



Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

E-NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 6. 2017

September, 2017

**Issue guest edited by:
Meena T Pillai on behalf of IACLALS**

EDITORIAL

Deconstructing a Shrine: The Crisis of English Departments in India

English departments in India have always held a contentious sway over academic imaginings in the country. Under the long shadow of an unfulfilled imperial project, they are complicit emblems of the colonial drive to control and subjugate forms of knowledge in British India. The employment of the colonizer's language – English – as a medium of tempering and subverting traditional Indian modes of knowing, behaving, and institutionalizing became the organizing logic behind the enterprise of British education. Language, being a pole-axe of cultural power, provided an overt weapon with which to enforce the common political wisdom of the times. With the inception of English language education, and later crystallization of English literary studies in the colonies, a class of acculturated intellectuals emerged; architects of Macaulay's aspirations to people "Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".

We, as proponents of English literature in classrooms are inheritors of this history, and in equal parts, agitators in an erstwhile colonial realm. If we look at the trajectory traced by English literary education in India, focusing specifically on its contemporary shifts, we can see how the colonial ideologies replicated in the English classrooms of India even after political independence from Britain seem to have undergone a paradigm shift of late. There has been, what can be called a cultural studies turn in the curriculum that aspires to at least partly dismantle the interpellation of the student as the civilized native, and read the canon critically and subversively, therefore radically critiquing the very idea of a universal or apolitical canon. The rise of discourses around identity politics, casteism, sexism, racism and homophobia, with a growing awareness that the political and the cultural cannot be delinked from epistemological formations has rendered academic practices within the discipline of English literary studies more complex and political. The evolution of

Post-Colonial Studies and Cultural Studies in the discipline has paved way for critically revisiting the curriculum, course structures, and the privileges of being in the English language academia. However, has the self-criticism been truly reflexive, or has it been contained to academic posturing? Have English departments in the country been decolonized, or have they simply occupied insidious spheres of power, inhabiting the old colonial hegemonies. A disturbing answer can be found in the endeavors of Chandra Bhan Prasad, a Dalit writer, to establish and enshrine an 'English Goddess' in the non-descript village of Banka, Uttar Pradesh. Modelled after the statue of liberty, wielding the constitution of India, and a pink pen, and donning a hat in rejection of conventional Dalit dress codes, the goddess of English language becomes a subversive symbol for the economic and social renaissance of oppressed castes in India. More than anything, does this phenomenon not depict the failure of English departments to be inclusive, to grow out of Macaulay's classes, and to encompass those masses who have been eluded by the luxuries of English Education? It is time we begin to critique our discipline as also our own privileged locations within it.

Meena T Pillai

Professor and Director
Centre for Cultural Studies
University of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram



TRIBUTE / OBITUARY

Wendy Robbins* (1949-2017)



*President of the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (CACLALS) from 1999-2002.

Wendy Robbins may or may not have been 'a force of nature' but as all her peers could see immediately on meeting her, she was a rare soul -- a committed radical who was (nevertheless) full of fun and humour, and an acutely discriminating and focused academic whose spontaneity and warmth were infectious. I had the privilege of knowing her through participating together in three successive triennial conferences of ACLALS, at Canberra (2001), Hyderabad (2004) and Vancouver (2007). On one occasion during this period when we both happened to be in London, we were asked to go and plead the cause of ACLALS, at a time of crisis for our Association, with high officials of the Commonwealth Foundation at Marlborough House. We were given a patient hearing and tea and sympathy but nothing more and as we returned empty-handed, Wendy joked that our combined postcolonial charm offensive had cut no ice at all with the frigid Brits!

We of the Indian ACLALS have a special reason to be grateful to Wendy Robbins. At the Canberra triennial the venue of the next big conference was to be decided at the EC meeting, and after I had argued the case for India, Wendy was so gracious as to withdraw her bid for Canada. And this was after a dramatic scene in the hotel lift the previous day when a grand old man of the Canadian ACLALS said to me, 'We have already collected 70,000 dollars for the next triennial. If I may ask, how much have you collected?' and I said, 'Not a penny! We thought we'd begin collecting *after* our bid is confirmed.' Wendy who too was in the lift seemed ready to burst with barely suppressed laughter.

When Wendy visited India for the triennial in Hyderabad (which turned out to be the Indian ACLALS's most glorious hour), she was genuinely perplexed. She had for decades been campaigning for gender parity in the hugely male-dominated professoriate in Canada, and here she was in 'backward' India to find that a clear majority of the professors at the conference were women, led from the front by Meenakshi Mukherjee and C. Vijayasree, the two movers and shakers of that conference! After a day or two, Wendy came up with a mock-sociological hypothesis to explain the phenomenon which was as wild as it was hilarious. She had a gift for mimicry not of speech but of body language, the (unsuspecting) victims of which included Vijay Mishra, Helen Tiffin, J M Coetzee, Gayatri Spivak and Derek Walcott.

