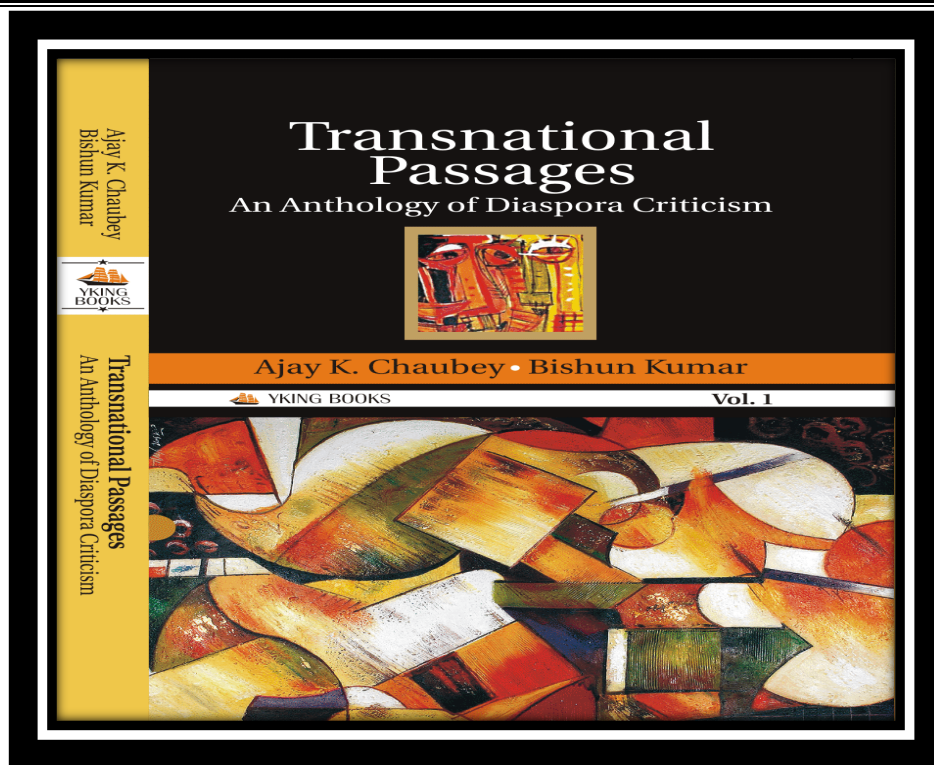
Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics brings together scholars from across the globe to provide diverse perspectives on the continuing impact of the 1947 division of India on the eve of independence from the British Empire. The Partition caused a million deaths and displaced well over 10 million people. The trauma of brutal violence and displacement still haunts the survivors as well as their children and grandchildren. Nearly 70 years after this cataclysmic event, *Revisiting India's Partition* explores the impact of the "Long Partition," a concept developed by Vazira Zamindar to underscore the ongoing effects of the 1947 Partition upon all South Asian nations. In our collection, we extend and expand Zamindar's notion of the Long Partition to examine the cultural, political, economic, and psychological impact the Partition continues to have on communities throughout the South Asian diaspora.

The nineteen interdisciplinary essays in this book provide a multi-vocal, multi-focal, transnational commentary on the Partition in relation to motifs, communities, and regions in South Asia that have received scant attention in previous scholarship. In their individual essays, contributors offer new engagements on South Asia in relation to several topics, including decolonization and post-colony, economic development and nation-building, cross-border skirmishes and terrorism, and nationalism. This book is dedicated to covering areas beyond Punjab and Bengal and includes analyses of how Sindh and Kashmir, Hyderabad, and more broadly South India, the Northeast, and Burma call for special attention in coming to terms with memory, culture and politics surrounding the Partition.



Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, the Nobel Laureate in literature of the 21st century, has occupied a coveted place in the zenith of literary circle in the world. He dexterously contextualizes and situates matter and manner, text and context, history and politics of culture and civilization of the post-colonial globe. His fictional and travel narratives have narrated the un-narrated polemics of the post-imperial societies. The whole corpus of his works includes not only his physical exploration of nation-state but it also divulges unearthing of his "self". Naipaul juxtaposes geo-political locations and multi-ethnic themes through his characters who tell the tale of ex-colony through the rubric of Eurocentric standards. Therefore, Naipaul is not merely a simple author but also a powerful subject of enunciation and a subject enunciated. The present volume offers a fresh perspective on V.S. Naipaul which contains seventeen scholarly papers that traverse through his literary taxonomy and bring out an incisive criticism. The papers in the present volume reflect profoundly upon his fiction and non-fiction within the theoretical eidons of 'post-colonialism', 'orientalism', 'gender theory', 'diaspora', 'identity', and 'travel theory'. Each of the essays closely scrutinises and puts forth the insights of multiple themes that Naipaul adeptly deals with. All the essays collectively collaborate that Naipaul's works are difficult to study without some supportive criticism. Hence, the synchronic reality of the anthology may make an attempt to suffice its goal. The book will be useful for the students and teachers of English literature, and researchers in this field.

Ajay K. Chaubey shares his knowledge and experience in the Department of Sciences and Humanities, National Institute of Technology (NIT), Uttarakhand with a doctoral degree on V.S. Naipaul. Previously he was associated with Mody Institute of Technology and Science (Deemed University), Lakshmangarh, Sikar (Rajasthan), and BBDNITM, a constituent college of Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow (UP). He is the Special Editions Editor for a volume on Indian Diaspora in the *Literaria: An International Journal of New Literatures Across the World* (Jan-Dec 2013), published by Bahri Publications, New Delhi. His academic interests include Travel Theory and literature, the literature of the Indian Diaspora, Caribbean Fiction, and Post-colonial theory and literature. After V.S. Naipaul, he is engaged in exploring discernible studies on Salman Rushdie, M.G. Vassanji and Literature of the Global Diaspora. Dr. Chaubey is a born diasporic as he came into being in Surat (Gujarat) and was raised in Ballia (UP) and has travelled extensively in the major cities of Northern India as a teacher, trainer, and taught to widen the horizon of knowledge and to sharpen his intellect. Moreover, he has qualified Uttaranchal- SLET (2012) and Rajasthan-SLET (2012) in maiden attempts.

