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Margarita R. Merino

Nibir K. Ghosh

Jonah Raskin

Swami Sujayananda

Debasish Chakrabarti

Shantanu Basu

Sanjay Kumar Misra

Dipa Chakrabarti

Tanutrushna Panigrahi

Anjali Singh

Aisha M. Shamsuddin

Sanghamitra S. Bhatt

Suruchi Upadhyay

Hafeez Jalandhari

Jagdish Batra

Namita Sethi

Manju

Sneha Shrivastava

CHIEF EDITOR : NIBIR K. GHOSH

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Chief Editor

Nibir K. Ghosh
68 New Idgah Colony,
Agra-282001, U.P. (INDIA).
Cell.: +91 98970 62958
e-mail : ghoshnk@hotmail.com

Editor

A. Karunaker
Plot No. 51, Road No. 6
Samathapuri Colony
New Nagole
Hyderabad-500035
Telangana (INDIA).
Cell.: +91 9849302145
e-mail : akredrem@gmail.com

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RE-MARKINGS
68 New Idgah Colony,
Agra-282001, U.P. (INDIA).
Telephone : +91 562 2230242
Cell.: +91 98970 62958
e-mail : ghoshnk@hotmail.com

EDITORIAL

“Why has India always been the target country for all invaders including a small country like Portugal?” and “Why India always, almost all the times, has given in to the invaders?” These two questions often asked by Dr. A.P.J. Kalam to the youth of India who came in contact with him call for deep introspection at all levels of history, society and polity. In my view the abundance of natural resources as well as the wealth of spiritual wisdom made India an obvious haven for looters, plunderers and conquerors from across the world in whatever garb they came. The vulnerability to fall easy prey to the invaders was primarily on account of the near-total absence of the sense of belonging to a nation. We existed as either individuals concerned with our own predicament and fate or at best as part of a clan, caste, community, religion or province. The idea of India as a country or nation has virtually been non-existent for centuries. Consequently, patriotism of any kind, which is an integral prerequisite for the defence of any nation against foreign invasion, has often been an extremely rare commodity.

One may ask, “What is patriotism?” The Random House dictionary defines patriotism as “devoted love, support and defence of one’s country; national loyalty.” Though one is intrigued by Dr. Samuel Johnson’s statement that “Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel,” I would rather say that patriotism is the lifeblood of any nation that believes in safeguarding its solidarity. If an Island like Britain could govern not only a continent but create and consolidate an empire, it could only be possible with the unquestioned loyalty of its citizens to the nation characterised by feelings so lyrically expressed by the British diplomat, Cecil Spring-Rice, in his poem “I Vow to thee My Country” (1908): “I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,/ Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love:/ The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,/ That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best.”

Despite my own fondness for the above lines penned by the British poet, it would be grossly unfair not to dwell at length at the superlative brand of loyalty displayed by Indians in the valiant struggle against the seemingly invincible British Empire in the freedom struggle. The utterances by Sri Aurobindo and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, among others, inspired millions to lay upon the altar of the motherland “the dearest and the best.” In “The Ideal of Karmyogin” Sri Aurobindo stated in clear terms: “the task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government

but at the building up of a nation.” He reiterated his stand when he said: “Others know their country as a material thing, as fields, plains, forests, mountains, rivers; I know my country as Mother. I offer her my devotions, my worship.... I know I have in me the power to accomplish the deliverance of my fallen country.... This feeling is not new to me, not of the present day; with this feeling I was born; it is in the marrow of my bones; God has sent me to earth to do this work.”

Likewise, the inimitable icon of India’s freedom struggle, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, galvanized the whole nation with his words: “How many selfless sons of the Mother are prepared, in this selfish age, to completely give up their personal interests and take the plunge for the Mother?” Netaji had learnt very early in life that “Only on the soil of sacrifice and suffering can we raise our national edifice.” It was perhaps natural that he took no time to relinquish the Indian Civil Service that was then thought to be a “heaven-born service.” Throughout his public career, he had always felt that though India was otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she had lacked one thing, namely an army of liberation. His historic role as the undisputed commander of the Indian National Army (INA) proved to be the proverbial last nail in the coffin of an Empire where the Sun never set. Had Netaji been present when the tricolour was unfurled at the Red fort in Delhi on 15th August 1947, who knows India’s “tryst with destiny” may have been spectacularly resonant with Tagore’s “Heaven of Freedom.”

It is, therefore, incumbent upon the young generation to walk in the footsteps of such valiant patriots of India who conceptualized the foundation of the nation in the principles of “faithfulness, duty and sacrifice.” If we construct our lives on such visionary ideals irrespective of the profession we are in and place our selfish interests even at par with our concern for the well-being of all in the nation, unmindful of the machinations of divisive forces, we can reassure our beloved former President, Dr. Abdul Kalam, that no invaders can henceforth dare to disturb the solidarity and prosperity of our motherland.