Wendy Robbins was a sunny and warm-hearted person. She died too soon, but with the terminal dignity she had advocated should be the right of everyone. It was a sudden culmination of a rich life which touched and enhanced many other lives.

Harish Trivedi

(Picture courtesy: CBC News, Tribute first posted on the IACLALS mailing list on 24th April 2017.)



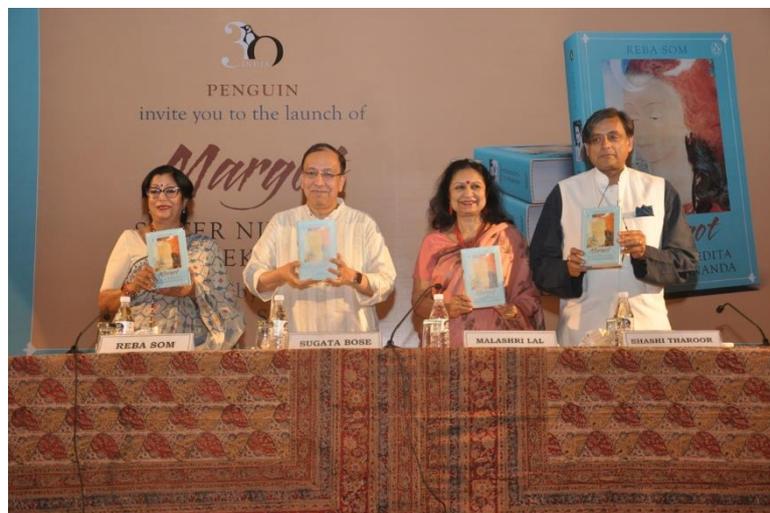
EVENTS AND REPORTS

100 Thousand Poets for Change 2017

Tripura Poetry Society, Agartala in collaboration with Sahitya Adda (Literary Rendezvous) organized on 19th September at the house of Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman, Founder and Director, at Banamalipur (Middle), Agartala, a one 100 Thousand Poets for Change event under the banner of '100 Thousand Poets for Change', USA. Eminent poets of Tripura were invited to read and recite poems on world peace and speak of how to change the world through poetry. Non-poet scholars were also invited to deliver their scholarly speeches on how to help establish world peace. Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman orchestrated this august literary gathering keen on world peace.

Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman
South Bank of Girls Bodhjung Dighi
Itakhola Road, Banamalipur (Middle)
Agartala 799 001, West Tripura, Tripura, India

Book Launch: "Margot: Sister Nivedita of Vivekananda" by Reba Som



"Margot: sister Nivedita of Vivekananda" authored by Dr. Reba Som and published by Penguin Viking was released in a grand launch cum discussion program organised at a packed C D Deshmukh auditorium of the India International Centre, New Delhi on 31st July 2017. The book was launched by Rajya Sabha MPs and distinguished scholars Dr. Shashi Tharoor and Dr. Sugata Bose, along with the author herself, and Prof. Malashri Lal who moderated the discussion.

A fascinating and well-researched biography of Margaret Noble who later came to be known as Sister Nivedita, one of the foremost disciples of Swami Vivekananda, the book comes in the year which also marks the 150th birth anniversary of the remarkable European woman who devoted her life to the cause of India and the propagation of Indian culture as well as nationalist sentiments. The enriching discussion with the eminent panelists brought out several crucial aspects of Sister Nivedita's life as brought out in the book, which weaves the narrative from over 800 letters, apart from underscoring the contemporary relevance of her thought to India today.

Kalyanee Rajan, New Delhi

(This report was first published in the Muse India, News section.)

ICSSR Workshop-cum-Exhibition on After Partition: Post-memories of Partition 1947

In order to mark the 70th year of India's Independence, the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur organised a ICSSR sponsored Workshop-cum-Exhibition on "After Partition: Post-memories of Partition 1947" on 18th August 2017. The Workshop-cum-Exhibition recorded a wide participation from a large number of undergraduate students and research scholars across various disciplines.