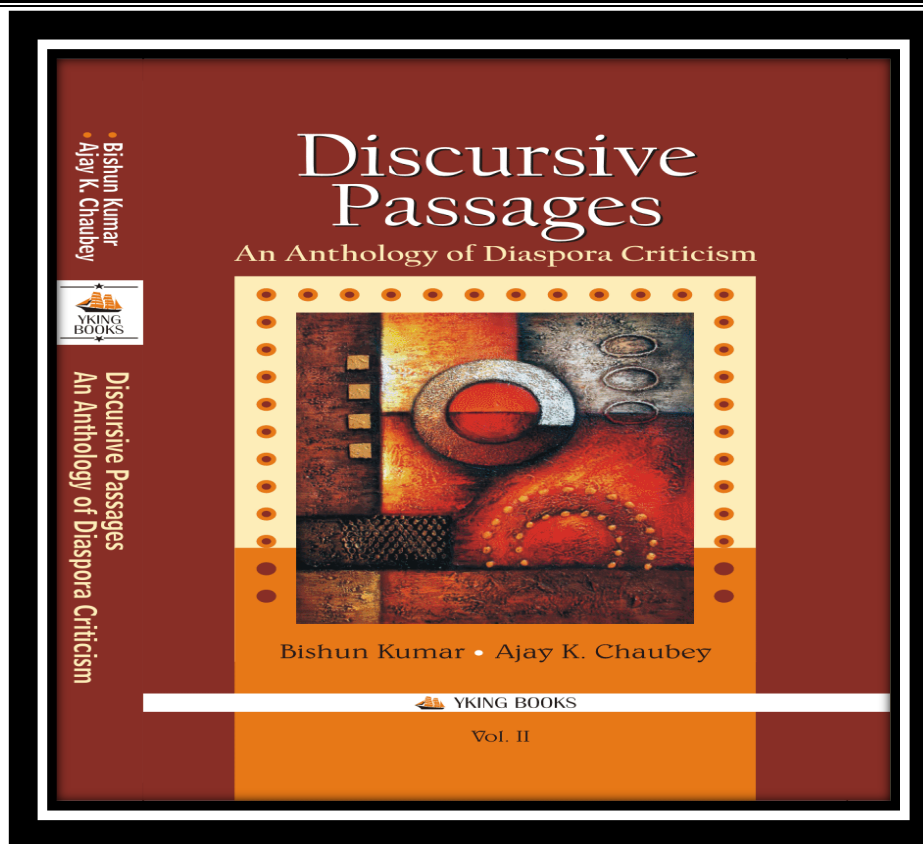


The book *Transnational Passages: An Anthology of Diaspora Criticism* attempts at exploring newer horizons of Diaspora Studies and throws light on the paradigm shift in human perceptions due to dynamism in political powers of the world- the flaring fissures between the first and second generation of Diaspora; diverting equations and changing definitions of Diaspora. To mark a few are - from alienation to celebration, from longing for homeland to fascination for foreign land, from displacement to settlement and resettlement, from miserable conditions to empowered status, from "Trishanku" position to unavoidable powerful link and so on.

The post 9/11 insurgencies have questioned the national and ethnic identity of the Diaspora due to emergence of the international trade and global identity with multiculturalism where native-land has become a promising market-land for selling their franchisees. The present volume offers the multiple nuances of Diaspora which adeptly deal with the literary taxonomy in the new millennium. The research papers, authored by the young and vibrant scholars of the country, explore the unexplored Diasporic overtures in the 'new' as well as the 'old' Diaspora.

Ajay K. Chaubey, PhD, is Assistant Professor (English) at the Department of Sciences and Humanities, National Institute of Technology, Uttarakhand, an autonomous institute of National Importance, sponsored by the MHRD, Govt. Of India.