Besides contributions celebrating the inspirational legacy of legendary figures, the current edition of Re-Markings offers essays and creative renderings focusing on issues and concerns of abiding interest. Wish you happy reading and a wonderful 2019!

Nibir K. Ghosh

Chief Editor

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**‘PASSION IS A PART OF THE TRIP,
COMPASSION ITS DESTINY’:
A CONVERSATION WITH MARGARITA R. MERINO**

Nibir K. Ghosh

Dr. Margarita Merino de Lindsay has worked in education, graphic design, the media and has had expositions of her poems and drawings. She has published books such *Viaje al interior*, *Baladas del abismo*, *Halcón herido*, *Demonio contra arcángel*, *La dama della gallerna*, *Viaje al exterior*, *Pregón de un Sábado de Piñata* and many essays, articles, columns and short stories. Critics highlight her talent as “total poetry” through the vitality of her voice. In Mudrovic’s *Mirror, Mirror on the Page: Identity and Subjectivity on Spanish Women’s Poetry (1975-2000)* she was identified as perhaps the one “who avails herself of the poem as a mirror with the most variety and imagination.” She has lectured, given recitals and sung in prairies, prisons, theaters, classrooms, night-clubs, cloisters and castles. Born in Spain, she lives in USA.

NKG: What attracted you initially to art and poetry? When did you publish your first poem?

MM: Love of arts runs in my blood. I have been communicating with myself—writing, drawing, and singing inside too—since my very early childhood, many times while hiding in closets. Some external sources were helpful such as the good library we had at home—books have been always there and I have been a voracious self-taught reader-. The strict environment where spontaneity or free thinking was repressed with fear at school, the punishment for “disobeying” or being different, the constriction to express ideas, imagination, around the whole society—especially for girls (women were second or third class citizens always under the control of fathers, brothers, husbands, sons..., in the Franquism)—triggered for me the wish to survive those boundaries in a quiet, secret form. I ‘published’ some of my early poems and handmade images in school magazines that have been lost with time or otherwise vanished. I had boxes of drawings, poems, illustrated things, but in the frustrated ways of overwhelmed women mostly doing home chores, my mother or a maid stored those early creations in an outdoor balcony, under the rain and the snow.... So the elements destroyed them.

Note: For complete conversation contact remarkings@hotmail.com

**SATYAGRAHA FOREVER:
WHEN DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
CAME TO INDIA**

Jonah Raskin

In an essay titled, “What King Learned from Gandhi,” the filmmaker and novelist Priyanka Kumar—who lives and works in the U.S.—ends her account of the “unlikely cross-pollination” between civil rights activist, MLK, and the esteemed guru for Indian independence, with a plea to reject violence, which she argues, “disenfranchises the public and antagonizes those in power.”

If only the way forward was that simple and that easy. It’s true that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. both embraced the philosophy and the political strategy of nonviolent resistance to achieve their goals. But to focus on violence and nonviolence and to ignore the complexity of their ideas and beliefs is to reduce them to stick figures without nuances and few if any contradictions.

In fact, Gandhi and King were far more than activists and organizers who used nonviolence. They both called for total war against oppression and injustice. They both made wrenching personal sacrifices—they both went to jail—and they both embraced and expressed a kind of ruthlessness that might have put violent protesters to shame. In order to defeat the Nazis, Gandhi explained to his supporters, “You will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis.” He also noted that while “non-violence is infinitely superior to violence,” he “would rather have India resort to arms to defend her honor than that she should, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonor.” In some cases, violence might be necessary, Gandhi allowed. “Nonviolence,” he noted, “can upon due notice be given up when it proves unsuccessful or ineffective.” While Gandhi and King believed that those who live by the sword die by the sword, they also recognized that those who reject the sword might *also* die by the sword. To those who believed that India would be violence-free after independence, he said, this “seems to me to be an empty hope.”

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

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DR. APJ ABDUL KALAM: MEMORIES REVISITED

Debasish Chakraborti

My eventful journey in DRDO since 1985 landed me to a premier laboratory named ADRDE, Agra as Director. Among other things, I was happy to meet two erudite scholars of Agra College, Agra, Dr. Nibir K. Ghosh and Dr. Sunita. It is Nibir who has motivated me to write about the illustrious personality of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam with whatever experience I gathered as a scientist. I humbly offer the following reminiscences as a tribute to one of the most worthy sons of Mother India.