The Workshop began with a Public Lecture on "Memory, Truth and Reconciliation: Partition in Private and Public Spaces" by Professor Amritjit Singh, Langston Hughes Professor of English and African-American Studies, Ohio University, ColumbusAthens, Ohio. Professor Singh was visiting IIT Kharagpur as a Distinguished International Faculty under the SGRIP scheme from 14-18 August 2017. The Workshop-cum-Exhibition recorded a wide participation from a large number of undergraduate students and research scholars across various disciplines. Professor Singh's lecture filtered the narratives of Partition through a geopolitical as well as a socioaffectual lens where memory acted as a significant narrative trope. Following the lecture, 10 young Story Scholars who had gathered rare insights into the fractured history of Partition through their interactions with descendants of erstwhile migrants and refugees recreated the traumatic and devastating personal trajectory of Partition survivors who are still hounded by a feeling of irreplaceable loss, an impotent rage and a strong sense of rootlessness having been ripped off their native soil and forced to relocate. Undergraduate students from the Department of Architecture and Regional Planning, IIT Kharagpur partnered with the Story Scholars in a poster exhibition that provided a visual narrative of the oral histories along with a live streaming of survivor interviews to vivify the narratives of Partition.

The Workshop was thus invested in an exploration of the long term repercussions of a bloody chapter in Indian history and of how violence rooted in communal prejudices was grafted onto subsequent historical events and was transmitted through a legacy of memories and disturbed recollections in need of the healing touch of cleansing rituals and peace ceremonies. The Workshop thus generated awareness in a generation physically removed from the gory event and sensitised them to the latent trauma and unreconciled grief that has been a legacy of the Partition.

The Department was honoured to have as guests, two nonagenarian Kharagpur residents, Professor PC Paul, a former Professor of the Department, and Ms Olive Lennon, President of the Anglo-Indian Association, who shared their personal memories of Partition. Professor Anjali Gera Roy took the initiative to organise the event which exposed the fractured socio political and cultural geography of Partition to subsequent generations paving the way for a better understanding of the power of trenchant religious sentiments in contaminating the social space. The Workshop would not have been possible without the scholarly and humane interventions of Professor Amritjit Singh and the powerful contributions of the young scholars who were enlightened through the field work they undertook while scouring for stories silenced by rage and grief.

Swatee Sinha, Research Scholar, Dept of HSS, IIT Kharagpur

Two-day Seminar on “Crossing Borders: Exploring New Paradigms of Interdisciplinarity and Transnationalism”



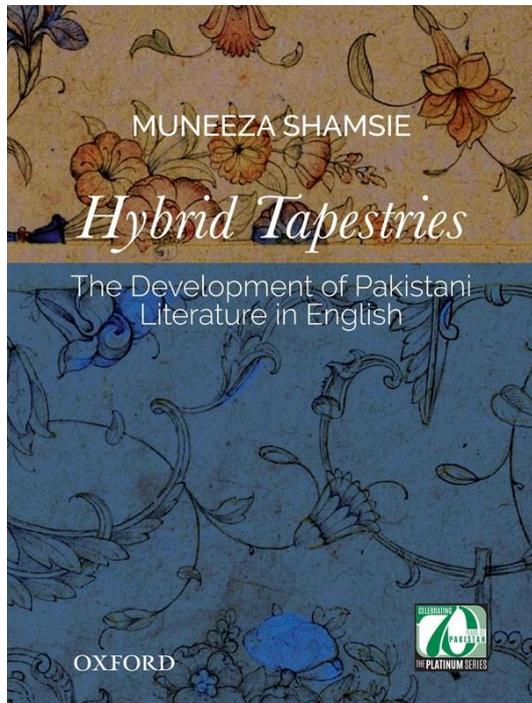


A two-day seminar on the trope of crossing borders in cultures and literatures across the globe was hosted by the Department of English, University of Delhi, on 22nd and 23rd August 2017. After the welcome remarks by Prof. Christel R. Devadawson, Head, Department of English, Seminar Convener Dr. Tapan Basu introduced the seminar and presented the layout of the proceedings for the two days. Professor Alok Bhalla delivered the Keynote Address on “The Gita as a Plea for Ahimsa: Reading a Few Miniature Paintings from Mewar”, in the inaugural session chaired by Prof. Malashri Lal. This was followed by the ceremonial Presentation of the Festschrift titled “Crossing Borders: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Society” edited by Dr. Tapan Basu and Dr. Tasneem Shahnaaz, published in honor of Professor Amritjit Singh, to Professor Singh by Professor Lal. In the next two sessions chaired by Prof. Rajiva Verma and Dr. Sunitarani Ghosh respectively, presentations were made by eminent scholars such as Prof. Nibir Ghosh, Dr. Debjani Sengupta and Dr. Tarun K. Saint. The next day began with a plenary address by Prof. Amritjit Singh on “Democracy, Diversity and Literature: A Reconsideration.” The session was chaired by Prof. Nibir Ghosh. This was followed by four intensive sessions chaired by Dr. Suborno Chatterji, Dr. Tapan Basu, Prof. Amritjit Singh and Dr. Tasneem Shahnaaz respectively. These sessions saw presentations by eminent scholars like Dr. Priya Kumar, Dr. Simran Chadha, Dr. Suborno Chatterji, Dr. Nita N. