

## IACLALS

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**Debashree Dattaray**

(On behalf of IACLALS)

**Editorial Team:**

**Priyanka Tripathi**  
**Debashree Dattaray**

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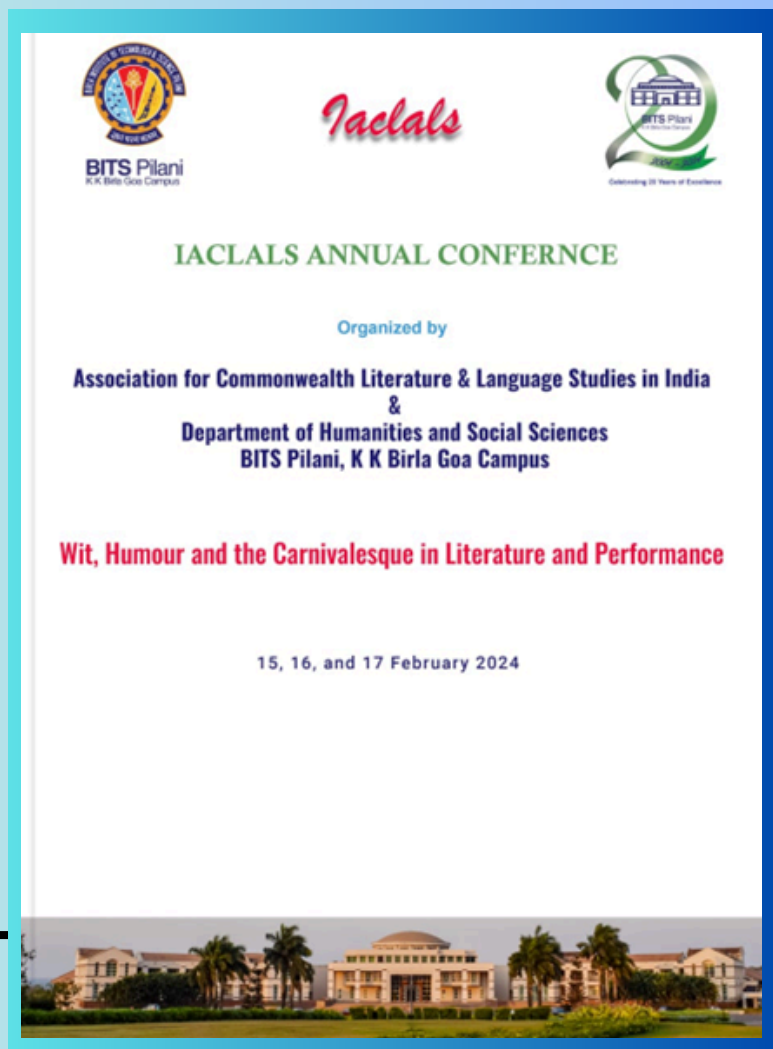
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**About IACLALS**

The Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies—is the officially recognized Indian chapter of the international ACLALS (Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies). IACLALS was instituted in India in 1974.

Its objectives are to promote and coordinate Post Colonial/ Commonwealth Literature Studies in India, organize seminars and workshops, arrange lectures by writers and scholars including those visiting India, publishing a newsletter about activities in the field of Commonwealth Literature in India and in other parts of the world, and holding the annual conference in collaboration with various Universities and Institutions in India.

The International ACLALS holds a conference once in three years. The international ACLALS was started in 1964 with a conference in the University of Leeds. Since then, the headquarters have moved every three years, and conferences have been held in different parts of the world including Canada, Australia, Singapore, Jamaica and India



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## EDITORIAL

IACLALS has been a pioneering community of colleagues, scholars and students working tirelessly together in the direction of cutting edge research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences from a glocal perspective.

The IACLALS newsletter focuses on recent research that locates diverse worldviews, practices, and histories at the centre of discussion in the context of increasing challenges and crises that engulf the humanities today. Through a critical and interdisciplinary perspective, the newsletter attempts to amplify voices that must be heard over and over again.

As always, this year too, the IACLALS newsletter foregrounds conference reports, creative writing, translations, new publications, awards and obituaries of the extended IACLALS fraternity and thus initiates a much needed interdisciplinary dialogue.

Esteemed members of IACLALS continue to inspire with a deep-rooted understanding of human culture, ethics, history and storytelling that in turn offers an ideal platform to engage with the complex knowledge systems in a world of hardening differences.

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## REPORTS

### IACLALS Annual Conference 2024

on

**“Wit, Humour and the Carnavalesque in Literature and Performance”**

co-hosted by

**The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa  
Campus 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 (Hybrid mode)**

### Conference Report

The Annual Conference of the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in India (IACLALS) on “Wit, Humour and the Carnavalesque in Literature and Performance” co- hosted by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus, was held from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 in hybrid mode. It was very well organized and efficiently managed by Dr Amitendu Bhattacharya (Organizing Secretary) and his team. The three days of intellectual deliberations and discussions were accompanied by an atmosphere of warm camaraderie and memorable hospitality. The BITS Pilani campus with its verdant landscape, well-manicured lawns and a variety of flowering and ornamental plants and trees was an optic delight. The venue of the conference was a charming blend of lush greenery and state of the art conference halls managed to perfection by young, smiling volunteers and members of the tech-support team.



The Inaugural Session – Dr. Amitendu Bhattacharya, Professor Swati Pal (Vice Chair, IACLALS), Professor M Asaduddin (Chair, IACLALS) and Professor K A Geetha (Conference Convenor, and Head, Dept. of HSS, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus)



Professor K A Geetha delivering the Welcome Address



Professor Suman Kundu



Professor Swati Pal



Professor M. Asaduddin

The Inaugural session opened with a welcome address by Professor K A Geetha, the Convenor of the Conference and the Head of the Department, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus. Professor Swati Pal, Vice Chair of the IACLALS and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, New Delhi, introduced the IACLALS. Following this, Professor M. Asaduddin, Chairperson IACLALS, spoke in detail about the theme of the conference. Professor Suman Kundu, the Chief-Guest and Director, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus, then addressed the gathering. In keeping with the theme of the conference he kept the audience riveted with a delightful combination of intellect and genial humor. The session closed with a Vote of Thanks delivered with subtle, yet distinctive sparkle by the organizing secretary, Dr Amitendu Bhattacharya.



Professor E V Ramakrishnan delivering his Keynote address

Eminent bilingual writer, poet and literary critic Professor E V Ramakrishnan, honoured recently with Sahitya Akademi Award (2023 for Literary Criticism), delivered the keynote address titled “Carnavalesque in Contemporary Indian Fiction: The Interface between Subversion and Affirmation.” His masterly analysis of some instances from classic Malayalam fiction, particularly Vaikom Muhammad Basheer’s *Viswavikhyathamaya Mookku* (The World-Renowned Nose) and S Hareesh’s *Moustache* underlined the relevance of the theme/s of the Conference in vivid detail and these resonated through several business sessions during the 3 days. The session was chaired by Professor Senath Walter Perera, former Chairperson, SLACLALS, Sri Lanka.



Session Chair Professor Perera making his closing comments

This year’s edition of the Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize (2024) (for the best paper published during the past two years) was won by IACLALS member Dr. Ved Prakash, Assistant Professor of English, Central University of Rajasthan, for his paper titled “Examining the domain of Caste, Gender and Sexuality through select Films of Jayan K. Cherian”. He received the Prize Citation and a cheque for Rs. 10,000/-.



Prof. M. Asaduddin and Prof. Swati Pal presenting the MMM Prize citation to Dr. Ved Prakash

In a session jointly chaired by Professor M. Asaduddin and Professor Swati Pal, Professor Pal engaged Dr Ved Prakash in a conversation which dwelt on screen representations of multiple struggles and discriminations experienced by Dalit communities, which are socially and politically significant in the contemporary times. Dr. Ved Prakash spoke with gravitas and deep understanding of his study. This year's distinguished jury comprised academic, literary critic, poet and editor former Professor at the University of Calcutta, Professor Sanjukta Dasgupta; Janet Wilson, Emerita Professor at the University of Northampton; and Professor E. V. Ramakrishnan.



Dr. Ved Prakash introducing his prize-winning paper

As always, the CD Narasimhaiah Prize (2024) (for the best paper presented at the conference) was a closely-contested competition. The five young finalists this time—Sanyogita Singh, Ashima Shrawan, Pooja Duggal, Srestha Bhattacharya and Tasnim Nazifa Choudhury were shortlisted after their papers were judged in the first round before the conference by Professor Meenakshi Bharat, Professor, Department of English, Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi, and Professor Seemin Hasan, Professor, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University. The three floor judges, Professor K A Geetha, Dr. Hemjyoti Medha and Dr. Natasha Thoudam then judged the contestants for their presentations and their skill in answering questions posed by an engaged audience at the conference.



Professor M. Asaduddin presenting the cheque to the winner Ms. Srestha Bhattacharya

The CD Narasimhaiah Prize 2024 carrying a certificate of commendation and a cheque for Rs. 5000/- was won by Ms. Srestha Bhattacharya, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Delhi, for her paper titled “Humour, Carnavalesque and Counter-Memory in the Literary Works of Suniti Namjoshi.” The runner-up prize which was introduced last year, went to Sanyogita Singh for her paper titled “Humour and Hurt: Narrative as Counter-strategy in Krishan Chander’s *Ek Gadhe ki Aatmkatha*.”



The five CDN Prize finalists with the three floor judges, and the session chairs Professor M. Asaduddin and Professor Fatima Rizvi

After the past three consecutive online annual conferences owing to impossibilities occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic, this year’s annual conference was the first in-person one, and what place could have been better than Goa! This then, was quite naturally, a fairly large conference with well over a hundred presentations, packed in parallel sessions over the three days. A number of powerful papers exploring various aspects of wit, humour and carnivalesque in folk and cultural traditions, bhasha literature, visual arts and cinema, caste, social and political realities, sitcoms, disability, everyday life, children’s literature, and poetry, followed by animated Q & A sessions and discussions were the order of each day.



Session 4C – “Indi-wit: Humour in Bhasha Literatures” chaired by EV Ramakrishnan



Session 7A – “Wit and the Other: Humour’s various Entanglements” chaired by Dr. Hemjyoti Medhi

Many members of the IACLALS are meritorious poets. This year, a poetry reading session chaired by Dr Kalyanee Rajan (Treasurer, IACLALS) showcased several young and senior poets who were also presenting academic papers at the conference. All of them captivated the audience with a variety of compositions – some deeply felt, some clever and witty, ruminative and even subversive, and surreal, in English, Hindi and Urdu. It was a pleasure listening to each one of these compositions.



Dr. Kalyanee Rajan with the participating poets

The IACLALS continued its tradition of releasing academic publications of its members by hosting the Book Release session this year too. It was held in hybrid mode with some of the authors, editors and translators joining the session online. A total of nine books covering a variety of areas of study ranging from women's movements to South Asian Culture, disability, a festschrift for Professor GJV Prasad, and a translated text among several more, were released by Professor Swati Pal and Professor M. Asaduddin.



The Book Release Session

Since this was election year, a General Body Meeting was held on the second day of the conference. The Chair, Professor M. Asaduddin warmly welcomed all the IACLALS members present in the meeting. He apprised members of the challenging circumstances faced by the present IACLALS Executive– the pandemic and the fact that the association had not been registered with the government ever since its institution several decades ago. As a result, KYC formalities could not be completed in 2020 and the association's bank account was frozen for over two-and-a-half years, a period through which the association had to be run by utilising personal funds. He informed the GB that the association is now a registered body, with a slightly changed nomenclature (because of bureaucratic compulsions) though retaining the acronym IACLALS, i.e., **Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in India**. The General Body appreciated the fact that despite challenges, the IACLALS team did not allow the academic activities to be hampered in any way. On the contrary, apart from continuing the Annual Conference in online mode for three years (2021, 2022 and 2023), and the e-Newsletter, it also added activities like instituting the **Distinguished Speaker Series** lectures and the **IACLALS Discussion Forum** to its kitty. The GB, by consensus, decided to declare the past 3 years of instability as a zero term, and endorsed the continuation of the current executive for the ensuing term, with some necessary changes, as follows:

CHAIRPERSON: Professor M.  
Asaduddin

VICE CHAIR: Professor Swati Pal

SECRETARY: Professor Fatima Rizvi

TREASURER: Dr. Kalyanee Rajan



At the General Body Meeting

The IACLALS Executive also welcomed Dr. Debashree Dattaray (Associate Professor and Head, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata) as the new East Zone representative, and Dr. Priyanka Tripathi (Associate Professor of English, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Patna) as the new Central Zone representative to its Board.



The conference concluded with a short valedictory session where the chair summed up the activities of the 3-day long conference, followed by a Vote of Thanks by Prof. Fatima Rizvi, Secretary, IACLALS, and Dr. Nilak Dutta, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus.

We at the IACLALS would like to thank our co-hosts at BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus for their warm hospitality – the delicious lunches and very comfortable guest-house residence, and for all the arrangements made by them to ensure the smooth running of the conference; all the faculty at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa Campus for their participation through the three days of the conference; all the chairpersons who conducted their sessions with engaged academic interest, all the delegates who presented their papers at the conference, and the audience who further enlivened each session with their questions and comments. An especially warm “thank you” to all volunteers who helped steer the conference with absolute precision.

Professor Fatima Rizvi  
Secretary  
IACLALS

## National Seminar on Sustainable Development Goals at JGND PSOU 10th July 2024

Public Relations and the School of Languages, Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University (JGND PSOU), Patiala, collaboratively organised one-day national seminar on “Sustainable Development Goals: Eco-centric vs Economic-centric Models” on 10th July, 2024. Prof Adarsh Pal Vig, Chairman, Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB), Patiala was the Chief Guest and Dr Amit Dhir, Professor, School of Energy and Environment, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala was the Resource Person for the seminar. Prof Karamjeet Singh, Vice-Chancellor, JGND PSOU welcomed the distinguished guests. In his address, he deliberated on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Prof Karamjeet Singh said, “Environmental dimension is necessary while economically progressing. The universal call for action to end poverty, protect the planet, and to ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 given by UN can be realised only by exercising limits. Research on planetary boundaries suggests that humanity has been transgressing thresholds of Earth’s life support system for economic development. There should be sustainable relationship between economic systems and ecosystems.”

Prof Adarsh Pal Vig exhorted the participants to initiate change at the personal level to attain sustainable development. While contemplating on an environment centric model of growth, Prof Vig highlighted the importance of integrating sustainable development goals with the environmental concerns. “Time is ripe to assess whether the implementation of SDGs has lived up to the promise of improving human well-being while at the same time protecting the Earth’s ecosystems.” Prof Amit Dhir talked about ‘Environmental Management’ in his keynote address. He highlighted that any economic progress made by compromising on environmental issues cannot lead to balanced development. “Any solutions provided for conservation and preservation of natural resources need to be both socially acceptable and economically viable in order to work,” he said. *Environment Unearthed: Literary Perspectives on Nature and Climate Change*, an anthology dedicated to the environment, edited by Dr. Navleen Multani was released on the occasion. Flyers of the upcoming programs initiated by the Public Relations Cell, JGND PSOU, “Expert Speaks @ JGND PSOU” and “JGND PSOU Chetna Series” were also released by the dignitaries.



In order to raise awareness among youngsters and participants, PPCB distributed jute bags and pamphlets on “Say NO to Plastic”.

Dr Navleen Multani  
Head, School of Languages  
Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala

***Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath* at JGND Punjab State Open University**  
**01<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University (JGND PSOU), Patiala under the aegis of *Swachhata hi Seva Campaign* organised ***Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath*** in academic block of the university. The teaching and non-teaching staff of the university participated in the mega cleanliness drive to mark celebrations of Gandhi Jayanti. Prof. Karamjeet Singh, Vice-Chancellor, JGND PSOU said, “The participation in hour-long *Swachhta Hi Sewa* campaign, announced by Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reinforces the significance of cleanliness. Every effort for cleanliness can restore green and immaculate surroundings throughout the nation.” Prof Gurdip Singh Batra, Dean Academic Affairs, said that cleanliness campaign is the most befitting tribute to the Father of Nation. Prof. Manjeet Singh, Registrar, said that it should be the duty of each and every citizen to maintain cleanliness. “This year also marks the third anniversary of Swachh Bharat Mission,” he added.



Dr Navleen Multani  
Director  
Public Relations  
JGND PSOU  
Patiala

**Title of Workshop: South Asian Water Imaginaries in an Era of Environmental Crisis –  
National Workshop**

**Organised by: Department of Liberal Arts IIT Bhilai**

**Dates: 13th October 2023**

**Report:**

The Department of Liberal Arts at IIT Bhilai organised a one-day national workshop titled "South Asian Water Imaginaries in an Era of Environmental Crisis" on 13th October 2023. The workshop aimed to trace the presence of water in South Asian literature and culture as an indispensable environmental act, continuously shaping its possibilities and perils. Prof Swarnalatha Rangarajan, IIT Madras, delivered the keynote session, in which she spoke about the primacy of water, both in its dearth and abundance, as an important signifier of the current ecological crises of the Anthropocene. Dr. Punyashree Panda (IIT Bhubaneswar), Dr. Madhuri Ramesh (Azim Premji University), and Dr. Sreejith Varma R. (VIT Vellore) were the mentors for the workshop. The workshop witnessed participation from doctoral scholars and postgraduate students from other IITs and central and state universities such as IIT Kharagpur, Central University of Kerala, and Jadavpur University. There were three simultaneous panels with a total of eight paper presentations.

The workshop provided participating scholars an opportunity to be mentored by experts in the field and discover zones of confluence with peers and mentors alike. It proved to be a valuable learning experience for the participating scholars, who received detailed feedback on their papers from the mentors. The workshop also emerged as an outcome-oriented platform that collaboratively reflected upon a set of chosen thematics as emergent from and reflected in respective literary and cultural texts. The Department of Liberal Arts at IIT Bhilai will continue to organise workshops and conferences of relevance to society at large.



**Name of Rapporteur with Institutional Designation/ Affiliation:**

Barsha Santra, Doctoral Scholar, Department of Liberal Arts IIT Bhilai

**Title of International Conference: Experiencing Home: Domestic Architecture in Urban Writing- International Conference**

**Organised by: Department of Liberal Arts IIT Bhilai**

**Dates: 22nd to 23rd February 2024**

**Report:**

The Department of Liberal Arts at IIT Bhilai held a two-day international conference titled Experiencing Home: Domestic Architecture in Urban Writing from 22 to 23 February 2024. The conference was organised in collaboration with the Association for Literary Urban Studies, a globally recognised professional body in the domain. The conference aimed to explore how the notion of home has held a place of significance as the stage on which domesticity and urbanity have sought to shape each other within broader zones of influence.

Professor Rajiv Prakash, Director, IIT Bhilai delivered the Welcome Address and congratulated the department for taking initiative and attracting global talent to IIT Bhilai. Professor Cecile Sandten from Chemnitz University of Technology and Professor Alex Tickell from The Open University delivered the keynote sessions at the conference. While Professor Sandten spoke about the multifaceted relationship between heterotopias, third space, precarity, and domestic architecture as depicted in urban writing, Professor Tickell focused on select Indian-English fiction to examine the continuities between fictional and built form in relation to city architecture, infrastructure, and design.

The conference witnessed participation from both senior academics and young researchers in diverse fields of studies, including literature, architecture, law, history, and sociology. It emerged as an interdisciplinary platform for experimenting with new ideas in the field of urbanisation. There were a total of six panels with twenty paper presentations. The conference facilitated valuable opportunities for interactive and collaborative exchanges to expand the field's horizons. Department of Liberal Arts will continue to organize seminars, workshops, and conferences of topical interest to society at large.



**Name of Rapporteur with Institutional Designation/ Affiliation:**

Barsha Santra, Doctoral Scholar, Department of Liberal Arts IIT Bhilai

## CREATIVE WRITING

### POEMS/ SHORT STORIES/ TRANSLATIONS

#### POEMS BY MASUM AHMED

##### Behead each other with our arms

You will not miss my gaze;  
neither this pitiful ogling  
from the school-bus passing by your window,  
nor this sheen smithery  
Recently  
I have started to manifest through my hands—

But you will miss  
the flare of my gaze  
sinking in the twilight of your soul—

I shall write  
On  
The mantle of my past rolling down  
from the wall of trust  
we supposedly raised  
and cemented together—

But how would you know  
Why a philosopher in residence  
is an exile in a poet's disguise!

The houses shame each other in the city;  
The talkers of equality  
And milieu  
Spit on each others' pictures  
with emojis—  
That's quite different I know from the quarrels  
We held by the dawn  
to behead each other with our arms  
In the evening—

The teapot's empty  
like the promises  
in our slender hearts; the smoke vaporises  
Above the heights of our distilled tears—  
Perhaps this is the exchange  
We made  
with forks sliding down our hands

And knives  
flying along our words—

But there is a moment that raids me  
as if I am the only exile who sits to warm himself up  
At the bonfire of memory—

But you too must have been used to  
burning down the phantoms of memory  
In the fire of loneliness—

Things turn like this.  
A feeling is not a shore  
But a wave  
to transport the heaviest load  
And dismiss  
the hollowest creature—

But you and I, still live  
with a strangely dynamic belief  
in each quarter of life's lore;  
there's a certain inevitable monster!

### **Disguise**

And one man I am  
playing my parts; caring none  
but moments that stitch my soul together onto the canvas of time  
with the smile of thine  
making a strand for each piercing!

All the silences of this world are terrifying  
but the silence rolling down through your eyes  
makes all other silences sing!

And that pagan I am  
building a temple of emptiness  
sans rule, sans civilities, and sans accommodation!

Do not thou justify this action  
when I compose a poem,  
calling it an optimization of my insolence  
to devise myself for some nomination!

Ah nominations! Lunacy of the ailing human nations!  
The cobbler nominates the shoes  
for the tyrant's face; the magante nominates the broker  
to bargain with the breasts of time!

Thus, I am one man  
observing the oldest rite in this world;  
Trying my best to be not what I am  
but that's just like the Box jellyfish  
pretending not to be something wild!

All these days but I am one man  
and a man all these nights I am.  
I have discovered myself in the dried veins of an autumn leaf  
floating in a frozen lake  
in absence of the white star—

And I played my part  
when the sage was absent at my christening;  
I took the rituals for something universal  
and wiped the neighbour's windows  
with my prayer mat.

And yet, I am one man  
playing my parts; like a hedgehog rolling on the forest leaves,  
an ostrich in the sandstorm, a migrant tied to protocols,  
a fateful egg in the boiling water-pot;  
A disguise behind the veils of moments,  
hatching out more moments  
to extend the disguise!



Masum Ahmed, alumnus, Department of English, AMU, works at Trivium Education Services, providing his professional services to various universities and colleges across the United States of America. He is Life Member of Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (IACLALS) and Member of Digital Humanities Alliance for Research and Teaching Innovations (DHARTI). His recently published poetry collection is “A Buzkashi of Feelings and Philosophy” and his poetry has appeared in various reputed anthologies, journals, and magazines including The Aligarh Magazine, The Criterion, Raleigh Literary Society, IACLALS E-Newsletter and others. He may be contacted at: [marcoramairo@gmail.com](mailto:marcoramairo@gmail.com).

## **POEMS BY MADHUMITA ROY**

### **Self-Cure**

Those five days of every month  
Are always marked red in my calendar;  
Days when I bleed profusely.

The first day seems to be a dark montage  
of pain, grief, sobs, and sniffs.  
My body demands rest,  
Yet it endures a lot.  
Long, unending journeys to my workplace:  
Discomfort prevails everywhere.

Second and third bring back countless moments,  
Bitter, misused, and misunderstood.  
Those memories leave permanent stain on me,  
Just the way each white napkin gets smeared with my blood clots.  
It's always easier to discard an overused sanitary pad  
than a heavily blemished mind.

The fourth day comes with migraine,  
Lesser light, much less work, and less strain to bear;  
The body becomes numb,  
However, the mind tries to heal all broken ties and tissues,  
With decreasing flow, unpleasant moments also recede gradually  
to lie dormant within.  
On every fifth day,  
My body rejuvenates itself,  
So does my mind.  
Hot water bags, pain relief sprays, and painkillers  
are kept aside for future use.  
Pain, unearthed and explored, subsides  
although temporarily.  
Another self-cure regime takes its turn.

### **Pain Relief Balm**

My bedroom has a very comforting smell.  
The aroma of ma's pain relief balm  
acts as a tranquiliser  
to my troubled nerves.  
After a day full of summer heat,  
A refuge is needed  
to forget all blemishes and heal all scars.  
I want to forget those thousand smells and odours and aromas and essence  
that I come across every day.

The essence of attar, aroma of coffee  
Fragrance of love, or the stench of envy  
The whiff of a dewy morning  
Or the odour of a burnt-out day  
The scent of a freshly brewed friendship  
Or the miasma of broken ties  
All are superseded by the semi-solid potion  
which holds a key to release all pain.  
Every night, as I inhale it  
I plunge into a pool of memories:  
Summer nights, grandma's stories,  
Baba's camera, magic moments, ma's melodies, study table, tape recorder, cassettes, and many  
more.  
As I rub it on my palm,  
I feel like touching those departed moments;

I choose to disown my present to live with the past.  
The balm takes a firm seat in me.  
Slowly, very slowly, it begins to numb all my senses  
Slowly, very slowly, I become addicted to the smell  
Slowly, very slowly, I become addicted to my past.



Dr. Madhumita Roy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Adamas University, West Bengal. Apart from her research interest in Tagore Literature and Bengal Renaissance, she loves to translate her feelings into poetry. She loves to explore new places and meet people. Her hobbies include writing, and finding texts beyond text books.

**POEMS BY JAYDEEP SARANGI****The Map-Maker  
for Keki N. Daruwalla**

I have always thought that if I were a  
river, I'd be the Ganges  
keeper of life in a landfall of truth  
flowing deep in time and fire-hymns,  
lit up with drowsy eyes and turn the drives  
Visiting Papyri into charcoal-line history on my back  
sad but joyful, windy but restful, caring yet desirous  
and emptying my everything in underwater notes  
when I have almost nothing left in slabs,  
the unrest of desire is the shadow of the heart.  
Standing under his Orion of winter poems,  
Sappho to Aphrodite and ancestral affairs  
everyone of us is the Ganges  
between the soul and the night river--  
the doors swing open across the years.

**Joy Forever**

In beauty there is no fear  
Thoughts on beauty, when I hear  
I see her hands awake, moist in silences.

Olive gardens to the land of Boabs  
is a long magic road, Damascus to Constantinople  
her form seems floating near me, calling.

I slip in the river of unknown faiths falling awake  
leading to nowhere, watching her whiteness of faiths  
beside stones of local prayers and house beliefs.

The tree is dancing in the air, sunny or showers  
with her joy today, with her flowers, with her love,  
theme in yellow, her leaves speak bliss to me.

A touch of fire on her blushing face, I watch her closely--  
a quiet smile playing around her poems on bright stars she possesses  
asking for kisses more burring than rosy hibiscus red.



Jaydeep Sarangi is an Indian poet poetry activist with eleven poetry collections in English latest being the half-confession (in press) and scholar on postcolonial studies and Indian Writings with forty-one books anchored in Kolkata/Jhargram. Widely anthologised and reviewed as a leading contemporary poet Sarangi is on the editorial boards for journals of repute, devoted to poetry and poetry criticism. With Rob Harle he has edited six anthologies of poems from Australia and India which are a wealthy literary link between the nations. With Amelia Walker, he has guest edited a special issue for TEXT, Australia. His recent book includes, Mapping the Mind, Minding The Map: Twenty Contemporary Indian English Poets, Sahitya Akademi, 2023 and A Life Uprooted: A Bengali Dalit Refugee Remembers, Sahitya Akademi, 2023. Sarangi is currently the President of Guild of Indian English Writers, Editors and Critics (GIEWEC) and Vice President, EC, Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata. Living with poets and poetry, Sarangi is principal of New Alipore College, Kolkata. He may be reached at: jaydeepsarangi1@gmail.com Website: <https://jaydeepsarangi.in>

## POEM BY BHASKAR ROYBARMAN

### Drops of a Stream

As does the Great River  
on to the sea and back  
to the matted hair of Lord Shiva,  
on flows the life-stream  
adorned with ornaments,  
as is a newly-wed couple.

Following on the footprints of the Great River

that leaves nonchalantly behind  
a good many water-drops  
evaporating midway through  
and mingling with the clouds,  
the life-stream does not mind  
about as many human drops bowing out,  
stripped of their embellishments  
they once prided themselves on.  
One of the human drops bowing out  
was a friend of mine, succumbing  
to the excessive love of his wife  
and to his in-laws feigning it

His father,  
as if to mock his son,  
sustained himself much father in the flow  
less loved by his wife  
by his in-laws the least.

## SHORT STORY

### Parikshit and Sushobhana

Sushabhana, daughter of Ayush, the Manduka –king, and her all-time companion, Subinita, was deep in a conversation in the secret recesses of a creeper-decorated hut facing a blue, garden guarded by trees in the vicinity of a lake. Outside the sun was blazing copper-red. Absolute silence reigned supreme. Sushobhana was lying almost naked, surrendering her body to the care of Subinita. But the conversation did not cease flowing. Sushobhana relished telling her maid of her love trysts with many kings who had fallen infatuated by her beauty and been unhinged to the extent that they had renounced their kingship in searching around for their lost lover. They looked out through the window and their eyes spotted a young man sporting a bejewelled crest gleaming in the sunlight and looking tired and thirsty. He was the king Parikshit. She revved herself up to face up to him. Coming out of the creeper-kissed hut, a seven-stringed veena in hand, she, gorgeously bedecked, was scuffling over to the garden through the shadows. She saw the king looking

around, bemused at the singular beauty of the garden. There was also a profusion of flower plants around.. A smile flitted across her face. It would be easier to entice into her folds the king who had already been bemused by the beauty of the garden, she thought. She went over to the banks of the lake and strummed the veena. She began singing in her sweet voice, closing her eyes. After a while she opened her eyes and stopped singing, hearing the voice she had been waiting for.

Who are you singing in a sweet voice in this desolate place?' Parikshit asked.

'I don't know who I am, nor do I know who my parents are and where I was born?' she replied, her voice sad.

'I don't believe this!' Parikshit said 'I'm seeing your body bedecked with bejewelled waist chains and your neck sporting strings of pearls. You have a glorious identity you are hiding from me.'

'I have no identity to boast of,' she said. 'Who are you?'

'I'm Ikshvaku Parikshi.'

'Please leave me alone strumming my veena and singing'

'No, I won't leave you here! I'll take you into the comfort of my royal palace!'

'I can't accept your offer, for there's a curse on me. I can't see my reflections in waters. If I do I'll vanish.'

'Leave it me!' Parikshit said.

Sushobhana bowed her head and they exchanged the tokens of marriage. They sat down, hand in hand, on the grass.

After a while Parikshit's friends and escort came over, searching for him, When they saw the king sitting with a newly-affianced bride, they sent for a royal carriage.

The king's chamber became a private chamber with no one else allowed in. The king's infatuation with Sushobhana had grown so strong he neglected his royal duties and even refused ministers audiences. Sushobhana had not come over here to live; she had many other kings to enchant. The king appointed a maid to look after her needs when she was left alone. She had won the maid over by her sweet voice and got her to bring in information of events. The maid confided to her that the ministers were not pleased at their marriage. They had already got to know of the condition of the marriage. They were fearing a public scandal. The chief-minister had a park laid out, trees laden with fruit and flowers planted and a bathing-pool dug.

One day She soft-talked the king into going into the park and thence to the bathing-pool.

'Do you remember, O King, the promise I've bound you to?' she said and, when he said he did, continued, 'You won't show me the waters. The moment I saw my reflection in waters I would disappear. Now I've seen my reflection on the surface of the waters of this bathing-pool. Bid me farewell!'

'I won't let you go as long as I live!'

'You have no power to annul the curse! Please leave me alone for a while.'

As soon as Parikshit had moved away for a bit, she disappeared. Sushobhana was sitting alone, desolate and abstracted, in her own chamber of the moss- coloured stone palace. Subinita was sent with her father, Ayush, disguised as a Brahmin, over to the court of the king Parikshit to report to her in toto what her father told the king and the reaction of the king. The Manduka king told the king the woman who had love-played with him was none but her own daughter. Sushobhana. That day when he saw Sushobhana had vanished, on retuning after a while, Parikshit thought that mandukas (frogs) had devoured her. In a frenzy of rage he attacked the manduka kingdom, killing many mandukas. The king Ayush had to go over to the king to save his kingdom. She had cried against her father revealing the truth to the king, but did not dare to prevent him. She knew that the king Parikshit would not forgive her, let alone go on loving her.

His manly voice had completely changed her and revealed to her the real heart that she had so long disdained and she had felt the outburst of love so long stifled in her pride of beauty. Now the pride of beauty had got shattered apiece, as she had tasted the flavour of love of man in those manly voice. Her pride of beauty had ruined the joy of living the wife of the King Parikshit she had loved her since that day. He had no other alternative but to kill herself, her pride of beauty. She was waiting for the report of Subinita before doing so. She had ready at hand a cup of poison mixed in wine.

To end her anxious waiting Subinita came back and said:

‘The great king Parikshit is waiting in a chariot outside the kingdom to take you back to his palace.’



Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman is an internationally published poet, short story writer, novelist, editor, Critic translator, book-reviewer, folklorist and organizer. His poems, short stories and critical articles get published in India and abroad. He has got published ‘Gateway to Heaven’, an original English novel, ‘Modern Short Stories: The Trap & Other Stories’, an original short story collection, ‘Folktales of Northeast India’, ‘El Dorado’, an anthology on world literature (edited) and South-Asian Literature: Criticism and Poetry (edited), ‘Tagore in Tripura’ and ‘Literato-cultural History of Tripura (Vol. I)’. He is recipient of many national and international awards. He is felicitated with the honours ‘Tripura Ratna’ and ‘Bhasha Ratna’ by Gemini Academi, Panipat. He is listed in ‘Who’s Who of Indian Writers’ published by the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. He is editing ‘Shashwati Bhabna’, Bengali-language magazine published twice a year by Sri Sri Bholananda Sevashram, Kunjaban. ‘He has presented papers at many national and international seminars and conferences. He has fathered and founded ‘World Literature Society’, ‘Tripura Poetry Society’, ‘Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous)’ and ‘Folklore Society, Agartala’. He is founding President of, Children’s Literature Research Centre, Readers Club International, Agartala and Bangla Academy Agartala. He is associated with Arts and Social Science Forum of North-East as a member of the Advisory Board and with UNESCO Association, Guwahati as a life-member.

## TRANSLATION OF TAMIL SHORT STORY

### Inside the Ashes

**Author: R. Chudamani**

**Translated by Chitra Sheshadri**

When we consider the lives of some individuals it makes us question whether their existence or death holds any significance. They merely breathe, exist, and eventually pass away. Some people lead a happy life, while others face constant distress. Both are straight-line realities of ordinariness. A monotonous flow of life persists, without unexpected changes or defining moments.

What is the meaning of Rajamani Mami's life?

Until eighteen she was a motherless girl, the daughter of a cook at the Perumal Temple. At eighteen, she became the wife of a clerk working in a private company. By nineteen, she had given birth to a baby boy. At nineteen and a half, a mother who had lost her son. By twenty-one, she had endured two abortions and her health had worsened. At twenty-one years three months, dumped by her husband, living as a single woman.

At 51, now, lying dead, before me, still considered a woman deprived of family life.

When Lord Brahma began creating Rajamani, he must have been in a joyful mood. Perhaps he sculpted her beauty meticulously, starting from her feet and working upward. Her golden-hued body, adorned with soft, floral-like feet, elegant legs, a sculpted waist, stomach, chest, neck, shoulders—every part radiated extraordinary beauty. When shaping her face, it seems he aimed for perfection. But then, something changed—what caused His hands to falter? Did He lose focus, distracted by a poet's song praising Saraswathi, His consort, whose divine grace could immortalize any creation? Did the realization of his own creations' mortality leave Him resentful, causing his hands to go astray?

A face like that of a scarecrow rested upon the exquisite form of Venus.

The private company clerk saw only the body and agreed to marry her. What greater blessing could there be for the poor cook than securing a marriage alliance effortlessly and without expense? The wedding took place, and Rajamani dazed in disbelief at the fortune that had unexpectedly come her way. The groom wasn't as handsome as Cupid, but compared to her face, any man could seem a hundred times more appealing than the arrow-wielding God.

He noticed her distorted features only when she turned twenty-one—her snub nose, protruding teeth, bulging spherical eyes, and oily hair. It was as if he was seeing them for the first time. Filled with disgust, he turned away, abandoned her, and chose another partner, leaving her to a life of solitude.

It took three years for her to understand that her husband would never return. She came back to her father's house bearing the title "ostracized lifeless woman". An heir apparent to her father's serving ladle, worked as a cook in houses and earned money. Every day she used to cook for her husband and wait for him. Suddenly, if he turns up, he shouldn't go empty stomach. Her employers restrained her from entering their houses during monthly periods. Her father too never takes food cooked by her, nor does he serve her the temple offering. He cooked and served her. She even kept half of that served food for her husband.

For three years Rajamani cooked food for her disappeared husband. Thousand and ninety-five days, without missing a single day.

Later, one day, she ate all the food served by her father.

"What Raji? It's really surprising!" her father asked. She poured buttermilk mixing the spicy sambar and ate two handfuls scooping and slurping looked up with a smile. Her bulged

spherical balls looked blank. Her poor health, due to one full-time pregnancy, two pre-matured termination and three years of distressed waiting, gradually recovered.

During this time the penniless cook fell sick and remained in the bed paralyzed.

She dedicated herself to care her father and volunteered to take up his job in the temple. The good-hearted priest agreed, upon the condition, to keep away from cooking on those three days of monthly pollution. He treated her like his daughter with dignity. But soon a variety of gossips made rounds. The priest's eyes brimmed with tears.

“What else can I do Raji, the Perumal (deity) is witness to our unsullied relationship. You are old enough to be my daughter. I understand your adverse situation, don't think that I leave you starving on the street. The person who serves God should be beyond suspicion.”

She stood in silence looking at him for a few seconds. As a mark of respect, fell at his feet and left the place. The temple job provided enough food for both the father and daughter, along with sufficient money to cover his medical expenses. Feeling reassured by the job's stability, she decided to stop working in individual households. Moreover, caring for her father required more of her time and attention.

Now, she visited those households, but in vain. She started hunting for a job. She was able to find work in two places nearly eight kilometres from her place.

Rain or shine, she woke up at three-thirty in the morning. Washed her father, took care of him, helped him do the physio exercises suggested by the government hospital doctors, prepared a liquid called coffee, fed her father, she too gulped, cooked rice in between, urgently took bath and felt cringed to leave her father in the care of a neighbouring woman. “I am leaving for work Appa” even before she could hear the echo of her voice, she chased the bus, boarded and reached the work spot by six. She was chewed out for a ten-minute delay, “one should keep up time while coming to work and stand here exactly on time, or else, sit back at home reclining like a queen. One can't have the cake and eat it too.” Such pots and pans were thrown.

Tiresome travel, hard work and heart full of worries brought down her health, while debts and expenses soared high.

When she was twenty-eight her father passed away.

It's true, expenses came down drastically, but grief burdened her inner “self”. Her ailing father, though frail, had been her sole source of strength through his mere presence. Now, the void of loneliness consumed her. A married woman sans the status, a single woman without male support—she found herself in a vulnerable position. This unsettling reality became her challenge to put up with. Her longing to hear her father's slurred voice feebly calling “Rajima” and painfully murmuring

“Narayana” became her sole companion during night time.

She toiled undeterred by rain or cold causing pneumonia. She was bed-ridden for three weeks. Kind-hearted neighbours helped her recover. Her debts soared. But none made it obligatory to repay neither money nor gratitude. They said it's the poor helping another poor. She folded her hands in prayer with tears welling up. After convalescing her body had lost half its strength. But its beauty remained undiminished. Her employers said “You stopped without informing us. How come we would know? Did you at least bother to send word through someone that you are sick? You need not come.” – they sent her away.

She literally starved without a job. Her neighbours weren't millionaires, they led a hand to mouth existence. They could do their best during a crisis, but to provide a regular sustenance was unfeasible. Her two-room portion rented by a store owner accepted to maintain her. He agreed to waive rent in future and also the pending payments. But he kept a price for this deal.

She wasn't ready to pay that price. Instead, gave him the sole property she had, a pair of gold ear rings purchased by her father when gold was selling cheap. This could make up for the balance unpaid rent. “Henceforth, you will stay here without rent? Vacate this place

immediately.” She did. She took refuge in a family known to the temple priest and began searching for work. Eventually, she secured a position as an ayah, in a private hospital where food and lodging were provided. However, work broke her limbs. Whether an ayah, nurse, sometimes scavenger, a cooking assistant, she took any of these avatars in a flash, following every command. She stayed there till she was thirty-five, exhausted herself until her body was utterly worn out.

One day, while cleaning the toilet, she coughed once and attributed it to the pungent smell of phenyl. Then she coughed again—this time, blood splattered.

If one wants to fall sick, what could be the better place than a hospital? But tuberculosis is highly infectious. Her body was touched and examined in a variety of ways - stethoscopes pressed repeatedly against her chest, male doctors X-rayed her lungs with a thin cloth covering her body. The diagnosis confirmed tuberculosis. How could they allow her to stay after that? Wouldn't the authorities prioritize the safety about the staff and patients? The management expressed their regret, “Poor Rajamani, such a dedicated worker, what a pity!” They handed her a month's salary, some medicines and sent her away.

Four months later, volunteers from a Women's Service Centre found her unconscious on the road, weakened by hunger and illness, and admitted her in their foundation.

The centre built with love and compassion towards humanity replacing bricks and cement that stood as a structure namesake. They gave her shelter and medicines to cure her disease.

After recovering from her illness, she remained there and served the Institution with her now limited capacity. The organization provided training in various skills to empower destitute women to become self-reliant. She learned tailoring and crafting paper covers. The money she earned was given to the centre and also helped them in the kitchen.

Staying permanently at the centre was not mandatory for those seeking refuge there. If an opportunity for hard work and a decent livelihood arose outside, the residents were free to accept it and leave. A friend of the Centre's head was an acquaintance of my aunt. After the elderly woman who had cooked in my aunt's house for many years passed away, my aunt mentioned it to her friend, who then approached the Centre's President to find a suitable replacement.

“A decent place, with good people. They need a woman to cook. They will give decent salary; good care will be taken and you can stay there. Is there anyone willing to take this job?”

This is how Rajamani Mami came to my aunt's house as a cook. When I went there to meet my aunt, she served me coffee. I was amazed looking at her body. Mami was forty-two at that time and myself a first-year postgraduate student.

I quickly realized it was inappropriate to stare at her. Her protruding teeth, snub nose, round bulging eyes, and scalp visible through her thin hair were repulsive to observe. Rajamani Mami worked for my aunt for nine years, and they developed a deep friendship. She shared her life story with my aunt, and through her, I learned about Mami. During this time, an accident with a gas stove caused a flame to strike Mami's right eye, and despite receiving treatment, she lost her vision in that eye.

While my aunt was ready to help her in the kitchen Mami refused. She cooked delicious food like the divine amrit with her one-eyed vision. On a Sunday she served divine amrit to the family and later complained of head ache. Within four days she was admitted in the Government hospital in an unconscious state. She died in the second week.

Brain Tumour.

My aunt with tear-filled red eyes asked me to perform her final rites. Her son was working in Germany as a Professor. Had he been here she would have entrusted him. I accepted. Here at the Otteri grave yard, she was lying on the funeral pyre. I looked at Mami for the last time. At

29, now I had the maturity to think beyond that beautiful body and ugly face about Rajamani, the Manushi (human being).

What was the purpose of this woman's life? A life sans meaning. A death sans sense. She was born, endured endless suffering, and then passed away. Can such an existence even be called a 'life'? A continuous chain of misfortune, wretched beyond redemption. Fate had been merciless to her—a kind, gentle soul. Truly pitiable.

I lit the funeral pyre.

My aunt started walking back and had been quite a distance off. I stood gazing at the rising flame. Then turned back. A man stood behind. Grey-haired, mediumheight, wrinkled face, wearing a bright polyester, dhoti and shirt.

He folded his hands as a mark of respect as I turned back.

I was surprised.

"Sir, please wait"

"Why did you fold your hands in prayer . . . I don't even know you."

He was hesitant for a moment, "For performing her final rites" he said in low voice.

An outsider dare not use "her" . . . must be some relative.

"Excuse me. What is your relationship with mami?"

"Husband"

After I stood still for a few seconds, sarcasm took the lead.

"Oho! The husband who ditched his wife when she was twenty-one, made her an "ostracized lifeless woman".

"Raji need not have remained a single woman losing her life. I repented for my acts and approached her after a few years leaving all my unsolicited friendships. I was running a small business of iron materials after giving up my job as a clerk. In fact, I was well off. She was thirty, lost her father, driven away from her house and hunting for a job. I asked her to come back and live with me. She refused to come."

We say life is meaningless. When a spark emerges out of a mere heap of ashes, What a miracle! I don't get into whether Rajamani Mami's actions were right or wrong. When a man repents for his sins and seeks forgiveness, is it morally correct to deny him pardon? I don't have an answer to that either. Similarly, nobody can tell how a wife, who tirelessly cooked for one thousand ninety-five days for her missing husband, hoping for his return, might react.

But something must have happened. Her self-respect was crushed, leaving her writhing in pain, and her grief frozen to disillusionment. Therefore, when a time comes for her to choose between happiness and hardship she chose the latter. She could have reconciled with her "well-off" husband, ending all her suffering and living in peace. But she refused - that was the defining moment of her life, when she chose what she believed was right. She embraced her wretched life and therefore it's not pitiable, but a respectful and dignified one. That dignity must have been the treasure of her 'inner being'. Yet, when she shared about her life to aunt, she never spoke of this choice.

I had a real vision of Rajamani Mami only after her death.

When did that man leave?

I went and joined aunt. "Hmm... poor Raji" she sighed.

I chose to remain silent.

### About the Author – R.Chudamani



A major twentieth-century writer, Raghavan Chudamani (1931–2010) has often been identified as an early feminist among Tamil writers. Subtly radical in her approach to human relations and social issues, her critique of entrenched social institutions and attendant attitudes is sharp and revelatory. But she never demonised them. Her stories traverse psychological, existential and socio-economic issues as also ordinary everyday human experience. Chudamani's writing is often considered to be from the middle-class, Brahminical milieu. Rajamani Mami, the protagonist of this story is one such brahmin woman who challenges conventionality and prefers a life of suffering when her disappeared husband returns to give her a secured status.

### About the Translator



Dr. S. Chitra has over three decades of service as Associate Professor in English. Her areas of interest include Partition Literature, Tamil Sangam and Vaishnavite Literature. She had translated a few short stories and a play into English. She had recently published the Translation of renowned Tamil women writer Rajam Krishnan's Paathayil Pathinda Adigal, a biographical fiction into English as Footprints on the Path. Currently, she is working as the Principal of Government Arts and Science College for Women, Koothanallur, Tiruvarur Dist. Tamilnadu.

## TRANSLATION OF HINDI SHORT STORY

**Jahanara**

**Author: Jai Shankar Prasad**

**Translated into English by Murari Prasad**

Fearsome silence pervades the royal palace by the Yamuna. The only sounds heard are the rumbling of guns and the jangling of weapons. The Old Shahjahan is lying against a cushion. A female attendant is standing by him with some medicine vials.

Deep in pensive thoughts, Shahjahan looks distracted. He gets startled by the sound of cannon. Suddenly he utters a cry of hope: no, no, he won't do it? Should we give up the Peacock Throne? Yes, we should forget it. Raising his head, Shahjahan said, "Is it Jahanara here? Are you right about this? Jahanara confirmed it, moving close to the king." My lord, your useless son, Dara, has run away and the ungrateful wretch, Diler Khan, connived with Aurangzeb in wresting control of the fort. "But, is Aurangzeb that cruel? "Shahjahan said to Jahanara. "Will he disobey his old father so much as to sit on the Peacock Throne while I am alive?"

Jahanara (with her tearful eyes) said to the king, "It is this parental affection of yours which has reduced you to this poor strait. Aurengzeb is terribly devilish. He is capable of doing everything that is not decent and kindly.

Shahjahan disagreed with his daughter but the latter persisted and said it again. The king said to his daughter, "If so, then doesn't this body have the Mughal blood in it? Could you help me a bit?"

Jahanara concurred with the king's command. Asking her to hand him his sword, Shahjahan asserted, So long as it remains in my hand, no one can take the throne from me. "With a surge of emotion Jahanara put the sword in Shahjahan's hand and stood beside him. The king rose and tottered, his daughter held him and moved towards the chamber containing the throne.

The old Shahjahan is sitting on the throne and a veiled Jahanara is sitting by his side. A few chieftains, including Naeqeb too, keep standing. Scarcely had he opened his mouth to utter his long-practised word when his head fell away severed from his body. All began to see it in a frightened state.

Clad in coat armour, Aurangzeb appeared there wiping his sword with his handkerchief and said amid his words of greetings, "I could not help seeing you after having heard about your majesty's illness." Shahjahan (trembling) said, "But my son, what called for this violence and bloodshed? The corpse of that old Naeqeb is rolling. Mine too, my son! Oh, I can't bear to see it. Shahjahan all a-tremble bent on the throne in a senseless state. Aurangzeb commanded his accomplices harshly to take away the unclean remains of Naeqeb lying dead.

Jahanara could not check herself from fetching scented water and sprinkling its drops on her old father's face. Aurangzeb looked towards her and questioned her act of holding his old father. He rebuked his father's henchmen for leaving him unattended. When they all stepped towards the throne with Aurangzeb, Jahanara quickly took out her dagger and a paper stamped with the royal seal. She stood in their way, and said, "You all halt where you are and refrain from moving ahead until I order you next, according to this edict. They all began to look at the paper in her hand. It was written there that all shall obey the command of this person and treat him like me. They all bowed before him, including Aurangzeb, and remained silent for quite a while. Suddenly, Aurangzeb stood erect and spoke with a gruff voice "Arrest this witch. All this is an intrigue. We accept only Shahjahan's authority."

Everyone headed to that woman. Marking their movement, she quickly lifted her veil. They all lowered their heads and backed off. Once again Aurangzeb bent the head and raved loudly,

“Jahanara, how come you are here?” Jahanara shot back, “Aurangzeb, you are here?” Aurangzeb turned to his son saying, ‘It seems the king and the lady have lost their marbles, otherwise they would not be here shamelessly. You should take care of him.’ Jahanara retorted, ‘And you Aurangabad, what makes you treat your father so shabbily? As soon as she spoke these words, the prince grabbed her dagger and directed her menacingly to proceed towards the palace. Jahanara could not bear so much. Using the resources of a woman’s strength and tears she entreated Aurangzeb pressingly to be kind to his father. “Why do you think so, First Lady?” As Dara was your brother, so am I? But you are an ardent partisan. Why this partiality?”

Jahanara: “He had no desire to usurp the throne and divest his father of his authority. He ruled at his father’s behest.”

“Can’t I do the same?”; Aurangzeb interjected.

Anyway, there is no point in quarrelling over it. The Lady should return to her place in the palace. Looking meekly at her weak and infirm father, Jahanara went along the path shown by the prince.

Shahjahan is lying on a cot in a building on the bank of Yamuna. Jahanara was asked by Aurangzeb about the place she wanted to reside at. She only desired to stay with her old and unfortunate father and so she spends her time attending to her poor father in plain bearing. The gaudy royal attire is not seen on her body. Only simple clothes add to the beauty of her calm face. The entire royal residence is utterly and uniformly quiet. Jahanara distributed her personal possessions among the poor and stopped wearing expensive ornaments.

She became now like an ascetic anchoress and immune to fussy tantrums. Except essential utilities she keeps nothing with her. Lying in the bed, the decrepit king opened his eyes to say, “My darling daughter, there is no need of medicine now. To remember God is the only remedy.” Don’t try for it now.”

Jahanara: My beloved father, so long as one has a living physique, one should take care of it. Shahjahan lay silent without adding any word. For a while, Jahanara stayed sitting. Then she got up and threw the medicine vials into the Yamuna. For some time, she kept on seeing the slow flow of Yamuna, sitting there. She would think that the river’s currents were the same, the Mughal Empire was the same, and so was the living Shahjahan, but he would not sit on the Peacock Throne now. She lay sitting there until the rays of the moon fell on her face. The princess Jahanara has become a devotee now. The natural shine is not there in her heart now, but she is aglow with a celestial radiance.

Her generosity expanded further. She was so sympathetic to the poor and bereaved that she was taken as compassion-incarnate. This conduct of hers moved even the stone-hearted Aurangzeb. Her freedom under seize was restored to her, but she had no time now to exercise it. Hundreds of servants would be bound hand and foot to her. Now she has dedicated her life to the service of her father. Whenever asked, she would make her father rise from the bed and support his movements on the banks of Yamuna and cheer him up walking as his shadow. The old Shahjahan gave up the ghost. Now Jahanara has no work in this world. She is tired of walking around in the mansion. The memories of her past began to oppress her. She became weak and weary. She fell ill but avoided medicines. Her health sank and the situation steadily worsened. It became unbearable for Aurangzeb when he heard about her condition. He went to see her. Jahanara was breathing slowly, lying in a worn-out bed on an old cot. Aurangzeb saw that the person for whom nothing was unaffordable in India and for whom Shahjahan would summon hundreds of doctors to treat her sickness is languishing in a corner.

The stone melted. Aurangzeb turned tearful and sat on his knees. Taking his mouth close to her, he mumbled, “Sister, is there any command for me?” Jahanara opened her eyes and handed him a chit which Aurangzeb took bending himself down. “Sister, would you forgive me?”

Jahanara lifted her open eyes towards the sky. A heavenly light was emanating from them at that time. She kept on looking up in the same state. Aurangzeb got up and read that bit of paper, wiping his tears.

It was written there: ‘No one except grass kisses my grave. So, the grass is sufficient as sheet cover for a stranger’s grave. There is no way to decorate the tomb that the poor woman has gone to rest in. In other words, the grave of a poor person like me is fated to have only a grassy cover.’

### **About the author - Jaishankar Prasad**



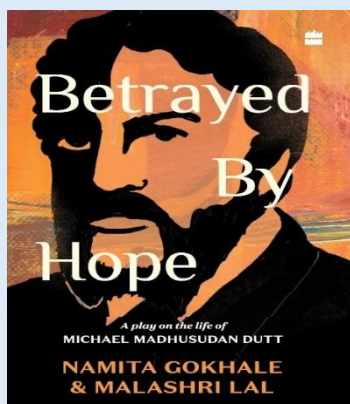
Jaishankar Prasad was a prominent figure in modern Hindi literature and theater who was known by his pen name “Prasad” and also as “Chhayavadi kavi.” He initially wrote under the pen name “Kaladhar” and his early works were in the Braj Bhasha dialect. He later transitioned to the Khadi dialect and Sanskritized Hindi. Prasad wrote several poetry collections, dramas, story collections, and novels. He is recognized as one of the Four Pillars of Romanticism in Hindi literature alongside Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma, and Suryakant Tripathi “Nirala.” Prasad’s poetry primarily employs Sanskrit (Tatsama) and Sanskrit-derived (Tadbhava) words, avoiding Persian elements, and covers a wide range of subjects, from romance to nationalism.

### **About the Translator**



Murari Prasad retired as Professor and Head of the English Department of Purnea University (Bihar). Earlier he taught English in Sana’a University, the Republic of Yemen.

## BOOK REVIEWS



**Book Review of *Betrayed by Hope: A Play on the Life of Michael Madhusudan Dutt* by Namita Gokhale and Malashri Lal, HarperCollins India, pb, 2024. Rs.299/-. Pages 112. Reviwed by Somjyoti Mridha.**

*Betrayed by Hope* is a unique play based on the life of nineteenth century bilingual poet and playwright Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873). Though the play is created by eminent writers, Namita Gokhale and Malashri Lal, it is more of a collaborative venture since the text contains original poems and letters by Michael Madhusudan Dutt as well as translations of his work by eminent authors/translators such as Amit Chaudhuri, Nandan Dasgupta and Debasmita Dutta. The play was first published as a hardback in 2020 by HarperCollins India and received the Kalinga Literary Festival's 'Fiction Book of the Year' award in 2020-21. A new paperback edition came out in October, 2024 serendipitously coinciding with the bi-centenary year of Dutt's birth.

Dutt's life and exceptional literary contribution still generates a lot of critical as well as creative interest among the literary community in Bengal. *Betrayed by Hope* is preceded by a plethora of scholarly books that engaged with his extraordinary life and literary career. The most notable among them are Ghulam Murshid's *Lured by Hope: A biography of Michael Madhusudan Dutt* (2003) and *The Heart of a Rebel Poet: Letters of Michael Madhusudan Dutt* (2004). In fact, the title of the play certainly alludes to Ghulam Murshid's title *Lured by Hope* which in turn is influenced by a phrase in Dutt's poem "Atmabilap". Noted scholar and translator, Nandan Dasgupta has recently published a biography titled *Maligned Maverick: Michael Madhusudan Datta: Life, Letters and Literature* (2024). Dutt, an embodiment of cross- cultural fertilization has become all the more relevant in this age of globalization and digital modernity due to unprecedented possibilities of cultural osmosis that characterize our modern existence.

The play documents the epistemological shift in Indic civilization in the aftermath of colonization and onslaught of Anglophone modernity which radically reconfigured literary and cultural aesthetics. Through the figure of Dutt as a literary subject, the play presents the contradictions and aporias prevalent in Indian society during mid-nineteenth century. Dutt's Anglophilia is symptomatic of a "double consciousness" that was common among elite Indians well versed in western systems of knowledge during the nineteenth century. Dutt's desperate attempts and tragic failure in English writing and his meteoric success in Bangla literature anticipates the literary journey of many Indian stalwarts of the period such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee has rightly pointed out that "anyone interested in the colonial encounter will want to engage with [this book]." Dutt derived his themes and content from Indian history and ancient Indian literature while emulating the form from

English, Greek and Italian thereby modernizing Bangla literature. Dutt's pioneering contribution to Bangla literature—introduction of blank verse and sonnet, was possible primarily because of his acquaintance and expertise in English literature.

Written in the epistolary form and interspersed with poetry, the play explores the trials and tribulations of Dutt's iconoclastic life in the context of nineteenth century India and his emergence into a literary genius. The juxtaposition of poetry and personal letters written to friends and acquaintances demarcates the mingling of the private/creative with the public/formal spheres of his life. Dutt's poems are romantic in strain and are deeply personal in nature. This promises exciting possibilities in staging the play.

The play transcends the limitations of genre and reads more like an epistolary novella or an epistolary biography. *Betrayed by Hope* should ideally be placed within the ambit of Indian English drama, a genre where Dutt made substantial contribution in its formative stages. Yet, the play traces the efflorescence of Bangla as a literary language under the influence of Anglophone literary cultures in the context of mid-nineteenth-century Calcutta. A significant portion of the text has English translations of Dutt's own poems and dialogues written in Bangla. Michael Madhusudan Dutt was a polymath and a polyglot, well-versed in English, Italian, French, Bengali, Persian, and Sanskrit. It is befitting that a book about his life transcends linguistic barriers and limitations of a single genre.

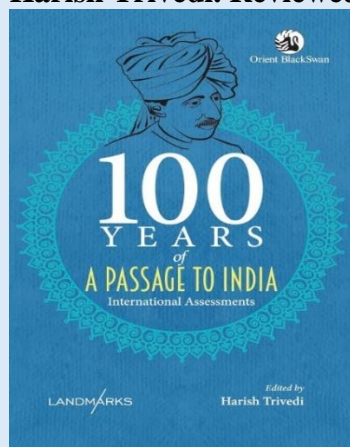
The dramatic device of a Sutradhar deserves special mention. It has been derived from ancient Sanskrit theatrical traditions and deftly exploited in the play. In fact, authorial interventions surface in the play through the comments of the Sutradhar, which simultaneously opens up the possibility of direct communication with the audience, thereby situating the play within contemporary, post-modern theatrical techniques. The device of the Sutradhar also brings to light the seminal importance of archival research in the creation of a play like *Betrayed by Hope*. The Sutradhar, Rubina Rahman, is a doctoral scholar at Dhaka University researching Dutt. Apart from providing a glimpse into the life of Dutt, the play also represents the literary scholar as a subject of crucial importance. Rahman's comments on Dutt provide a contemporary literary critical perspective on the writer.

*Betrayed by Hope* blends archival research, biographical, dramatic, and poetic traditions with an epistolary mode of writing—all compounded into one fascinating text. It also inaugurates a new tradition of celebrating erstwhile Anglophone dramatists who gave a direction to Indian English drama.



Somjyoti Mridha teaches at the Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya. His areas of interest are Post-Colonial Studies, Ideas of Nation and Nationalism, Indian English Literature, and Literatures of Kashmir Conflict. His doctoral research was on literary and cinematic representation of Kashmir Conflict.

**Book Review of *100 Years of A Passage To India: International Assessments*. Edited by Harish Trivedi. Reviewed by Murari Prasad.**



**100 Years of A Passage To India: International Assessments. Edited by Harish Trivedi. OrientBlackswan, Hyderabad, 2024, 243 pp, Rs 1350.**

During the century since its publication in 1924, *A Passage to India*, E M Forster's most ambitious and accomplished novel, has been extensively read and evaluated. Abundant critical material has accumulated around the novel following the analysis of its themes from disparate points of view as well as explication of Forster's concerns pinned under the skin of the narrative. The present volume put together by Professor Harish Trivedi adds fresh and scintillating stuff to the flourishing range of opinions about the book. Trivedi taught this novel for long in St Stephen's College, Delhi, and later in Delhi University and engaged with the enigmatic text in his earlier publications. This substantial collection of fifteen essays including his own takes Forster and his centenarian novel further along the track of emphasizing its continuing relevance as a lively and abiding image of British India.

Many of Forster's contemporary readers took *Passage* as a politically tendentious novel for his loathing of the British in India. His ignorance of administration and judicial procedure was considered unbelievable. The fairness of representation – especially the portrayal of Anglo-Indians – aroused controversies. Yet the reviews were very positive, dispelling Forster's fears of the novel's bad reception. Trivedi rightly notes in the Introduction that "viewed over the whole span of the century that has passed since its publication, *A Passage to India* still stands tall as Forster's supreme achievement" (xvi). It has been variously read with copious interpretations of its well-crafted drama and ideological collision between the main characters. Forster, by his own admission, has invested poetic meaning into the novel's narrative transactions which makes it a multivalent text. In his essay on *Passage* included in this anthology, the editor examines how the disconcerting coalition of "the political and the poetic" here leads to the misreading of the novel's poetic meaning imbued with Forster's essential intent.

Referring to the exclusion of Gandhi and the growing upsurge of nationalism under his leadership from the novel, Trivedi says that it was "political evasion" (220), especially when Forster was fully familiar with the contemporary British writers, such as Sara Jeanette Duncan, Edmund Candler and Edward J Thompson, and their overtly political novels describing the Indian disaffection against its imperial appropriation. However, despite the omission of palpable historical facts, the novel's texture is impregnated with the expanding nationalist fervour. The novel does not explicitly refer to Gandhi's emergence in the national movement since 1917, which was a salient fact of Indian political situation, but it does allude to the impact of Gandhi on the anti-colonial ferment shaking up the political torpor for a resurgent India in an

oblique reference to the Khilafat movement. The indirect allusions to the national movement in the novel do not support Trivedi's point of silencing the foremost political feature of the time. Trivedi attributes Adela's fantasy or hallucination about Aziz's unfair sexual advances towards her to Forster's "overheated imagination" (226) following his Indian friend and host Syed Ross Masood's rejection of his homosexual expectations in the night before he visited the Barabar Caves close to Bankipur in Bihar on "28 January (sic!) 1913," and thus projected his own distractions on to her. This speculation adds another layer of uncertainty to what actually happened in the caves simply because there is no obvious original for this event. The author, as the omniscient narrator, never divulged it. The point thus made in the essay is moot because Forster was not writing the novel on the fly or in a flurry. He planned and put his hands to the plough many months after visiting these caves. The writing got stalled and the fragments hung fire until he revived the novel after his second visit to India in 1921-22. As he said in several interviews, a novelist should be a meticulous planner and always settle "what is going to happen in the novel and what his major event is to be." Trivedi concludes his argument by stating that the novel ends up in a "non-poetic and utterly political impasse" (230). The reasoning, however, is not persuasive enough in that it gives short shrift to the novel's multiple perspectives on its principal problem of forging friendship across socio-cultural divides and under political conditions of oppression that unleash the pressures of social and political forces on human relations with troubling alternatives.

In her perceptive essay in this anthology, Rukmini Bhaya finds Forster's 1927 work of criticism, *Aspects of the Novel*, as a "covert, self-reflexive reading" (200) of the aspects of his Indian masterpiece and of his own art. Unlike a historian, who is wedded to the empirical details about a palpable figure, a novelist fashions a possible fictional figure in the form of a character from the real bits of information. A novelist's creative prowess in creating characters is empowered by the reader's endorsement of them. Nair views Forster's novel through the critical lens offered by *Aspects*. Although she explicates the statistically signifying occurrence of terms like "cave" and "echo" in *Passage*, she does not go so far as to apply Forster's critical formulations to a close analysis of the text for teasing out its blurred edges. The passage from "the warren of intertextual tunnels" (201) to the novel's territory is not fully explored. Nonetheless, the all-embracing hallmarks of fiction given in *Aspects* sit well with the novelistic world designed in *Passage* and they all seem to be conceptually spliced.

The screen adaptation of *A Passage to India* in 1984 enlarged its readership base with assured global reach in the age of the Internet and new media. Forster was firmly opposed to the filming of his novels and resolutely refused to release the rights for a cinematic version of his Indian novel to many movie makers, including Satyajit Ray of India and others in the USA and UK. Of course, he had happily agreed to Santha Rama Rau's stage rendition of this novel in 1960 and positively reacted to the performance in glowing words, but its transfer to the screen materialised only in 1984—fourteen years after the author's death in 1970. Madhu Singh's essay in this collection is a well-curated recapitulation of the visual production of Forster's novel, including the one by Martin Sherman produced by Shared Experience in 2003. As in the case of Santha Rama Rao's show and its modified telecast in 1965, Forster might have had the feeling of "a full theatrical meal" in David Lean's screen version.

Three essays in this compilation deal with the translation of *Passage* in various languages since its publication. Krzysztof Fordonski offers an informative account of these translations in various languages. According to him, it was first rendered into Swedish in 1925, and subsequently in Czech and Russian (1926), Finnish (1928), German (1932), Danish (1935), Polish (1938) and Hungarian (1941). Due to political reasons during the time of Stalin the second translation (1937) lay largely dormant until a new edition came out in 2017. In Poland, Forster's masterpiece had an indifferent reception for over fifty years. It has now come into its

own with a new version in 1993. The French translation of *Passage* in 1927 by Charles Mauron as *Route des Indes* had Forster's full approval. It was not a commercial success but it attracted the interest of the French readers. In her perceptive essay in this collection, Evelyne Hanquart - Turner notes that David Lean's film version (1984) of *A Passage to India* created the French readers' interest in the text afresh. It has been enriched now with user-friendly material to draw the readers to this tantalizing colonial tale with the theme of friendship in the age of Internet and transnational ties of various kinds. Forster and the French translator of his novel became close friends. This intimate bond was vindicated by Forster's dedication of his 1927 book, *Aspects of the Novel*, to Charles Mauron. Evelyne refers to their matey and genial meetings in Charles' Garden in Provence, enjoying "real international friendship" which Aziz and Fielding could not forge in the early years of twentieth century India (41).

In the Indian subcontinent, while two Bengali translations, *E paysej to Indiya* (1960) by Rabishekhhar Sengupta, and *Bharatpathe* (1995) by Hirankumar Sanyal, were published from Calcutta and Dhaka respectively, a Hindi version of *A Passage to India* is still awaited. In this context, Rupert Snell's essay in this anthology illustrates the challenges of catching the precise nuances of Forster's language in Hindi. The samples of bilingual execution for collating their comparative merits included here are by eminent translators, namely Harish Trivedi, Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Kunwar Narain, Rohini Chowdhury, Sara Rai and Rakesh Pande. Rupert, who has for long taught Hindi at SOAS, the University of London, and at the University of Texas, Austin, and translated extensively from Hindi into English, examines the strengths of these translated excerpts closely. His incisive analysis and cogent evaluation are useful for future attempts at translating *Passage* into Hindi. A creative reworking of Forster's novel is evident in Anamika's innovative take-off from the text in her essay titled "Adela Adrift in India." It is an ingenious and intriguing send-up on the Englishwoman's post-trial hang-out in India for about ten years in contrast with her quiet exit in the novel. Forster's 'priggish', awkward and theoretical character reduced to a catatonic figure in the court and her reflective and articulate doppelganger envisioned by Anamika crossmatch in their courage and conscience.

Finally, this centenary revaluation of Forster's masterpiece updates and enriches our understanding of the book. Although this critical anthology is a comprehensive assessment of *Passage*, some issues of this protean text still remain to be resolved. As the editor rightly observes, "the flame of Forster burns on." This novel will remain pertinent to India for its lively shots of the imperial landscape.



Murari Prasad retired as Professor and Head of the English Department of Purnea University (Bihar). Earlier he taught English in Sana'a University, the Republic of Yemen.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS

**Name of Author:** Jaydeep Sarangi

**Institutional Designation/ Affiliation:** Principal, New Alipore College, Kolkata

**Bionote of author (within 100 words):**

Jaydeep Sarangi has guest edited a special issue for *TEXT*, Australia. His recent book includes, *Mapping the Mind*, *Minding The Map: Twenty Contemporary Indian English Poets*, Sahitya Akademi, 2023 and *A Life Uprooted: A Bengali Dalit Refugee Remembers*, Sahitya Akademi, 2023. *Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map* (2023, Sahitya Akademi) is his latest book. Sarangi is currently the President of Guild of Indian English Writers, Editors and Critics (GIEWEC) and Vice President, EC, Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata. Living with poets and poetry, Sarangi is principal of New Alipore College, Kolkata.

Zinia Mitra teaches in the Department of English, University of North Bengal. Her travelogues and articles have been published in *The Statesman*. She is associated with Department of Women's Studies, University of North Bengal

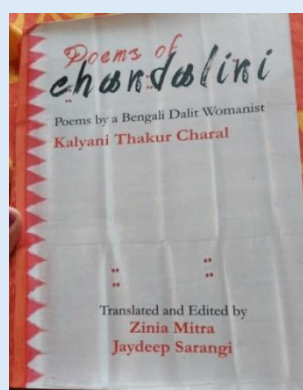
**Brief Description of the Book (within 300 words):**

*Poems of Chandalini* are poems woven around intensely felt private love and loss, if the poems depict nature they inevitably lead to private memories of ruefulness. The poems depict society at large as a machinery of caste oppression articulated from a personal perspective which is unmistakably the Dalit existence of Kalyani Thakur Charal. Kalyani Thakur's poetry is a beguilingly bitter and sharp critique of cultural intolerance, opportunism and oppressive conditions of Dalit women. There is always a tone of high justice in her armoury.

**Keywords (Five):** Wamanism, dalit, chandalini

**Title:** *Poems of Chandalini: Poems by a Bengali Dalit Womanist*. **Year of Publication** 2023, **ISSN :** 978-93-917-96-5. **Price:** INR 275/-

**Photograph of Book Cover:**



**Photograph of Author(s):**



**Jaydeep Sarangi**



**Zinia Mitra**

**Name of Author: (Editor) Kamayani Kumar**

**Institutional Designation/ Affiliation: Assistant Professor, Department of English, Aryabhata College, University of Delhi**

**Bionote of author (within 100 words):** Dr. Kamayani Kumar is an Assistant Professor of Literature at the Department of English, Aryabhata College, University of Delhi, India. She wrote her PhD on children as victim of Partition and transgenerational transmission of trauma. Her work primarily has its focus on childhood and trauma studies. She is currently authoring a book that focuses on how art as a medium has been used to represent and articulate Partition and its violently divisive legacy. Her areas of interest include Partition Studies, Childhood Studies, Film Studies, Trauma Studies, and Visual Narratives on Partition.

**Brief Description of the Book (within 300 words):**

The volume addresses the pertinent need to examine childhood trauma revolving around themes of war, sexual abuse, and disability. Drawing narratives from spatial, temporal, and cultural contexts, the book analyses how conflict, abuse, domestic violence, contours of gender construction, and narratives of ableism affect a child's transactions with society. While exploring complex manifestations of children's experience of trauma, the volume seeks to understand the issues related to translatability/representation, of trauma bearing in mind the fact that children often lack the language to express their sense of loss. The book in its study of childhood trauma does a close exegesis of select literary pieces, drawings done by children, memoirs, and graphic narratives.

Academicians and research scholars from the disciplines of childhood studies, trauma studies, resilience studies, visual studies, gender studies, cultural studies, disability studies, and film studies stand to benefit from this volume. The ideas that have been expressed in this volume will richly contribute towards further research and scholarship in this domain.

**Keywords (Five): Childhood trauma, resilience, conflict, abuse, post and prosthetic memories**

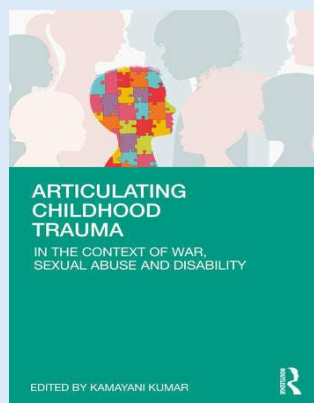
**Title: Articulating Childhood Trauma :In the Context of War, Sexual Abuse and Disability**

**Publisher: Routledge India**

**Year of Publication: 2024**

**ISBN Number: ISBN 9781032705293 Price: INR 1295/-**

**Photograph of Book Cover:**



**Photograph of Author:**



**Name : Mumtaz Mazumdar**

**Affiliation : Teaching Staff in M. C. Das College, Sonai, Assam**

**Bio-note of author (within 100 words):** The author is in her mid-40s and considers this publication her first serious compilation of short stories. She has done her formal studies in Holy Light English School, Holy Cross School, G. C. College, Cotton College and Assam University which are in Sonai, Silchar and Guwahati. Her father Tajamul Ali Mazumdar is considered the most important and foremost educationist of Sonai region. She is also the mother of a ten years old daughter.

**Brief Description of the Book (within 300 words):** The stories are about the Muslims of Sonai and its neighbouring areas, who are shown in relation to the personal, social and cultural space they share with the same community and others. This is the first representation of this place's Muslim community in English language, through creative writing and accepted by national level publishers. The stories are completely original, directly or indirectly inspired by real people and real happenings from present or from the past. The use of local language's usage by Muslims, is deliberately done not only to make the stories look more original but also infuse the realisation that any dialect or language anywhere is complete and of equal importance. The objective of writing these stories is also, to familiarise others with the Muslims of this remote place and it attempts to extend English literature. The book is available in Amazon.

**Keywords :**

Qaqa, Muslims, Sonai, Stories, Lima

**Title :**

Qaqa and Other Stories

**Publisher :**

Rubric Publishing, Noida

**Year of Publication :**

2024

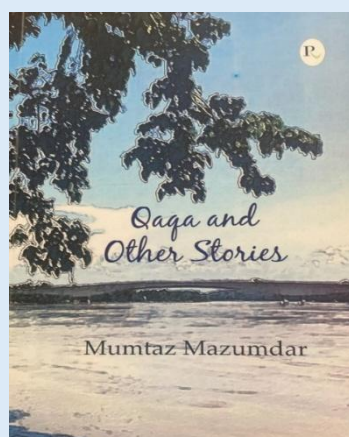
**ISBN :**

978-93-91761-40-0

**Price:**

₹275

**Photograph of Book Cover:**



**Name of Author:** Neeru Nangia Anand

**Institutional Designation/ Affiliation:** Professor, Department of English, Dyal Singh Evening College, University of Delhi

**Bionote of Author :** Neeru Anand, Ph.D (JNU) is Professor of English at Dyal Singh Evening College, University of Delhi. Her interests lie in literature, history, and the interface between the two.

**Brief Description of the Book:** The monograph explores how the revolutionary ideology in India evolved, sustained, and broadened itself through a reading of and a critical engagement with 'revolutionary' or 'protest' literature. Focusing on the literary works that two of India's foremost revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev engaged with, the volume highlights those texts and their reading contexts as significant formative influences that moulded the consciousness and credo of these two revolutionary icons. Friends since childhood, the two were also voracious readers. Their readings included not merely philosophical tracts and books but also a great deal of fictional literature. It is this reading of imaginative literature and its significance in the freedom struggle of India that is explored in the book. However, the book is more than a mere chronicle of the growth of revolutionary ideology. It is also about friendship, debates, discussions, and disagreements that can abound around books, ideas, personalities as well as about growing up at a specific historical moment.

**Keywords:** Fiction, Freedom Struggle, Lahore, Reading, Revolutionaries

**Title:** Readers, Rebels, Visionaries: The Literary Sphere of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev

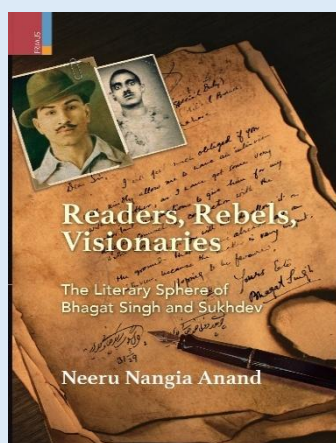
**Publisher:** Primus Books, New Delhi

**Year of Publication:** 2024

**ISBN No.:** 978-93-5687-789-4

**Price:** Rs. 1395/-

**Photograph of Book Cover:**



**Photograph of Author:**



**Name of Author(s): Anway Mukhopadhyay, Saptarshi Mallick, Debashree Dattaray (Editors)**

**Bionotes of Authors (Editors):**

Anway Mukhopadhyay is Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India. Previously, he was an Assistant Professor at Banaras Hindu University and The University of Burdwan. His publications include, among others, *Atheism and the Goddess* (Palgrave macmillan, 2023), *Thematizations of the Goddess in South Asian Cinema*, edited with Shouvik Narayan Hore (CSP, 2023), *Living without God: A Multicultural Spectrum of Atheism*, edited with Sanjit Chakraborty (Springer, 2022), *The Authority of Female Speech in Indian Goddess Traditions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), *The Goddess in Hindu-Tantric Traditions* (Routledge, 2018; paperback 2020), *Literary and Cultural Readings of Goddess Spirituality* (CSP, 2017), *Why Fiction Matters*, edited with Vanashree (Pencraft International, 2017) etc.

Dr Saptarshi Mallick is an Assistant Professor at the Department of American Studies, University of Graz. His recent publications are *Connecting Spaces: The Travelogues and Letters of Lady Abala Bose* (Routledge, 2024; monograph) and *Finding Philosophers in Global Fiction: Redefining the Philosopher in Multi-cultural Contexts* (Bloomsbury, 2024; edited anthology). He is an Associate Editor of *Gitanjali and Beyond*, the online, peer reviewed international journal of the Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies (ScoTs), Edinburgh.

Debashree Dattaray is Professor in Comparative Literature and Deputy Coordinator of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Jadavpur University. She has been the recipient of a Fulbright Alumni Award 2019, CICOPS Fellowship at University of Pavia, Italy, a Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Lecturer Fellowship at UC Berkeley, the Erasmus Mundus Europe Asia Fellowship at the University of Amsterdam and Fulbright Doctoral Fellowship at State University of New York, Stony Brook. Her most recent publication is a co-edited volume entitled *Finding Philosophers in Global Fiction* (Bloomsbury: September 2024) She is on the Editorial Board of *Littcrit: An Indian Response to Literature* and *Lagoonscapes: The Venice Journal of Environmental Studies*. She is currently Zonal Representative (East) for the Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. (IACLALS). She is Principal Investigator on an ICSSR Major Research Project on “Digital Empowerment and Traditional Knowledge Systems: A Case Study from Bankura and Purulia, West Bengal.”

**Brief Description of the Book:** A cross-cultural study that explores and redefines what philosophy, philosophizing, and philosophers are through the lens of literature. The academic discipline of philosophy may tell us, too rigidly, what a philosopher is or should be; but fictional narration often upholds the core conundrums of humankind in which philosophy germinates. This collection of essays explores whether a study of 'philosophers' at a planetary scale, or at least on a broad cross-cultural spectrum, can decouple philosophy from its academic aspect and lend it a more inclusive domain. Contributors to this volume play with three conceptual poles, making them interact with each other and get modified through this interaction: 'fiction', 'narrative' and 'philosopher'. How do these three terms get semantically modified and broadened in scope when we speak of the figures of philosophers in imaginative writing? How do these terms assume different connotations in different cultural contexts, interacting with the multiplicity of not just 'thought', but also the media and tools of 'thought'? Do we always think only rationally? Or do we also think with and through emotively powerful images, symbols and tropes? In the end, *Finding Philosophers in Global Fiction* insists on the need to 'de-elitize' and democratize the concept of a 'philosopher' by reflecting on the possibility of seeing a philosopher as one who sees things clearly, from any vantage point.

**Keywords:** Fiction, Narrative, Philosopher, Planetary, Interdisciplinarity

**Title:** Finding Philosophers in Global Fiction: Redefining the Philosopher in Multi-cultural Contexts

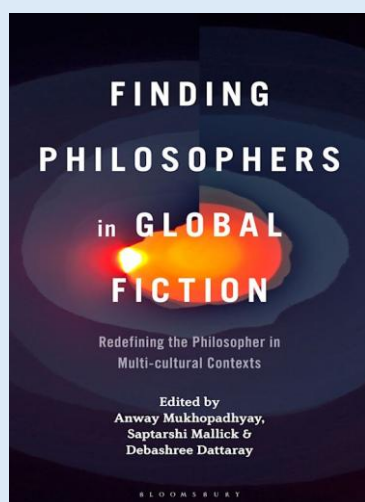
**Publisher:** Bloomsbury Academic India

**Year of Publication:** September 2024

**ISBN Number:** 9798765100943

**Price:** Rs. 809

**Photograph of Book Cover:**



**Photograph of Authors (Editors):**



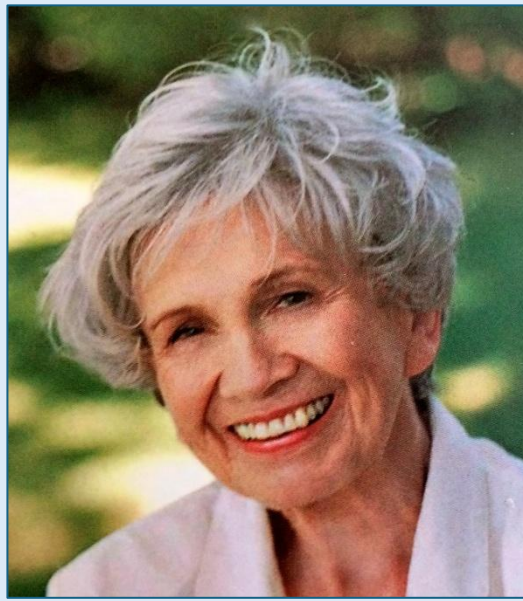
**Anway Mukhopadhyay**



**Saptarshi Mallick**



**Debashree Dattaray**

**TRIBUTES / OBITUARIES****ALICE MUNRO  
(1925-2023)**

The passing of Alice Munro on May 13, 2024 has proved to be an irreparable loss for the literary fraternity of Canada. As the first and the only Nobel Laureate in literature from Canada, she has been largely responsible in bestowing Canadian literature, especially the Canadian short story, with a recognition and prestige in an international platform, like never before. Her absence would be mourned by the connoisseurs of her literary genius, across the world.

Born Alice Ann Laidlaw on July 10, 1931, in Lower Wingham, Huron County, Canada, to fox and mink farmer Robert Laidlaw and school teacher Ann Clarke Laidlaw, Munro spent her childhood in the small towns Southern Ontario. As the eldest of the three siblings, she spent her formative years taking care of her family in the face of a chronic illness of her mother and pursuing her education at the, from where she graduated as a valedictorian in 1949. While studying English and Journalism at the University of Western Ontario, she left her university education midway to marry her senior James Munro and move to Vancouver. Soon a mother of three, the early years of her career were marked by an attempt to strike a balance between her domestic responsibilities and her literary aspirations. Motivated by the mentorship of the legendary Robert Weaver, she published her first collection of short stories *Dance of the Happy Shades* in 1968, that went on to win the highest literary honour of Canada – the Governor General’s Literary Award – cementing her position as a creative artist to reckon with. Her fame continued to soar high as she won the Governor General’s Literary Award twice more for *Who Do You Think You Are* (1978) and *Progress of Love* (1986). She graced the position of the ‘Writer-in-Residence’ at the University of Western Ontario and was awarded an honorary LLD in 1976 by the very institution she had been a former student of. As her name and fame spread beyond the confines of her nation, she was bestowed with the prestigious Man Booker International Prize in 2009 for her “overall contribution to fiction on the world stage”<sup>1</sup> This ‘contribution’ was all about introducing and endorsing certain formal and thematic innovations within the less explored genre of short story, thereby helping it reach new heights. Her

remarkable efforts were deservedly acknowledged through the Nobel Prize in Literature which was awarded to her in 2013 for being “the master of the contemporary short story”.<sup>2</sup>

Munro was instrumental in shifting the focus of the English-Canadian short story from the progressive social realist concerns over political turmoil and economic deprivation of the 1930s-40s to the psychological crisis faced by the small-town middle class due to the changing social, familial and gender dynamics brought about in the early postcolonial decades that followed the end of World War II and the Economic Depression of the ‘30s in English-Canada. Her ‘psychological realism’ can be located at the crossroads of the modernist tendencies dominating the Canadian literary prose well into the 50s and some of the earliest post-modernist tendencies taking shape therein the decade after. Her stories emerged to be the ideal vehicle for mapping the mental terrain of physically, emotionally and aspirationally deviant individuals who were battling the biases underlying a judgemental, conservative, morally restrictive small-town existence. Her candid honesty at admitting to the use of her lived experiences as a “starting dough”<sup>3</sup> has, however, been repeatedly been superseded by her skilled craftsmanship at fictionalizing real locations. In the words of the Canadian writer and the founder of Project Bookmark Canada, Miranda Hill: “For an initiative that seeks to link fiction and Canadian landscapes and cityscapes, it seems strange to many people that there is no Bookmark for Alice Munro. Munro had purposely given these locations (of her stories) new names, providing a layer of distance from the real places and the real people. And it is not the business of Project Bookmark Canada to lift the authorial veil.”<sup>4</sup>

It is, however, the hint of establishing a ‘house’ upon the foundations of her ‘personal material’ using the building blocks of literary epiphany, oxymoron, symbolic imagery, shifting time frames, dream sequences, suggestiveness, indeterminate endings and pluralistic interpretations that throws light upon the profound philosophy underlying her storytelling process. As she herself explains in an interview with *The Canadian Forum*: “It is not a question of “I will make this kind of house because if I do it right, it will have this effect.” I have got to build up a house, a story, around the indescribable “feeling” that is like the soul of the story and which I must insist in a dogged embarrassed way is no more definable than that”<sup>5</sup> Perhaps her unwillingness to align herself to any particular literary movement stems from such an understanding of her creative process. However, her regional focus coupled with her engaging explorations of the dark crevices of the human mind has consolidated her position as a major writer of the Southern Ontario Gothic along with her literary contemporaries like Margaret Atwood, James Reaney, Barbara Gowdy, Marian Engels and Jane Urquhart.

What sets her apart from them, however, was her conscious yet organic decision to concentrate exclusively on a less critically acclaimed and less commercially viable literary form than the novel - in turn helping it acquire a canonical status within and beyond Canada. The graceful declaration of her retirement encapsulated within the folds of her final published work *Dear Life* (2012) had been received with the mixed feeling of gratitude and foreboding. Her illustrious career spanning five decades and thirteen short story collections (including two award winning collections of ‘linked short stories’), though laced with moments of personal heartbreaks and professional adversities has seen the emergence of a free-spirited, female short story writer who has been open to new ideas, challenges and experimentations. She is and will continue to be loved by her devoted readers all over the world.

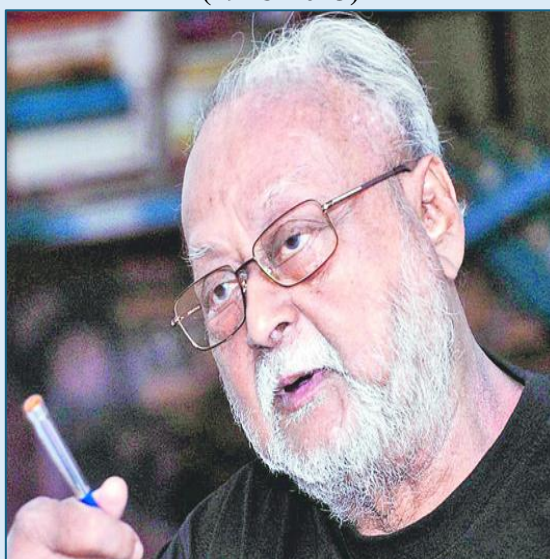
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Email: [urmibolchi89@gmail.com](mailto:urmibolchi89@gmail.com)

**End Notes:**

1. <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/alice-munro> Accessed 20 November 2024
2. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2013/summary/> Accessed 20 November 2024
3. Alice Munro. 'What is Real?'. *The Canadian Forum*. Vol. LXII. No 721 (September 1982). p, 36. Print.
4. Urmi Sengupta. 'An Interview with Miranda Hill'. *The Short Stories of Nirmal Verma and Alice Munro: Mapping the Transformations of a Genre*. PhD diss., Jadavpur University, 2022. p. 240. <https://shodhgasnga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/428000> Accessed 20 November, 2024.
5. Alice Munro. 'What is Real?'. *The Canadian Forum*. Vol. LXII. No 721 (September 1982). p, 36. Print.

**JAYANTA MAHAPATRA**  
**(1928-2023)**



I never thought I would be writing on Mahapatra – Jayanta Da this is how we referred to him. I first met him at Canterbury Commonwealth Writers conference in 1989-90 and it developed into a very fond friendship which lasted until his death in 2023. An outpouring of tributes, readings, seminars, and books is a sign of an overwhelming admiration and popularity. The news of the passing of Jayant Mahapatra on 27<sup>th</sup> august 2023 has left a deep void in our hearts. A poet much loved, a man much respected, so full of grace and empathy – Mahapatra wrote about those on the margins and the ones discarded. He wrote with abandon and a sense of ease about the uneasiness of being. I remember how like a young man he walked on hills and dales, relishing the wind and the lush green countryside in the UK. “You are so young and fragile. The world is heartless. Do look after yourself” he wrote in his first letter to me. In 2006 I shared the stage with him at DAV college Kanpur. It was a proud moment for me. I met him on several occasions and had the pleasure of his company at home. In 2017 he came to the Department of English at Lucknow University and was floored by the love and affection showered on him by the students.

Born on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1928 in Cuttack Mahapatra earned his master’s in physics from Patna University, Bihar. He retired as Reader in Physics from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. As a poet he started publishing his work in his early forties. Described as a late bloomer Mahapatra’s pen stood by him until his death at the age of 95. As a bi-lingual author he wrote more than twenty-five books. A poet, memoirist, short story writer and a translator he wrote both in Oriya and English with adequate ease. Jayanta Mahapatra a teacher of Physics by profession blossomed into one of the finest Indian poets writing in English. His first two volumes of poems *Close the Sky* and *Swayamvara and Other Poems* were published in 1971. Mahapatra became a master craftsman who chiselled the poetic landscape with his extraordinary eye that captured the most subtle and the earthiest with a quiet diligence. His output has been the most admirable of the contemporary group of poets. Mahapatra belonged to a tradition that has respect for the ordinary and the mundane tenor of life. His eye captures the everyday moorings with a sensitive strain. His is a hand that holds the poor and those on the margins with deep affection. He will be remembered fondly for his contribution to literature that brings us close to life.

As editor of the journal *Chandrabhaga*, Mahapatra set a fresh trend in Indian poetry in English by encouraging and opening doors for young aspiring poets and critics. He personally looked

after the minutest details, wrote all his letters by hand and developed a warm camaraderie with his readers. He was the first poet in India to receive the Sahitya Akademi award for his poetry in English. He has been a recipient of Padma Shree and SAARC literary award, Jacob Glastein memorial prize of Chicago's Poetry magazine, Allen Tate Poetry Prize and several others. Some of his well-known works are *A Rain of Rites* (1976), *Life Signs* (1983), *Burden of Waves and Fruit* (1988), *Temple* (1989), *A Whiteness of Bone* (1992), *Bare Face* (2000), *Random Descent* (2005), *Hesitant Light* (2016). Jayanta Mahapatra was the oldest of the three children in his family. His family had converted to Christianity and the poem *Grandfather* recreates the pain and pathos of a man who chose to survive by conversion. "My father starving to death, staggered into a missionary camp during the famine" was a note in his father's diary. It is here that we see the poet delving into the past trying to find answers to questions: "The separate life let you survive, while perhaps/ the one you left wept in the blur of your heart." As a child he was clever, and he spent much of his time reading books. He shared an ambivalent relationship with his mother who loved to dictate. In one of his interviews, he writes. "Physics taught me a discipline, to observe things, to observe nature; and to know exactly what there is. ...it shows how infinitesimal one is in the world, in this world of universes." For the poet in him there was nourishment in physics, and he never saw the two as incompatible to each other. The consciousness of death continued to haunt his verse, but he also valued life – "there is something in me that refuses to die... And this is poetry". Style varies and so do the themes. Memories of childhood, the places that he visited, the people he met, the lonely blade of grass or the haunting minarets, the sand and soil of his country, the politics and parties, the differences and diversities, the inequality and injustice, the discrimination and disenchantment, the women and war form the essential core of his poetry. The poet in him writes and reacts. He also writes to escape.

Bruce King, one of the leading critics observed "His work blends contemporary, post-modernist poetics and the Indian philosophical tradition in which all desire is for a world of illusion". Mahapatra had an intimate association with Orissa. Orissa glistens and warms up to his discreet presence. His land of birth is artfully personified in his poetry. If there are matters that give anxiety with 'twisting uncertainty like light on the shifting sands' (Dawn at Puri), there is this state of awareness that comes with experience 'And if you open your past enough/ to see into your own shadow, / you all but become the shadow itself' (A Mood of Denial). The poetic voice brims with concern for humanity as in one of his most famous poems "Hunger". The poet captures the ugly face of desire with unsettling acuity. A poem that shakes us to the core with its visual web of associations. Words brush with everyday reality as the title hunger equivocates between lust and longing, food and flesh. Poetry gives him comfort but the painful awareness has a mournful timbre "This small movement of the poem/ has no purpose" (Falling into Intimacy). A lingering sadness permeates his later poems. His autobiography *Bhor Motira Kanaphoola* is considered one of the most beautiful and intense writing in Oriya. The poet in him opens about his life and draws attention to his vulnerabilities with a haunting prose. He outlived his wife Runu who was an alumna of Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow. The tragic death of his only son Mohan of Cancer in his early fifties was something he could never reconcile himself with. A man with a kind heart and a warm smile, his heart wept for the weak and ailing. He always kept a low profile, spoke softly and enjoyed the company of young people. Jayanta Mahapatra with his deeply sensitive mind and a frail physique continued to face life with fortitude. It was his love for words and the abiding faith in human values that saved him and gave him the strength to write.

Ranu Uniyal

Poet and Professor of English

University of Lucknow

**CHANDRA MOHAN  
(1933-2023)**



You are infinitely more alive. Say how that is.<sup>1</sup>  
- Rumi

On 27 March 2024, Dr. Chandra Mohan left for his heavenly abode. With his ever-warm smile and passionate efforts, he has left an indelible mark across the Indian and the global academia as an academician of great repute, well versed in international higher education, particularly in the field of American, Canadian, Australian and Indian Studies.

Dr Chandra Mohan superannuated from his regular professional life as a Reader from the Department of English, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, University of Delhi, though his passion for academics ensured that he does not retire from working beyond the classrooms. He was the General Secretary of the Comparative Literature Association of India and Advisor, International Higher Education, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar. His contributions towards the foundation and support of the Canadian Studies Programme in India are remembered with reverence, as are also his lessons within the classrooms at the University of Calgary, Canada, the International University of Florida Miami, and the University of Georgia USA. He was the President of the Indian Association for Canadian Studies (1995-1999). He later became the Advisor of International Higher Education Centre for New Literatures, Culture and Communications, at the University of Jammu (2003-2006). He was also elected as the Vice President of the International Comparative Literature Association of India (2004-10). He also served as the Advisor of the International Higher Education Central University of Gujarat. Gandhinagar. All this – and more – “He had moved ahead selflessly, with his strong belief and faith in team-communion and camaraderie, even during moments of disagreements”, reminisces Dr. Tapati Mukherjee, a long-time academic associate of Professor Chandra Mohan.<sup>2</sup>

He was one of the Chairs of the International Comparative Literature Association Standing Committee on South Asian Literature and Culture which pivoted on ‘Literary and Cultural Interrelationships between India, its Neighbouring Countries and the World’. His significant publications include Culture, History and Politics: South Asian Narratives (2019, co-edited with E. V. Ramakrishnan and Jasbir Jain); Gender and Diversity: India, Canada and Beyond (2015, co-edited with Malashri Lal); Interdisciplinary Alternatives in Comparative Literature (2013, co-edited with E.V. Ramakrishnan and Harish Trivedi); and Studies in Comparative Literature: Theory, Cultural and Space, In Memory of Sisir Kumar Das (2010, coedited with Jancy James).

We mourn Dr, Mohan's absence, and yet in resonance with his relentless spirit of dedication and unconditional warmth, resolute to work towards achieving higher goals for the Indian academic panorama.

**End Notes:**

1. "Resources for Loss: Poem by Rumi, Contributed by Ali Dabaje (2021)." 2021. Resources for Loss. 2021. <https://scalar.fas.harvard.edu/resources-for-loss/poem-by-rumi-contributed-by-ali-dabaje-2021>.
2. Mohan, Chandra. 2024. "JUCL Memorial Meeting for Professor Chandra Mohan." YouTube. April 3, 2024. [https://youtu.be/Jhi7W0NkGiQ?si=mmljRILJn7\\_CqaT6](https://youtu.be/Jhi7W0NkGiQ?si=mmljRILJn7_CqaT6).

Hriya Bannerjee  
PhD Research Scholar  
Jadavpur University

**MALTI JOSHI**  
**(1934-2024)**



‘Malwa ki Meera’ Malti Joshi Dies at 90

Malti Joshi was born in Aurangabad on June 4, 1934. As a young adult, Joshi started penning short stories and poetry for Hindi periodicals like *Parag* for young people. In 1971, she contributed a short tale to *Dharmayug*, a Hindi literary journal published by the Times group. She kept writing for a number of popular Hindi publications, such as *Sarika*, *Kadambini*, *Manorama* and *Saptahik Hindustan*. She also started the ‘*Shubh Sankalp*’ magazine, which is edited by Dr. Sunita Shrivastava. Joshi performed her stories onstage for listeners as part of the oral rendition ritual known as *kathakathan*.

She knew Hindi and Marathi well and wrote more than 60 books in the two languages. Her well known works comprise *Madhayantar*, *Pataakshep*, *Parajay*, *Ek Ghar Sapno Ka*, *Woh Tera Ghar*, *Ye Mera Ghar*, *Vishwaas Gaatha*, *Pashaan Yug*, *Samarpan ka Sukh*, *Mann na huye Das Bees*, *Malti Joshi ki Kahaniyaan*, *Ek Ghar ho Sapno ka*, *Aakhiri Shart*, *Mori Rang de Chunariya*, *Antim Sankshep*, *Ek Sarthak Din*, *Mahakte Rishte*, *Piya Peer na Jaani*, *Babul ka Ghar*, *Million Dollar Note*, *Shapit Shaishav*. She also wrote a novel *Aurat Ek Raat Hai*.

She was honoured with several awards like *Bhavbhuti Alankaran* in 1999; *Shikhar Samman* in 2006; *Dushyant Kumar Sahitya Samman* and *Ojaswini Samman* in 2011, *Vanmali Katha Samman* in 2013; *Rashtriya Maithalisharan Gupt Samman* in 2013-14; *Kamleshwar Smruti Puraskar* in 2016; *Hindi Sevi Samman* in 2018; and *Padma Shri* for her outstanding contributions in literature, by the President of India in 2018.

Joshi, one of the most well-known authors of Hindi stories, was recognized for her distinctive storytelling style and occupied an exceptional position in the world of literature. Universities all around India have researched her works in great detail, demonstrating the influence of her writing on readers and academics alike. *Doordarshan* adapted a number of Joshi’s stories for television. Her stories were incorporated in shows including *Saat Phere*, which was produced by Jaya Bachchan. *Kirdaar*, which was created by Gulzar, included two of her stories *Mann Dhuaan Dhuaan* and *Culture*. In order to connect with and impact a wider range of people, her stories were translated into other languages, including Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Malayalam, Kannada, English, Russian and Japanese.

Hers was a very well-known household name for a lot of people. Many newspapers and magazines published her stories. Adults as well as young adults read her stories with great interest. Discourse about women issues, Indian culture and traditions were/ are some of the key themes in the works of Joshi. A new style of narrative craft joined/s the readers though time and in society. She was a master of stories based on family environment. She portrayed different shades of domestic relationships through those simple and true stories, while also establishing class differences and unique similarities of characters through the characters of maids in her stories. When she was in Mumbai, she would visit various *chaupals* several times and read many poems, songs, stories and excerpts from her memoirs.

Malti Joshi mentions: "I have been weaving small experiences and memorable moments of life into my stories. These feelings are sometimes my own and sometimes those of my loved ones. And the number and circle of these close ones of mine is very wide. Anyway, the writer has no subjective feelings of one's own. The happiness and sorrow of the world scattered around her becomes her own happiness and sorrow. And maybe that's why most of my stories start with 'I'."

The most unique and captivating aspect of Malti Joshi's storytelling was that, like the '*katha vachak*' of epics and historical tales, she would speak her stories verbatim in public rather than reading them from a written page. Renowned Hindi writer Mridula Garg wrote: "It gave them [Joshi's stories] a unique tonal quality and showcased, not only her prodigious memory, but also her command over tenor and melody of the text. No wonder she had such a vast readership."<sup>1</sup>

Themes of human ugliness, middle-class love and the married existence of a husband and wife are all prevalent in Joshi's works. In her books women are suppressed in a patriarchal society and they suffer in a household where broken dreams are a reality. Kalyani of *Raag Viraag* is deprived of love. The language of Joshi's writing is natural, simple and sensitive. She has underlined the subtle fibres of the female mind along with the deep human sensitivities of middle class families. Along with local words, she also uses figurative vocabulary extensively in her stories due to which all the stories become poignant and heart-touching. One of her stories is *Sneh Bandh*. The entire story mainly revolves around the lead character Meeta and her mother-in-law. The plot focuses on twin layers of man's conduct. Sometimes a person complicates her/ his external behaviour so much that her/ his inner perspective goes beyond his control. It begins to get transmitted through external behaviour. Such is the world of Meeta and her mother-in-law. Meeta's behaviour does not match the picture of a daughter-in-law steeped in traditional middle-class values imprinted in her mother-in-law's mind. There are moments in the story when their distance seems to be reducing but the mother-in-law's ego; stubbornness and prejudice prove to be an obstacle in making the relationship smooth. Dhruv and Shiv, the sons and her husband, do not like this behaviour of Meeta's mother-in-law is but they tolerate it so that their mother/ wife does not get hurt. When her husband goes abroad, despite the insistence of her father-in-law, Meeta does not go with him because she does not want unnecessary expenses to be incurred. This reflects her sense of responsibility towards her home. One day when Meeta is at her maternal home, her father-in-law's health suddenly deteriorates. As soon as Meeta finds out, she immediately takes him to the hospital and gets him good treatment. After this the mother-in-law also has a change of heart. She starts seeing Meeta not only as her daughter-in-law but also as a daughter.

Malti Joshi is among those writers who have strongly expressed the subtle vibrations of the female mind in her Hindi stories and has vocalized the resistant voice of women in the patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society, there is discrimination between boys and girls since childhood. Both of them start being treated differently. From here the girl gets accustomed to the environment of her mother and the son to his father. Malti Joshi weaves all such

environments into her stories with great intensity and subtlety and complete readability. Millions of her fans weave the fabric of their lives with the stories of Malti Joshi. She has the ability to capture even the subtlest vibrations of human emotions in her words and never realizes when she reaches into the depths of the readers' minds through her naturally flowing language style.

She died on May 15, 2024. She leaves behind an archive of significant contributions to literature and compelling stories.

'My existence is a mere drop in the ocean of existence' wrote Malti Joshi.

**End Notes:**

1. Ghosh Avijit. (2024). "Noted Hindi writer Malti Joshi, whose work was filmed by Gulzar, no more." *Times of India*. May 16. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/noted-hindi-writer-malti-joshi-whose-work-was-filmed-by-gulzar-no-more/articleshow/110185161.cms>

## AWARDS/ RECOGNITIONS

### Awardee: Professor Swati Pal



**Name of Award:** Fulbright - Nehru International Education Administrators Seminar, October 12-26, 2024.

**About the Award:** 10 academic administrators from across the country were selected after a rigorous selection procedure to visit several US universities and institutions across multiple cities, meet with leaders in the field of education and participate in group discussions and roundtables. The objective was to work on areas of collaboration and networking between educational institutions in both countries and the awardees visited several institutions in the USA such as University of Notre Dame, Purdue University, University of Chicago, Northwestern university, Malcolm X College, University Maryland, Baltimore College, Gallaudet University.

**Bio-note:** Swati Pal, Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi, is a Fulbright- Nehru fellowship scholar, a Charles Wallace scholar and the first Asian scholar to receive the John McGrath Theatre Studies Scholarship at Edinburgh University. Author of several books on theatre, creative and academic writing, her newspaper articles articulate her views on education. Her areas of research interest include performance studies and cultural history. She translates from Hindi to English and several of her translations have been published. She writes poetry and her poems appear in several anthologies; she also has two collections entitled In Absentia and Forever yours and a curated collection called Living On. She is the Vice Chair of the Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies and has been the recipient of several national and international awards, both as a teacher as well as an administrator.

## Awardee: Dr. Priyanka Tripathi



**Name of Award:** Charles Wallace India Trust Visiting Fellowship (2024-25) at the School of History, University of Leeds.

**About the award:** The Charles Wallace India Trust was established in 1981 as a Registered Charity. The trust gives grants to Indian nationals living in India and studying or working in the arts, heritage conservation, or the humanities.

**Bio-note:** Priyanka Tripathi is an Associate Professor of English and former Head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Patna (India). She serves as the Co-Executive Editor of the *Journal of International Women's Studies* (published by Bridgewater State University) and as the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (published by Taylor & Francis). She was also awarded the IPD Visiting Research Fellowship (2022-23) at IASH, University of Edinburgh. She has published extensively in the *Journal of Gender Studies*, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *GeoHumanities*, and *Economic and Political Weekly*, amongst others. Her monograph with Bloomsbury is titled, *The Gendered War: Evaluating Feminist Ethnographic Narratives of the 1971 War of Bangladesh*. She works in the areas of Gender Studies, South Asian Fiction, Medical Humanities, and Graphic Novels.

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