It happened to be a rainy morning at Chandigarh DRDO guest house, when I saw our chief of DRDO, Dr. Kalam taking a stroll in the midst of deep clouds, quite relaxed with rain water gently sprinkling his head. About 2/3 weeks ago, the country had witnessed “Pokhran-II” — the nuclear experiment at Rajasthan under the able stewardship of Kalam sir. I quickly got down and congratulated him on the success of Pokhran. On the same afternoon at the lunch table along with young scientists from DRDO, Dr. Kalam put up two specific questions to the youngsters. One was, “Why has India always been the target country for all invaders including a small country like Portugal?” and the second one, “Why India always, almost all the times, has given in to the invaders?” The questions were simple but intellectually loaded and it still hovers on me to find the most appropriate reasons and answers to both the questions in this jigsaw puzzle of information blast in the world. However, one thing was certain that he had kindled the quest to know our country and serve it with all righteousness. I asked him on the same day, whether this nuclear test was indeed a priority for the country which has been facing all kinds of problems like poverty, malnutrition, health, education and *Roti-Kapda-Makan*. “Good Question” was his impromptu response in his usual way ... but his answer to the question startled me a lot. He said: “The U.S.A. administration has rolled the heads, since they could not anticipate/predict this great event and at the same time in the American media, probably for the first time, they talked about ‘nuclear fission experiment in India’ several times, which is a homegrown technology.”

- **Debasish Chakraborti** is an Outstanding Scientist (Scientist H) at DRDO. He has to his credit one Indian and one Russian patent granted on Floating Recorder and Transmitter.

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REMEMBERING SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS HISTORIC 1893 CHICAGO ADDRESS

Swami Sujayananda

When we remember a speech delivered by Swami Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 125 years ago then we can safely assume that it must be very special and especially relevant even today. We will try to see what he spoke on that day and how it is relevant even in present times, what is its impact and effect in India and in the world in general and most importantly what tribulations and hardships he had to undergo before reaching the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and becoming the world famous Vivekananda.

Even today he is remembered for that famous speech delivered on 11th September, 1893. It was not even a speech; it was an introductory address of barely four minutes which made history. The first day of the Parliament was devoted to twenty-four short replies by the delegates after the welcome address by the officials. Other delegates came prepared with their speeches and many read their addresses but the Swami had neither prepared nor brought any notes along with him. He was not even prepared to deliver his address before such a huge elite gathering as we come to know from one of his letters written after the Parliament to Shri Alasingha Perumal at Madras.

Before appearing on the world stage on 11th September, 1893, he set out as a wandering mendicant from Calcutta in 1890 and traversed almost whole of India. While living a mendicant's life, he was distressed to see the ancient India in its present degraded state after 700 years of Muslim rule and another 200 years under colonial rule.

In his sojourn he took a vow that he will not touch money and he will not ask for food; if it comes by chance then only he will partake it. It so happened that he had to travel mostly on foot and many a times he couldn't get food for 2-3 days at a stretch. Many a times he fainted due to hunger. During his travels he lived with kings and rich people on the one hand and at the same time stayed with lowest of the low so he could see the real India.

- **Swami Sujayananda** is a Senior Monk at Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Gwalior, M.P.

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META-LANGUAGE AND HUMAN CIVILIZATION

Shantanu Basu

Meta (from the Greek preposition and prefix μετά- meaning "after," or "beyond") is a prefix used in English to indicate a concept which is an abstraction behind another concept, used to complete or add to the latter. The Oxford English Dictionary cites uses of the meta- prefix as "beyond, about" (such as meta-economics and meta-philosophy) going back to 1917. A notable early citation was Orman Quine's 1937 use of the word "metatheorem," where meta- had the modern meaning of "an X about X." In 1979, Douglas Hofstadter widened the scope of the term 'meta' as a stand-alone word, as an adjective and as a directional preposition ("going meta," a term he coined for the old rhetorical trick of taking a debate or analysis to another level of abstraction).

Applied to the field of language, the term 'meta' is about seeking patterns within a linguistic description and trying to understand themes in other languages or symbolic systems; as if tracing commonalities in linguistic and symbolic systems across the globe, underscoring the fundamental unity of humankind. However, meta-language is not an end in itself. It is also applied to various fields of natural and social science and the humanities.

Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* is taught in almost all Indian universities in their undergraduate English programme. The Berlin Conference in 1885 decided the carving of Africa between the major colonial powers of the time, including The Congo to the Belgian King, Leopold II, for whom it became a personal fiefdom. The fiction of a world of African savages crying out for the civilizing influence of Europe and Christians was created. This clash of cultures served as the alibi for unmitigated pillage of Africa and inhuman treatment of Africans. A soulless "white sepulchral" Europe bears down on a helpless but passionate culture for entirely economic reasons. However, the fiction of a 'superior' Europe is maintained notwithstanding its inherent decadence. A thin veneer of philanthropy is intact amongst those who remain in Europe; held together by naivety in some and self-deception in others.

- **Shantanu Basu** served the Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IA&AS) since 1984 and lastly as Principal Accountant General (A&E),

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE: THE MASTER STRATEGIST

Sanjay Kumar Misra

Subhas Chandra Bose is a hero. He is and will always be one of the immortals of modern India. He is a quintessential larger than life figure. Reams have been written about his role and persona as the leader and the fighter for the cause of India's freedom from the British Rule. Tales and myths about him abound the public space in Indian polity and society. He remains one of the most mystified heroes of the 20th century history.

There have been innumerable papers, articles, books and studies on the personality and achievements of Netaji. Of late, he has become the most intriguing personality from the days of India's struggle for freedom. Here, I want to talk about one particular book written by a person who worked as an interpreter and translator in the Indian Legion, which was a military unit formed by Netaji in 1941 during the Second World War in Hitler's Germany. It was also known as the "Tiger Legion."

The title of the book is *The Sign of the Tiger* and the name of the writer is Rudolf Hartog. It was first published in 2001. The subtitle is "Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian Legion in Germany, 1941-45." This book, as the blurb says, has been written from a German perspective. It focuses more on Bose's political vision than on his magnetic personality. Well, when it comes to knowing and understanding the political ideas and vision of Netaji, one book stands out, namely, *The Indian Struggle*, which was written by Subhas Chandra Bose himself. It has been edited excellently by Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose and published by the Oxford University Press in collaboration with the Netaji Research Bureau, Kolkata. *The Indian Struggle* presents to us Netaji's views on the Indian freedom movement and his political ideas and philosophy in detail. It was hailed by none other than Romain Rolland who described it as "an indispensable work for the history of the Indian movement" (Blurb).

- **Dr. Sanjay Kumar Misra** is Associate Professor in the Department of English at R.B.S. College, Agra.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

ALEXANDER PUSHKIN'S *EUGENE ONEGIN*: A CHALLENGE FOR TRANSLATION

Dipa Chakrabarti

Written in the 19th century by Alexander Pushkin, *Eugene Oegin* is considered as one of the masterpieces of Russian literature. To the Russians Alexander Pushkin is comparable in his esteem to Greece's Homer, Italy's Dante, Spain's Cervantes, England's Shakespeare, Germany's Goethe, America's Whitman or France's Victor Hugo. The large number of translations of this work correspond with its popularity all over the world. Pushkin named *Eugene Oegin* a "novel in verse." This work actually blurs literary preconceptions of the distinction between prose and poetry, novel and poem, and makes use of a great variety of styles and genres. His approach fits with Mikhail Bakhtin's definition of a multilingual text which is characterized by *polyglossia* and is shaped by a unique structure which later on came to be known as the "Oegin stanza." *Eugene Oegin* is a challenge for translators. Charles Johnston, the most accepted English translator of recent times, writes in his translator's note, "Few foreign masterpieces can have suffered more than *Eugene Oegin* from the English translators' failure to convey anything more than, at best, the literal meaning" (Johnston 29). It is as if a wall separated Pushkin's poetic novel from the non-Russian reading world!

It is said that *Eugene Oegin* was written between 1823 and 1830 when Pushkin was thoroughly steeped in French classicism along with the rest of the Russian aristocracy of the period but he composed *Oegin* under the Romantic and Anglicizing influence of Byron, Sterne, and Shakespeare. The result is a novel paradoxically crystalline in its structure but completely ambiguous. Pushkin's enthusiastic and digressive narrator describes it toward the end as a "free novel."

In the introduction to Charles Johnston's 1977 translation, John Bailey comments on this "free verse": ...

- **Dr. Dipa Chakrabarti** is Head, Amity School of Languages, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur. She obtained her master's degree in French from Rouen University, France.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

THOREAU'S OPPOSING ECOLOGY: WALDEN FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE

Tanutrushna Panigrahi

The Anthropocene finds its most radical expression in our acknowledgement that the familiar divide between people and the natural world is no longer useful or accurate. Because we shape everything, from the upper atmosphere to the deep seas, there is no more nature that stands apart from human beings. There is no place or living thing that we haven't changed. Our mark is on the cycle of weather and seasons, the global map of bioregions, and the DNA that organizes matter into life. It makes no sense now to honor and preserve a nature that is defined by being not human, that is purest in wilderness, rainforests and the ocean. Instead in a world we can't help shaping, the question is what we will shape - James Purdy (18).

What James Purdy writes in the prologue of his book *After Nature: The Politics for the Anthropocene* may not be all inclusive and the final statement on the subject but is meaningful from the fact that Thoreau's environmental philosophy has echoed it centuries before when he warned Americans as well as humanity at large that nature must be beyond human control. *Walden's* environmental politics rests on Thoreau's phrase that in "wildness is the preservation of the world," and, therefore, wildness must be beyond human reach. The irony is, in the middle of the nineteenth century, he was unsure how much of the nature is left to be called "wilderness."

To read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* with Anthropocene eyes is to read the book with its opposing ecological sensibilities. His environmental imagination rests on the mystic harmony between humans and nature that has been played out in his romantic transcendental moments in wilderness and his communion with nature. The epiphanic heights in the narrative that Thoreau experiences through his heightened perceptions of nature ensure that the perfect harmony between humans and the natural world is possible and does exist. It exists only when one lives physically, mentally and morally in nature, not in civilization/civilized state.

- **Dr. Tanutrushna Panigrahi** is a faculty in the Department of Basic Sciences and Humanities, IIT-Bhubaneswar.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

(AB)NORMAL LIVES
RED LIPSTICK: THE MEN IN MY LIFE
AS A TRANSGENDER NARRATIVE

Anjali Singh

Their voices were harsh, their songs melancholy;
They sang of lovers dying and or children left
unborn...

Some beat their drums; others beat their sorry
breasts

And wailed, and writhed in vacant ecstasy.

- Kamala Das, "The Dance of the Eunuchs"

Co-authored with Pooja Pande, a freelance writer-editor, Laxmi Narayan Tripathi's biographical narrative, *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life*, takes over from where her earlier book, *Me Laxmi, Me Hijra* left off. Remarking on the angst faced by the LGBT community and broaching the elemental question of deciphering one's identity, and from it the very basic question of being and belonging, Laxmi freely and frankly disabuses the general consensus centred on transgender people. She calls attention towards the status of transgenders in India and attempts to address their basic needs and struggle. The voice of the voiceless is made explicit through this text.

While the book is structured around the men in her life, it is essentially about her, and traverses the varied paths she has taken to get to where she is today – a renowned transgender-rights activist. In all her dealings with the men she has come across in her life, be they men in her family, her friends, her colleagues or her lovers, she speaks honestly and sometimes brutally and frankly from the heart. Laxmi proclaims proudly, "I just can't be a victim. I am a celebration, I feel, and that's the narrative I choose for my story" (180). In this fascinating narrative, she tells the stories of the men she encounters, playing different roles in her life as creators, preservers and destroyers. Biologically born a male in a distinguished Tripathi family from Gorakhpur and christened 'Raju' by her Brahmin parents, Laxmi is caught up in the roles that define gender and identity and finds herself attracted to boys.

- **Dr. Anjali Singh** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

VISUALIZING THE INDIAN SUPERHERO IN INDIAN COMIC-BOOK SUPERHEROES AND MODERN ADAPTATIONS OF THE MYTHICAL

Aisha Mohammad Shamsuddin

The concept of superhero became a trend in the early twentieth century with the creation of Superman in 1933. The idea was to take refuge and comfort within a phenomenon, even though fictional, that would save the world from injustice and crime that prevailed at the time. Superman became an icon of the American culture and in no time the concept of 'superhero' became global. The comic-books industry played an important role in promoting the trend of superheroes. While the coinage of the term 'superhero' is a twentieth century phenomenon, such figures are not. The canvas of mythologies across various cultures features pantheons of supernatural beings that became the source of inspiration for modern day superheroes. Over the time and with development in science and technology, the superhero phenomenon has come to stand and grow individually. A whole range of superheroes coming from varied origins and catering to different cultures have captured creative imagination. What is interesting to note is the interaction that takes place, almost constantly, between the categories of the superhero and the mythological. In his essay *The Structural Study of Myth*, Levi-Strauss quoted: "It would seem that the mythological worlds have been built up only to be shattered again and that new worlds were built from the fragments" (Levi-Strauss 101).

The phrase "new worlds" is important here. Unfortunately, its interpretation has remained limited. So, one may ask if it is fair to say that the present culture of superheroes is a mere representation of the existing mythologies? While some scholars may agree, tracing religious and mythical nuances into superhero narratives, one cannot ignore the restrictive nature of this approach. The domains of the mythical and the superhero do interact and overlap with each other in terms of inspiration and narrations. But it would be far-fetched to limit the scope of the study of superheroes to simply mirroring of mythologies. This is a dynamic and continuously evolving genre.

- **Aisha Mohammad Shamsuddin** is Ph.D. scholar in the Department of English at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

LAKSHMIBAI TILAK'S *I FOLLOW AFTER*: A NARRATIVE OF PROTEST

Sanghamitra S. Bhatt

The society and its culture are indispensably present in the constitution of the selves. When writers take up writing about their own lives, the resultant narratives are also steeped in social traditions which either prompt or inhibit in some way or other the expressions. Women, who are considered as the prominent bearer of culture and tradition of the particular community, because of such accountability hesitate all the more to come up candidly when writing their own life stories and resort to strategies.

Jasbir Jain in her article "Gender and Narrative Strategy" notes, "When experience which is being narrated moves against the current, is unconventional or unusual, is radical in its standpoint, or displays a strength which may be best muted for the time being, strategy is resorted to.... It may be imagery, or landscape, or scriptural references, or character, or subplots, or a structure which is being used for this purpose – and waiting to be decoded." The act of one's own life writing has varied purposes: sometimes it is the desire to be remembered after life, sometimes cathartic, sometimes to share an act of achievement, and often to leave behind a legacy. The desired purposes can be fulfilled only when there is social acclamation. To get it is not an easy task so the women autobiographers opted for various strategies to make their work approvable. The most strategic part of it is giving title to the script that will give the work its face value. Very safe way could be to give a neutral title – "My Life," as most autobiographies by women named in the nineteenth century or as in the case of Laxmibai Tilak's autobiography "I Follow After," a title that describes the befitting role for a woman of following her husband, not leading. A superficial reading of the text quite justifies its title but if a deeper analysis is made it can be seen that beneath the superficial chatty and humorous narrative there is a story of pain and sufferings, a story of resistance to the social norms that governs life and a transformation to a newer and more satisfying world views by personal choice, quite contrary to the prevalent social norms.

- **Dr. Sanghamitra S. Bhatt** is Assistant Professor at Government Engineering College, Rajkot, Gujarat.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

BADAL SIRCAR'S *EVAM INDRAJIT*: A DISCOURSE ON IDENTITY CRISIS

Suruchi Upadhyay

Is sensitivity doomed to suffer? How far one needs to adapt with an environment? Are individual needs so trivial that they need to be moulded with environmental social needs? Where is then the individual identity? Is everything governed by biological clock, age clock of life? It baffles, agonizes and torments the identity of self. These ideas creep in my mind when I read *Evam Indrajit* by Badal Sircar. The drama depicts the apt picture of the perplexing condition of the prevalent attitudes and undefined identity crisis running through the veins of the middleclass urban youth of Indian society. The play reflects the inner complexities of the writer who is finding it tough to write a play due to the honesty and integrity of his personality. The play beautifully deals with the life of the writer who finds life to be so fragmentary that its transformation into the dramatic form is not possible. He feels that life is less natural and much more mechanical in the chaotic modern time and his attitude reflects the anxiety and agony of the artist who is a keen observer of the critical scenario of the modern world life. *Evam Indrajit* is in some way about the remnants; the remnants are those who have failed to regulate, line up, and stopped to aspire, and also those who are entangled in the day-to-day struggle for existence.

Evam Indrajit is essentially about an emptiness of modern life as 'life' in the modern criteria becomes a repeated response where originality is the real casualty. The play keeps on rumbling that our individual identity is a futile speck of dust. The drama layers up different aspects of society in relation with individual identity. Manasi's reiterating questions highlight the sensitive aspect of identity crisis. The issue of identity crisis is evolved through sharp dialogues exchanged between Amal, Kamal, Vimal and Indrajit, where Indrajit is scared to reveal his true identity. The aspect of identity crisis is developed through the dreams, anguish, and disappointment of the central character Indrajit. The writer, a character in the play, is the narrator-cum-philosopher who involves himself in the play and successfully attempts to create a plot as the play goes on.

- **Dr. Suruchi Upadhyay** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at D.A.V. P.G. College, Siwan (J.P. University, Chapra), Bihar.

Note: For complete article contact remarkings@hotmail.com

POETRY

TWO POEMS

Hafeez Jalandhari

Translated from the Urdu by **Amitendu Bhattacharya**

IN ME THERE MUST'VE BEEN

SOMETHING LACKING

("Hum hi mein thi na koi baat")

In me there must've been something lacking
That I couldn't figure in your imaginings
You've cast me out of memory
But I've made you the pivot of my destiny

My tales of woe if you too refuse to hear
Who'll lend me a sympathetic ear?
Who'll give voice to my suffering
If it were not my own lips that did the telling?

My senses I'd recovered
The courage to act on my thoughts I'd mustered
Gauging the mood of the gathering
Holding my head high wasn't an easy thing

Everyone here yearns for an alliance
And yet utters many a grievance
Who among you has the valiance
To look me in the eye?

The life of the assembly I became
With fascinating tales the audience I regaled
Though my heart was full of complaints
I couldn't express them because of some constraints

My words should catch her ear
Let there be such a messenger
Who'd swear to my miserable state
And rush to share the story with her

The beloved's ill-temper
Is made worse by my timidity
Let them now nurse her
Who know how to treat this malady

Many are vocal here
But nobody dares speak from his heart
Who like you Hafeez can sing songs of pain
And turn it into an art?

I STILL AM YOUNG

(*"Abhi toh main jawan hoon"*)

I still am young.
The breeze blows merrily too,
The flowers are resplendent as well,
A thousand melodies swim the air,
The magic of a bounteous spring has descended everywhere.
Where are you starting for, O *Saqi*?
Retrace your steps, return!
What are you gawking at?
Fetch the decanter and pour wine into my goblet.
Look around, you apathetic creature,
And see how the world soaks in bliss.
Dark clouds billow on the horizon,
The procession of wine-drinkers is already marching to the tavern.
What makes you so wary?
Surely, you don't think I am feeble-hearted!
Why must the thoughts of piety and abstinence cloud my mind
When I still am young?

There is no escape from the talks of devotion
And from the worries of finding salvation;
From the madness of receiving rewards in Heaven
And from the fears of inviting divine retribution.
But listen to me, O *Sheikh*:
You are such a strange character!
Have beauty and passion ever been ripped asunder?
When beautiful damsels with their coquetry
Are wreaking havoc all-round
And their fragrance is scattered by a gentle breeze,
Why won't desire be accentuated?

They are adept at weaving their charm around one and all—
Look here! See there!
When they so provoke us to partake of their pleasures,
Which mortal can resist?
So, to cut a long story short:
Your point of view may be right, O venerable one; so be it—
But I still am young.

The saunterings in the hills
And the promenades along gushing streams,
The chirruping of the nightingales
And the mirth of the red-cheeked virgins—
A fortuitous meeting with someone
Dissipates every strife and grief;
When Fortune slumbers,
Someone smiles while another weeps.
Such are the tales of love, of the exuberance of youth.
Munificence on His part; bravado and evasions on our part.
The sky, the earth, and all the captivating sights:
They enjoy the boon of eternal existence.
To think that I will have to forsake the scene one day!
That Death waits at the door, I can never believe.
No, it can't be true; no, the end can't be so close.
For, I still am young.

Nothing worries me:
Neither propinquity, nor remoteness;
Neither the abyss, nor the crest;
Neither the past, nor the present;
Not even the pledge of the Day of Judgement.
Hope and despair are lost; reason and consciousness are muddled;
The cup and everything else are lost from the sight.
May the wine keep flowing and the cup forever touch my lips;
May these revelries and bragging last till the Doomsday.
Strike up that poignant tune, O musician,
Which swamps pain and amplifies joy,
Sets the heart ablaze and enthuses to sing and dance,
So that all lips cry out in unison:
O wine-bearer, pray do not withhold yourself!
Keep pouring, keep pouring, keep pouring,
Because I still am young.

- **Abu Al-Asar Hafeez Jalandhari** was born on 14 January 1900 in Jalandhar, Punjab, Undivided India. He migrated to Pakistan after the Partition. An autodidact, Jalandhari's compositions are replete with religious and patriotic motifs—a feature that distinguishes him from his remarkable contemporary Faiz Ahmed Faiz whose poetry is secular and socialist in nature. Jalandhari's major works include *Nagma-e-Zar* and *Shahnama-e-Islam*. For his literary achievements he was awarded the Hilal-e-Imtiaz and Pride of Performance by the Government of Pakistan. His *nazms* and *ghazals* are popular across Pakistan and India and have been sung by renowned artists like Mallika Pukhraj, Mehdi Hasan, Jagjit Singh and other singers from both the countries. Hafeez Jalandhari died on 21 December 1982 and is buried in Lahore in the vicinity of the Minar-e-Pakistan.
- **Dr. Amitendu Bhattacharya** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (Pilani), Goa Campus.



TWO POEMS

Jagdish Batra

IN MY SIRE'S DAYS

In my sire's days
They sowed the seeds of love
And grew crops of
Silk-smooth relations
In serene surroundings.
And reaped the harvest of gratitude.
Smiles and tears
Nourished the trees

Lining the fields of
Old fellas.
...?
Yes, the uncouth, untutored ones.

You could see
Boughs bent with
Beautiful blossoms
That beckoned the stranger
To dally with them awhile
And stuffed his pocket
With farm-fresh feelings
Before he went his way.
“And all this – for free?” you ask.

THE REALIZATION

Slowly descends the dusk
And the sky darkens;
The evening rose wilts
And the birds head home
Soon, the owl warns...

My nightmare leaves behind –
An aching heart.
Slowly the dawn breaks;

The shadow lengthens,
And the ray writes on firmament –

One can walk with you
Only as long
As one's shadow covers you
To the goal posts
Of the many short sojourns.

Beyond that lies
The no-no land
Of pebbles and nettles,
That only the maverick
Or the saint tread;
Not the man of this world
Whose words are weighed
In currency notes.

Who would, then,
Choose to be obliged
By airy, sweet nothings?
Let the reminiscences rest
And sentiments die.
The present is all

That you care for

And that's how it must be.

- **Professor Jagdish Batra** teaches English at O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat. His area of specialization is Indian English Fiction on which he has presented papers at many international conferences. A Rotary Study Exchange Scholar to U.S.A., he has published eight books besides many research papers. Occasionally, he writes poetry.



FOUR POEMS

Namita Sethi

IN VERSE

The source is the self

But a poem writes itself

Like a slippery fish turned by its tail

The poet in knots, hot on its trail

I think I create, I will

Write that not this

A few words fall into line

The rhythm seems fine

For a few beats, until

It overrides the will

It's on the wing, it takes flight

Disappearing from sight

I try to shape and hold it

Down to keep it still
it slips, slides, squirms
it lives on its own terms
In alien landscapes
Yet to my world true
Sometimes I don't get it
Then sometimes I do.

MYTH

Caught in a trance by her eyes, her tresses
Enchanted by her looks that seem exotic
He puts her up on a pedestal to worship
An adoration that is in fact self-worship.
Philomena, Lucretia, Leda and Daphne
Europa, Cassandra, Antiope and Persephone
Beautiful women all, forced in myriad ways
In love, in earnest the Gods began each chase
With ravishment ends the charm, the spell
The women silenced, their tales poets tell
Bar Philomena whose tongue was severed
the terrible truth to conceal,
A tapestry she wove and to Procne sent,
the rape to reveal
Of Tereus's betrayal

For the world to view
Then turned to a nightingale
She sang Tireu, Tireu.
If a woman allows herself to be viewed
as the other, only as attractive
Not always a victim maybe,
not always passive
If she does not object:
She is reduced to an object

No

Two letters
One simple word
Helps recover
One's whole world
Defines boundaries
Deletes threats
It's not an expletive
But it's more feared
The more it's uttered
The better it's heard
Takes time to practice
Worth it, once learned
It's defined as negative
It enables the positive

So hard to say
But it's okay
Say it without fear
Say it loud and clear
'NO.'

NARCISSUS AND ECHO

Once upon a time
A youth there was
Full of I, me, myself:
the fair Narcissus.
This hunter hero
caused much pain
The love of others
he held in disdain
He would live long:
it was prophesied
Up until the moment
himself he recognized.
Proud and detached was his mind,
so certain he was always right,
empathy bounced off his heart:
A black hole that swallowed light.
A maiden who loved him as much
as he admired himself

In trying to speak and reach out
to him, she lost all sense of self.
He fell in love too but
with his own reflection
in the spring, a mirror
of his perceived perfection.
Denied himself he died leaving
Jonquils fragrant, white and yellow
And of her who gave her voice away
Nothing remained but Echo Echo.

- **Dr. Namita Sethi** is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi.



FICTITIOUS REALITY

Manju

Whenever I cried as I do it often
You always came with a hankie in your hand
Whenever I was surrounded with the goons
You swept them as if you hold a magic wand.
Whenever I drowned
You came as an expert swimmer
You taught me the lesson of life
I, just a useless dreamer,
I made mistakes
You were always right

I, just a dark shadow
Thou, always luminous bright.
You precarious came back
Piqued by having same kind of fun;
I accepted you and adorned with a title
I was addressed Biwi No. 1
This double standard society
Enjoyed your winking eyes;
The more they were amused
The bigger were my sighs.
Whenever I giggled
I faced a social wrath;
They mocked at me
Called me Wife of Bath.
You the privileged ones
Your path is secured from Lakshman *Rekhas*
For me there are many.
I long for the time when Things Fall Apart
And I will place them in order.
Lo! I can hear approaching footsteps.

- **Dr. Manju** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities at Chandigarh University, Punjab.



SOME SWEET AND SILENT WISHES

Sneha Shrivastava

Wish I could rewind the time
So that I could rearrange memories.
Wish I could stop the moments
So that I could cherish relations.
Wish I could just laugh continuously
So that I could love my tears flowing.
Wish I could sit with lots of fireflies
So that I could admire the sparkling light in darkness.
Wish I could just walk aimlessly
So that I could enjoy the nature's beauty.
Wish I could fly like a bird on heights
So that I could see only uniformity without boundaries.
Wish I could admire the blue, clear sky with stars
So that I could find some intimate friends.
Wish I could let the moonlight rest on my face
So that it could brighten and beautify me.
Wish I could be water flowing through stones
So that I could nurture life of others.
Wish I could be that fresh and cool breeze
So that I could refill everyone with contentment.
Wish I could be that absolute silence of night
So that I could spread it to others to relax.
Wish I could climb that lonely mountain
So that I could give company and rejuvenate him.
Wish I could be just a little child forever
So that I could be ... myself!

- **Sneha Shrivastava**, an MBA and Engineering graduate from ABV Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, Gwalior, is a budding creative writer.



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