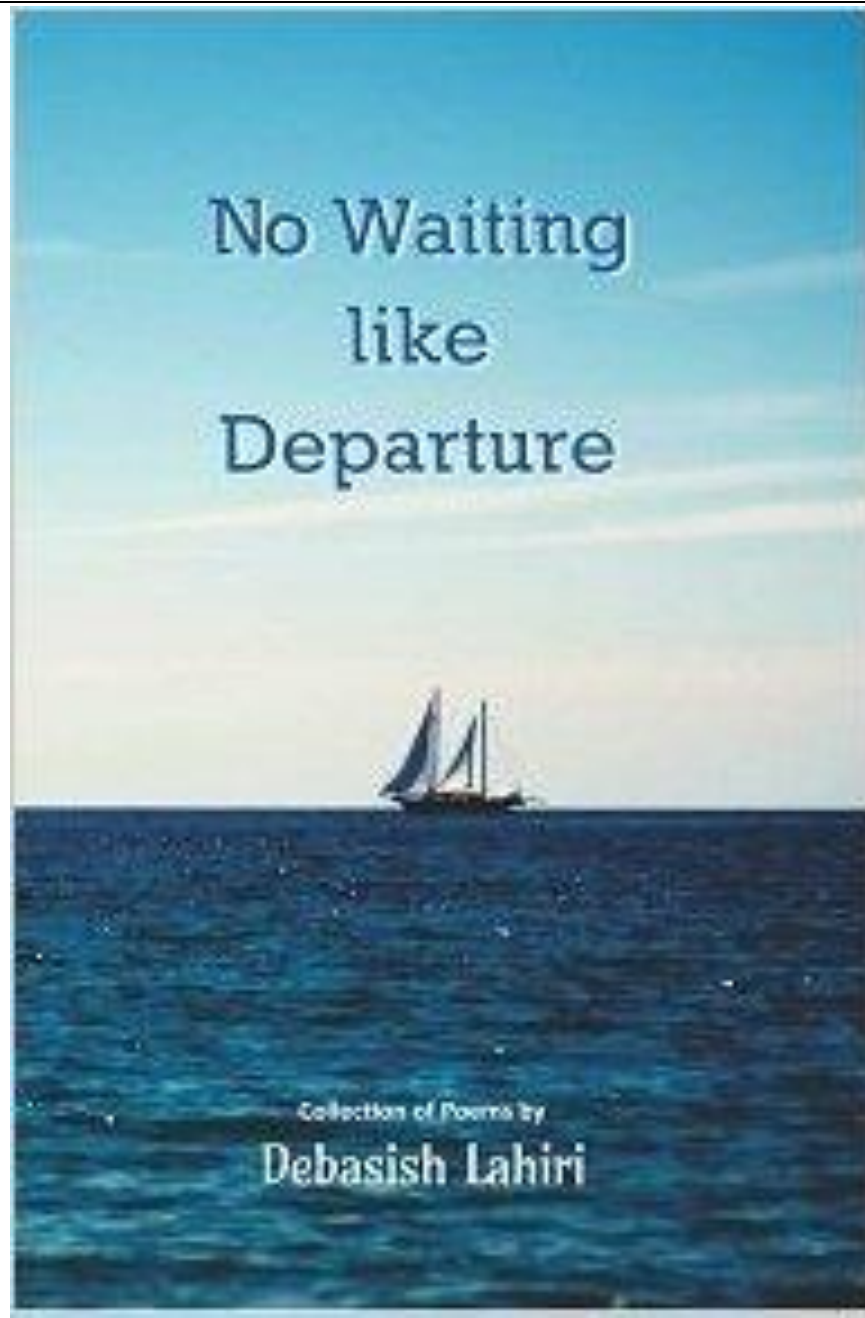
Dr. Bishun Kumar shares his academic pursuits of knowledge and thoughts as Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow and has doctoral degree on Mulk Raj Anand from University of Lucknow. Besides editing the present anthology, he has also edited *Major Voices in New Literatures in English* and *Maresh Dattani: Themes, Techniques, and Issues* both published from Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi while *Discursive Passages: An Anthology of diaspora criticism Volume 2* published from Yking Books, Jaipur itself. Dr. Kumar is also an assistant editor of The SPEIL Journal of English Studies and academic bodies. He has published many research papers and critical essays of the diverse fields in different reputed International Journals and anthologies. The sole objective of his life is to devote himself in studies befitting human welfare.



The Diaspora of the twenty first century is globalized and worthy to be appreciated for the heterogeneous achievements. Hence, the question of the address is not confined to the periphery of the Indian Diaspora but it would be better to deliberate is as the Global Diaspora. Exodus from one nation to another is an inveterate movement worldwide. Due to dominance of international trade, overgrowth of technological advancement, and booming professionalism, the 'forced immigration' of imperial and pre-independence period has now taken the shape of 'border crossing' and 'fascination for migration' in post-independence period. It is, therefore, now opening new horizons of discussion instead of beating on the bush. The multiplicity of subject matter, plurality of cultural edifice, subjectivity of identity discourse and 'nostalgic diversity' make Literature of the Indian Diaspora discursive and digressive and the present Anthology offers the synchronic reality of the texts on the same. Eighteen critical essays included in the volume closely harmonise each other and meticulously analyse the peculiarities of the Indian Diasporic Literature. The well-researched papers from the Indian subcontinent also show the existent socio-economic issues of Diaspora, cultural and familial connection between diasporans, Strong yearning for the homeland and the politics of identity, adaptation to hostland, and/or of course, perpetuation of monomania and nosomania have also been critically analysed in this Anthology.

Ajay K. Chaubey, PhD, is Assistant Professor (English) at the Department of Sciences and Humanities, National Institute of Technology, Uttarakhand, an autonomous institute of National Importance, sponsored by the MHRD, Govt. Of India.

Dr. Bishun Kumar is Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow and has doctoral degree on Mulk Raj Anand from University of Lucknow.



Debasish Lahiri ekes out the living of a fugitive sophist at Lal Baba College. His travels and sojourns have been fated like scrolls out of the Alexandrian Library. His first book of poems *First Will and Testament* was published from Writers Workshop in 2012. He currently lives in Kolkata.

Paperback: 116 pages

Publisher : Authorspress; 1st Edition (2016)

EMERGENT IDENTITIES IN LITERATURE

“Emergent Identities in Literature” (ISBN:978-9-38-565645-3) Headword, New Delhi: 2016) has been published by the Department of English, Mizoram University. Priced at rupees 395/- the book has been the outcome of a national seminar held in March 2015, on ‘Emergent Identities: Its Literary Representations’ and has been edited by Margaret L.Pachauau and Thongam Dhanajit Singh of the Deptt. of English, Mizoram University. With a foreword by Prof. GJV Prasad, Centre for English Studies, JNU New Delhi who succinctly denotes “that identities are never permanent, never static, but always in flux, always in negotiation and formation and hence always emergent or emerging” the book debates on the aspect that in our emergent moments our identities seem to be all, our academic and literary objective seems to be to give life to our political ambitions, to find ourselves as a community. This stimulating collection of papers has an especial focus on Mizoram but other papers cover the representation of Jews, the Portuguese settlement in western India, the Barak Valley, tea plantation labourers, characters in Mahashweta Devi’s works, Bengali Dalits, Arab women, cyborgs, in fact such a variety of emerging identities that it is clear that the politics of representation has to be viewed through a wide lens, that goes beyond the local and actually sees the various locals in terms of the new global. This collection looks at the complications of identity politics, the necessity for it and its limitations.

For more information on the book kindly contact Margaret L.Pachauau Professor Deptt. of English Mizoram University -maggielpachauau@gmail.com

UPCOMING

Scholarly Article Submissions



LLILJ

Lapis Lazuli- An International Literary Journal (LLILJ) ISSN 2249-4529

COMMEMORATING 400 YEARS OF SHAKESPEARE

(Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 2016)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Guest Editors - DR. ABHA SINGH

University of Delhi

KALYANEE RAJAN

University of Delhi

In his Preface to the First Folio (1623), fellow writer and acclaimed playwright Ben Jonson wrote of Shakespeare:

"He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When like Apollo he came forth to warme
Our eares, or like a Mercury to charme!
Nature her selfe was proud of his designes,
And joy'd to weare the dressing of his lines! ..."

It is a fact that William Shakespeare (1564-1616) pervades collective consciousness across languages and cultures throughout the world, through his plays, poems, re-workings and adaptations across various media platforms, and is subjected to innumerable researches across academic circles, with translations and cultural appropriations breaking new frontiers literally every passing minute via literature,

films and indeed theatre. As Shakespeare turned 450 on 23rd April 2014, it was time to celebrate his work and his unparalleled intellectual brilliance, as also enunciated via the Bardolatory tradition. Since the 19th Century, many readers have wondered how someone like Shakespeare with his education at grammar school and mercantile roots could have written so knowledgeably and eloquently on subjects ranging from politics and law to medicine and falconry. Some critics have come to question the genuineness of the authorship of the plays. While it is the right of any critic to hold a democratic inquiry into any aspect of a celebrated author, to some scholars, questioning the authenticity of authorship based on the author's humble roots seems rather absurd as it lends space to an elitist notion that the son of tradesman could not have produced the mammoth Shakespearean canon, thus sounding a dangerously snobbish proposition. Shakespearean plays, though derived from a distinctly English culture, are universally recognized and applauded by people all over the world. This year, as we commemorate 400 years since his death in 1616, celebrations are on across the globe to celebrate Shakespeare as a wonderful creator of plays and poems, characters and ideas, words and worlds.

Lapis Lazuli- An International Literary Journal (LLILJ) (ISSN 2249-4529) invites scholarly and well researched papers in and around the following themes and sub-themes for Vol. 6, Issue No. 1, Spring 2016:

What was Shakespeare really like?

A twenty-first-century Renaissance in Shakespearian biography? (new 'discoveries' and innovative biographical writing)

Culinary Shakespeare (question of food and eating in Shakespeare)

Plants and Gender in Shakespeare and early modern literatures, (the relationship between humans and the vegetable kingdom expressed through the performance of gender in particular in text)

Shakespeare and Dance

Shakespeare and Music

Shakespeare on Modern Indian Stage

Shakespeare and the question of Colonialism

Shakespeare and the question of Race

Shakespeare and Crime

Shakespeare in Popular Culture

Shakespeare and Manga Comics

Tele-adaptations of Shakespeare

Shakespeare in Hollywood

Shakespeare and Bollywood

Magic and the occult in Shakespeare (and his contemporaries)

Abridged Shakespeare for Children and Young adults

Shakespeare and Art, Painting

Localizing Shakespeare in performance
Translating Shakespeare
Kalidas and Shakespeare- Contemporary observations
Teaching Shakespeare in contemporary times
(Re)interpreting Shakespearean Sonnets
Rewriting/Paraphrasing Shakespeare
Shakespeare in Regional Indian languages
Reconfiguring Shakespearean Idiom in the 21st Century.

We would also like to invite unpublished poems, short fiction, interviews, and book reviews related to English language and literature.

- All research papers should **mandatorily follow** the 7th edition of MLA citations.
- All research papers should be accompanied by a one-paragraph long **abstract**, at least ten **keywords**, and a brief **bio-note** of the author containing institutional affiliation and basic contact details.
- For submission and queries, please write to: lapislazulijournal@gmail.com
- Please visit <http://www.pintersociety.com> for detailed submission guidelines.

The last date for submission is **15th May, 2016**. Please note that there shall be **NO** extension of deadline, and no submissions received thereafter shall be entertained.

Editor: Dr. Dinesh Panwar, University of Delhi

RECENT EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Shakespeare and Kalidas: A Comparative Discussion

Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) organized a comparative discussion on Shakespeare and Kalidas, kalidas being the greatest poet and dramatist of ancient India, on the first floor of Ujjayant Book Market to mark the second year of the establishment of Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) on 14 November 2015 to observe the second anniversary of the establishment of Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous). Prantosh Karmakar, a distinguished singer, inaugurated the discussion by singing a song. In his pedantic speech Prof. Saroj Choudhury touched upon all the major plays of Shakespeare academically and captivated the listeners. Among other speakers were Rajkumar Jitendrajit Sinha, Dr Jagadish Gan-Choudhuri and Prof. Bishwajit Gupts. Prantosh Karmakar and Babli Dey presented a duet song, Tapas Roy, co-ordinator, Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) gave the votes of thanks.

Dr. Bhaskar Roy Barman

IACLALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016 REPORT

As Iaclals annual conferences go, this year's was smaller, more low key but making up in ways as it did, through its topical, volatile theme, "Right to Write: Cultures of Literary Controversies and Controversial Literature". From the 22nd to the 24th of January 2016, Kakatiya University, Warangal played host to delegates from all over India, for many of whom it was the first visit to the newly constituted state of Telangana.

In the run up to the conference, our hosts were unflappable and in the quietest way possible. After the super regularity of Nilak Dutta's missives from Goa last year, the quiet emanating from Warangal was a little eerie to start with. But on arriving, we were greeted by an organisational grid so efficiently in place, that all we had to do was nudge ourselves into allotted spaces that had been calmly, assuredly worked out by our hosts.

The Keynote was delivered by Ambai, and in her typical forthright, feisty way she spoke of banning cultures and the dangerous loss and displacement therein of critically engaged readings and debates. Vishwajyoti Ghosh, graphic novelist and creative artist in his inimitable style attacked the attackers with, 'love', while illustrating his ideas and politics through his own work and also through the time he had spent at Charlie Hebdo in Paris. The second day began with a plenary addressed by the much admired Telugu writer, Naveen, speaking of the need to debate tolerance within creative spaces. The Valedictory Session was addressed by the feminist writer Volga, who spoke of the different kinds of censorship that women and Dalits are subjected to.

This was a writer-centred conference, aptly so given the theme, and we had pre-dinner evening sessions where writers from Telangana like Raama Chandramouli, M. Narendra and Sharath Komarraju brought creative writing into academic reflection in lively ways.

A conference held in the shadow of the tragic suicide of a young Dalit student from a neighbouring university, gave the debates a stringent urgency, bringing the very idea of the University, pedagogy and activism into critical focus.

Papers read by delegates spoke of controversies generated by books often deemed incendiary by non reading publics mobilised by sentiments that uncritically damn them. They also spoke of critical receptions, the changing situations that read new controversies or erased old ones, of controversies that were strictly literary to those that were occasioned by historical readings, specific times and spaces, power relations and social tensions. The intimacy of a small conference meant that discussions continued over tea and lunches and dinners (and what a great spread that was!) even as threads were picked up in other sessions.

As usual the focus of attention was on the winner of the Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize for the best published paper and the plenary session to decide the CD Narasimhaiah Prize for the best paper read at the conference. The MM winner this year was Nishat Haider from the University of Lucknow (the first IACLALS Grand Slam winner, so said Prof Harish Trivedi in his congratulatory message on our yahoo group) for her essay "Framing Dalit: A Study of Satyajit Ray's Sadgati", published in the 2015 Special Topic Issue "Satyajit Ray" Vol. 36 No.1 of the South Asian Review. The competition was closely fought with at least two other contenders ranking high. A similar contest unfolded at the CDN Prize with papers that took the conference theme to nuanced understandings. The finalists were Amandeep Kaur and Jasdeep Singh with their joint paper, Neha Arora, Nishtha Pandey, Ritwick Bhattacharjee, and Someshwar Sati. The winner was Someshwar Sati, from KMC, DU for his paper, 'Impaired Controversy: Margarita with a Straw: Sexuality and Disability'.

A big thank you once again to our MM Prize judges, Radhika Mohanram-Cardiff University, Walter Pereira-University of Peradiniya, and Akshaya Kumar-Panjab University Chandigarh and also the CDN judges Joel Kuortti University of Turku, Finland and Somdatta Mandal of Visva-Bharati (who did the initial round of judging and shortlisting), and Ambai, Bala Kothandaraman, and G Damodar, our host from Kakatiya University, who judged the final round.

After the valedictory, the hosts took us on a tour of Warangal and this gave further occasion to both interact with each other and also soak in the local history. Mention must be made of the volunteers who made the conference move smoothly and also the students who attended most sessions in large numbers. Our heartfelt thanks to the two Damodars.

We came back with memories of the beautiful Kakatiya campus and the absolutely incredible conference feasting ever. The food was delicious and rolled endlessly into tens of dishes, each topping the other in flavour and taste. This one's going to be an

impossibly hard act to follow. And yet, we urge our intrepid members from Universities that are willing to take on the challenge to help us co-host and organise the 2017 annual conference. We look forward to hearing from prospective collaborators and continuing our conference calendar through another year of exciting intellectual conversations and bonhomie.

Dr. Rina Ramdev
Secretary
IACLALS

WORLD POETRY DAY 2016

The UNESCO has declared 21 March as the World Poetry Day. In explaining about the significance of the day, Irina Bokova, secretary General of the UNESCO says. ' Every poem is unique, but each reflects the universal in human experience, the inspiration for creativity that crosses all boundaries and borders, of time as well as space, in the constant affirmation of humanity as a single family.' To give a fitting importance to this day Tripura Poetry Society in collaboration with Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) organized a poetic get-together in two phases at six pm at the house of Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman at Banamalipur (Middle), Agartala, West Tripura, Tripura, India. The first phase of this poetic get-together held on 21 March was restricted to reading of original poems and singing of any songs by the poets and the singers participating. Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman, Founder and Secretary, Tripura Poetry Society, spoke in detail of the importance of the day. The second phase of the poetic get-together held was restricted to discussion on the poetries of Shakespeare, Kalidas and Rabindranath Tagore.

Dr. Bhaskar Roy Barman

Programme Report: SMML 2016

3rd Sujit Mukherjee Memorial Lecture at CCL, University of Hyderabad

The Centre for Comparative Literature, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad organised the 3rd Sujit Mukherjee Memorial Lecture held at School of Humanities' Auditorium, University of Hyderabad, on Friday, 12th February 2016. Sujit Mukherjee was a prolific writer, translator and comparatists. His contribution in the field of Translation Studies and in the historiography of Indian Literature is highly acclaimed. Beside his academic works, his elegant writings on cricket also stand testimony to the ecumenical temperament of this Indian scholar. Centre for Comparative Literature took this initiative of organizing this memorial lecture every year by a noted academician in 2014. This year, CCL is organizing this event for the third time. The first Sujit Mukherjee Memorial lecture (2014) was delivered by the renowned comparatist, translator and creative writer, Nabaneeta Dev Sen on "[Translations and Multilingualism](#)". Prof. Indra Nath Choudhuri, an eminent academician, writer and cultural administrator delivered the second Sujit Mukherjee Memorial Lecture (2015) on the "[The Idea of an Indian Literature](#)".

The speaker for this year was Prof. Sukanta Choudhury, a Professor Emeritus

at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Prof. Choudhury, is a well-known litterateur and had been engaged in a number of landmark scholarly works. He has written widely on English Literature and translations, and has taught at many places like Presidency College (now as Presidency University) and Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He is acclaimed for his work of digitization at the School of Cultural Texts, Jadavpur University. He has also extensively worked on English and Bengali renaissance studies. His lecture was titled “My Tagore, Your Tagore: Translation and Textual Identity”. Prof. Tutun Mukherjee, the Head of the Centre for Comparative Literature welcomed and introduced the event. She expressed her deep respect for Sujit Mukherjee and pointed out how Sujit Mukherjee thought of practicing Comparative Literature in India with an indigenous methodology different from Western mode of reading Comparative Literature. Prof. Pramod K. Nayer, a distinguished professor of English introduced the life and contribution of late Sujit Mukherjee both as an academician and other roles by charting the range of Sujit Mukherjee’s scholarly interests spanning disparate fields from translation to sports and other kinds of writing.

Prof. Sukanta Choudhury started his talk by paying tribute to late Sujit and Meenakshi Mukherjee whom he knew and met several times. During his talk he discussed many works on Rabindranath Tagore, focusing on the difference in style and language of Tagore's English and Bengali poems. After discussing various technical aspects of Tagore’s writing, Prof. Choudhury demonstrated that difference between various versions of a literary work is not peculiar to Tagore but is widespread in world literature across the ages. He gave example from other classical literary traditions like Latin and Greek. He talked of Dante, Homer, Virgil and their works. Later, he moved to English Literary world. He discussed Shakespeare and other English writers. He focused on metaphor and other literary devises of different writers. He discussed about Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and its various adaptations in various forms. He talked of *A Midsummers Night’s Dream* - another play by Shakespeare and its transformation in the various translated versions around the world. After discussing these writers and their classic texts, during the last part of his talk, Prof. Choudhury tried to connect with the contemporary world of machine and internet. The issue of copyright also came in. From Persian to modern Turkish language and literature and much more, Prof. Choudhury brought many literary fields, ages, writers in a single frame. The lecture followed by scholarly responses from the audience. The formal vote of thanks was followed by tea and snacks.

100 Thousand Poets for Peace Event

Tripura Poetry Society, Agartala in collaboration with Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) organized a 100 Thousand Poets for Peace event on 3 October 2015, Saturday. Only silence presided over the event, but no one chief-guested or guested it, as is the rule of the Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) which collaborated in organizing the event. All the speakers, all the poets and all the singers present addressed their speeches, their poems and their songs to the silence that presided over the event. Majority of the guests hobnobbed about how to help establish world peace and listened to poems being read, speeches being delivered and songs being sung.

Mr Prantosh Karmakar presented the inaugural song. The inaugural song was followed by two poems read by Dr Arundhari Roy, an eminent poet. Then Mr Jitendrajit

Sinha, a distinguished educationist in his erudite speech grieved over how the present students are being alienated from books outside of the syllabi in a mad rush for career building and do not bother about what is happening around them. Siuli Roy, Babli Dey and Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman and others read their poems on world peace. Siuli Roy Sang a solo song and then she and Prantosh Karmakar presented a duet song to mark the end of the event.

Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman

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'Divergences' International Seminar at Janki Devi Memorial College

Janki Devi Memorial College (Delhi University) organized an International Seminar 'Divergences' on April 1-2, 2016. The Conference was inaugurated by the Acting Principal of the College, Dr. Swati Pal. In her opening address, she proposed the importance of critical thinking as a desirable goal of education, asserting that the role of universities is to promote humanism and tolerance.

The keynote address was delivered by the eminent academician Prof. Alok Rai. He spoke on 'The Culture in Cultural Nationalism.' He proposed a working definition of culture which is dynamic and growing rather than static or sterile. He concluded his lecture by reading out a Hindi poem 'Veero ka kaisa ho Vasant?', written in 1931 in the context of the hangings of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. The poem reminds us of the urgency to not simply be the inheritors of a culture but constantly work on it to build it further.

The panelists in the 1st session titled 'Faith, Secularism and Democracy' were noted feminist Nivedita Menon from JNU and Kranti Saran from Ashoka University. The session was chaired by GJV Prasad from JNU. Menon touched on the key themes pertaining to the debate on secularism. She focused on 'Sarv Dharam Sambhawa,' wherein the state has a duty to intervene and ensure that all religions are treated equally. She further stated how in the present context, the resistances to communal, capitalist and neo-liberal structures of state are coming through the insistence on democracy rather than secularism. Kranti Saran talked on the theme of Anger, comparing two different scholars namely Amia Srinivasan, a researcher and lecturer at Oxford, and Sāntideva, a Buddhist monk. He detailed out for the audience the effects of calling someone angrily, effects of being angry, and consequences of being angry on oneself. He suggested that anger can be used in a constructive way, motivating us to do what we otherwise would not.

The 2nd session titled 'Whose Nationalism?' was chaired by noted Indian feminist historian Prof. Uma Chakravarty with speakers Prof. Ania Loomba and Prof. Aditya

Nigam. Prof. Loomba, a Professor of English literature in Pennsylvania University, began the session by tracing the promotion of nationalism in India through emotional advertisements in 1990s on television and print media. To her, such attempt was an emotional appeal to Indians. However, she also indicated that nationalism in India has not been inclusive because women, dalits, muslims, minors have always remained out of it. Prof. Aditya Nigam explained that nations have been integral to all imagination. He cited Benedict Anderson, who argued that the construction of nations require forgetfulness of history. It is a deliberate act involving symbols, a sense of belonging and a set of routine performances. He gave an alternative understanding of nation as given by Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj*. To Nigam, the word "Hind" is important because it describes the nation as a geographical entity different from a religious one. Uma Chakravarty concluded the discussion and talked about women as the ones holding the state accountable.

The 3rd Session 'Nature Morte: Environment and Urban spaces' was chaired by Raj Liberhan, former Director of India Habitat Centre. The panelists included Dr. Awadhendra Sharan from Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and Dr. Rajat Kathuria, Director and Chief Executive, Indian Council for Research on International Relations. The Chair initiated the discussion by commenting on the philosophy of urbanization, its impact on environment and need for sustainable development. Dr. Sharan spoke on several pertinent issues such as problem of water and the unfulfilled dream of universal piped water supply. He discussed the role of decentralization of power and the importance of local government instead of municipal corporations. He suggested the need for thinking of our cities in ways that make sense instead of borrowing theories or principles from the western world. Dr. Kathuria presented the economic perspective to the issue of environment that is a global public good with high demand elasticity. Continuing with high level of environmental damage would adversely impact health as well as agriculture productivity and that more than income; India faces institutional constraints to address the environment issue. The monumental challenge for India is the implementation of the public policy efficiently as there is problem of ethics of transactions in public spaces. The Chair concluded on a positive note that there is still hope and scope of working towards improving environment for the country.

The 4th Session on the second day was on 'The Future of the Public University'. The session was chaired by Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra and comprised three distinguished speakers: Prof. Satish Deshpande, Prof. Suvir Kaul and Prof. Rajashri Dasgupta. The Chair provided the impetus to the session by asking for the discussion on the future of public university on account of political turmoil in India. Prof. Deshpande discussed the history, ideology and politics of the university and its movements. He claimed that educational institutions were centres for national politics. He cited examples of the JP movement and Naxalite movements of the 1960s as marking the beginning of students protest. He compared the past and present situations of public university to highlight two key differences. One, that movements were born out of states mechanism. Second that there was a shift in the role of science from being politically alert to apolitical resulting in the need of social sciences to deal with socio-political struggles. Prof. Kaul spoke of the political strategies and policies adopted during India's economic liberalization that accelerated higher education and better future of public universities. He analyzed 'Higher Education: Vision 2030', a policy document submitted by FICCI in

2013. The document estimated that about 140 million would be in a college going age group. The present structure of India's higher education would not be able to meet the demand for higher education. He implored the need to be wary of lobbying from the corporate sector and the government. Prof. Dasgupta explained the future of public universities by emphasizing on the meaning and function they provide. He noted that there was a shift in perception of seeing the universities as 'teaching shops'. He distinguished between education and training and regarded commodification of education to narrow and technical training devaluing humanity. He strongly urged the need for complete autonomy of academia from the state and market as universities provided spaces for critical thinking.

The 5th session on 'Media/Truth and Law' was chaired by noted columnist Ashok Malik. The panel comprised of Swapan Dasgupta an eminent public policy analyst and now a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament; Ravish Kumar a senior journalist with NDTV and Sharukh Alam, a lawyer, social activist and writer. The Chair spoke briefly about the contemporary debates around the media and its debatable truth claims. Alam, talked about her experiences as a social activist, her engagement with underprivileged muslim communities and about the tenuous relationship between law and community practices and how the legal system is not always equipped to take on ambivalent and contesting community claims. She threw up difficult questions about the nature of faith, law and truth, and the language of Rights. Swapan Dasgupta spoke eloquently on what is perceived as biased journalism and the politics behind partisan assertions. He talked about the need to understand a common person's right to opine and be heard. He felt that developments in the social and new media have made journalism more democratic both in content and response. Ravish Kumar felt that the popular is not necessarily radical and there is a need to speak truth to power. Often a critical position is unpopular but the job of a journalist is not to be populist but to speak the truth. Like any other space, media is not free of corruption but he argued that there are journalists who are still committed to the profession.

The last session on 'Love and its many Discontents' was chaired by Dr. Kumkum Roy from Jawaharlal Nehru University. Dr. Simi Malhotra from Jamia Milia Islamia spoke of the idea of love as a risk to the 'stable self' because it reaches beyond the limits of oneself and onto the radical other. Referring to 'In Praise of Love' by Alain Badiou, she examined the risk-potential of love as an event or rupture that destabilises the structure of the normative order. Dr. Rupal Oza from Hunter College, US examined love as an engagement of not two individuals but of the family as a social unit. She illustrated the case of women in rural Haryana and the implications of the Hindu Succession Act, which increased the number of women asking for their share of family's land/inheritance. In this context, she spoke of the 'Love' between fathers and daughters and brothers and sisters which was perceived as being threatened.

Dr. Akhil Katyal from Shiv Nadar University, spoke of the popular idioms on same-sex love and how this love is seen in popular culture as excess, as addiction and even as disease. However, there exist conflicting idioms within this idiom which may express both acceptance and critique. He explored the constraints and breaking points of these various idioms in the way popular culture has negotiated with same sex love. Dr. Ambrish Satwik, a surgeon at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital attempted to explore the evolutionary discourse of monogamy in Homo Sapiens and its connection to the masturbatory practices of the human male; especially in the context of Japanese

pornographic genre of Bukkake and Gokkum. Ravikant, a bilingual historian, writer, and translator discussed the history of songs in Hindi cinema over the years. He examined the changing popular discourses of love through the 1940s to the contemporary period and connected it to the aspirations of the emerging nation-state. The Chair concluded the session by commenting the sheer variety of discourses that are available on the concept of Love and that it is essential that one constantly reimagines the ideas connected to it.

Reported by Bharti, Ruchika, Shilpa, Zubair, Tarini, Antara.

Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi's Symposium on **"Tagore and Gandhi: Dilemmas, Dialogues, Dichotomies"**

Commemorating the 155th birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate and illustrious Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941), Sahitya Akademi (Indian Academy of Letters), New Delhi organised a Symposium on the theme "Tagore and Gandhi: Dilemmas, Dialogues, Dichotomies" on 9th May 2016. Spread over two sessions, the symposium began with the welcome address delivered by Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, SA who dwelt upon the significance and relevance of discussing Tagore and Gandhi together, the two great influences on public consciousness and their respective pivotal roles in the national movement for independence.

The Introductory remarks were given by Prof. Malashri Lal, Convener of the SA English Advisory Board, who reflected on the first meeting of Tagore and Gandhi at Shantiniketan and their ideological differences, but also their friendly banter about food, including the merits of fried *pooris*! Tagore neither agreed with Gandhi's methods in the non-cooperation movement nor did he accept the disproportionate significance that the Mahatma attached to the spinning of the *charkha*. Lal illustrated the ideological conflict between Gandhi and Tagore with specific reference to the former's remarks regarding the Bihar earthquake of 1934 subsequently eliciting strong reactions from Tagore. She also dwelt upon the tributes to these two great leaders through publications of the SA over the years and the current programme providing a continuum.

This was followed by the inaugural lecture titled "Tagore and Gandhi: Their Intellectual Conflict and Companionship" delivered by renowned scholar Prof. Indra Nath Choudhuri, former Director of the Nehru Centre in London. Setting the tone for the symposium. Choudhuri brought out various aspects of Tagore and Gandhi's relationship, the focal points being philosophical questions on a desirable society and a universal humanism. He pointed out that while Tagore was older to Gandhi, he addressed Gandhi as the Mahatma or the great soul, and Gandhi addresses Tagore as Gurudev that is, the great preceptor, indicating that the two held each other in great respect. Choudhuri emphasised that Gandhi warned us specifically against developing a colonial mentality. Choudhuri saw Gandhi and Tagore as bridges to the future, with the caveat that though the twenty-first century could be called that of Gandhi, Tagore goes beyond time and cannot be limited to the ambit of a century. Referring to Tagore's exalted poetic craft and his search for beauty in man and nature, Choudhuri spoke of Gandhi's journey of dauntless courage and astonishing spiritual energy. Covering a wide spectrum of incidents from both Tagore and Gandhi's lives, Choudhuri concluded by highlighting the motto of "rejoice and renounce" as given by Tagore and the exact reverse given by

Gandhi, indicating the essential clash of principles between the two great leaders, who nevertheless had the courage of spirit to speak and walk alone.

The first session chaired by historian Prof. Bharati Ray began with Prof. Bashabi Fraser from Scottish Centre for Tagore Studies, who presented her views on “Tagore and Gandhi: A National Encounter”. Focusing on what she termed as the “Bard/Bird” metaphor, she brought out many instances from the Tagore and Gandhi debates in the print arena, touching upon their respective understandings of truth, freedom, *charkha*-spinning, and non-cooperation. Fraser ended her scholarly presentation with the observation that Gandhi viewed Tagore as a visionary but not a realist, and poetry as superfluous because the hungry need food, questioning how the national bard/bird cannot sing at the time of national awakening.

Dr. Reba Som’s presentation on “Tagore and Gandhi Agreed to Disagree: A Civilised Dialogue” hinged upon the intellectual discourse created by the two eminent leaders, which subsequently provided a backdrop for younger politicians like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. Dwelling upon various vertices of dissension between Tagore and Gandhi, chiefly those of non-cooperation, compulsory spinning of the *charkha*, the boycott of foreign cloth, ideas of nationhood, religion, and the role of women, Som, an accomplished singer, gave a soulful rendition of Tagore’s lyric “*Jeebono Jokhon Shukaey Jaey, Korunadharaey Esho...*”, translated by Tagore himself as, “When the heart is hard and parched up come upon me with a shower of mercy”. Tagore had sung this for Gandhi in Pune.

Furthering the concerns of the symposium, Dr. Radha Chakravarty spoke on “Language and Identity: Reconsidering Tagore and Gandhi”, talking about how both Gandhi and Tagore held varying views on the importance of language in the creation and expansion of the self and national identity. Chakravarty explained Tagore’s detection of “the worst kind of provincialism” in Gandhi’s insistence on the mother tongue, while he himself endorsed a broader approach, and imparting education in foreign languages. She ended by highlighting the importance of translation in this context, and the need to draw inspiration from Tagore and Gandhi’s dissenting views, in order to get a fresh perspective on the contemporary linguistically divided world.

The second session began with two students from Delhi University singing Gandhi’s favourite ‘Ram-dhun’. The session was chaired by eminent academic Prof. Alok Bhalla, who shared an interesting anecdote about Gandhi being challenged by a gathering of migrants in Kingsway camp on interpreting the line from the Ram Dhun, “*Ishwar allah tero naam*”. Prof. Bindu Puri presented her views on “The Tagore Gandhi Debate: On Creativity and Freedom”. She focussed on their conflicting ideas regarding “Swaraj”, the concepts of Truth, possibilities of untruth and the nature of freedom. She also spoke about creativity and its relationship to freedom as a theme underlying the debate between Tagore and Gandhi, Tagore’s ideas on creativity and two other related ideas – surplus and the idea of transcendence, and finally, Gandhi’s philosophy behind projecting the *charkha*.

In the next presentation, Professors Anita Sharma and Arttatrana Nayak spoke on “Influence of Tagore and Gandhi in China”. Anita Sharma presented a detailed survey of Gandhian studies in China, through its various stages of rise and decline, towards the contemporary steadily rising phase of interest in Gandhian Studies, which has led to the

establishment of Gandhian Studies Centre at Shanghai University, springing from a growing desire for spiritual life in China. Prof. Nayak detailed his experience at Vishwa Bharati's Cheena Bhawan, moving on to talk about the Indo-Chinese civilizational dialogue, the role of Buddhism, and the shared history of the two nations.

Finally, Prof. Malashri Lal in her insightful paper titled "Tagore and Gandhi: Perspectives on Women" brought out crucial aspects of their views about the role of women in individual and national capacities. Citing various vignettes from the personal lives of Tagore and Gandhi, Lal interpreted the values behind their respective relations with their spouses Mrinalini and Kasturba, and their expectations and understandings thereof. She made a significant observation regarding Gandhi's employment of 'feminine' symbols like a fistful of salt, charkha weaving and so on for the Satyagraha, with great success, as opposed to Tagore's poetic validation and decoration of futuristic, empowered women who could only exist in literary texts. She ended her presentation by talking about how desirable companionate relationships as envisaged in contemporary times would be a fitting tribute to Tagore and Gandhi and would go a long way in grasping the ideals of equity and equality in society. The extremely engaging and well-attended symposium ended on a suitable note with a warm vote of thanks by Smt. Gitanjali Chatterjee, Dy. Secy, Sahitya Akademi.

Kalyanee Rajan

Awards and Nominations

10/1/2015
UNESCO - The Hindu

Mohanty nominated to India's Commission for



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PUDUCHERRY, September 30, 2015

Mohanty nominated to India's Commission for UNESCO

▪ Staff Reporter

Professor Sachidananda Mohanty, Faculty, Department of English, University of Hyderabad, Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Orissa, and an alumnus of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry, has been nominated by the President of India to the Indian National Commission for Co-Operation with UNESCO.

The permanent Commission was established in 1951 through the Union Ministry of Education.

He has been nominated to the Commission as an individual member in his personal capacity. The tenure of his membership is for four years. The educationist has authored several books in Oriya and English. He has received awards from the British Council, and has been a Salzburg Fellow, and a Fulbright Visiting Professor.

The nomination is significant, given my ties to Auroville and Puducherry.

Professor Sachidananda Mohanty

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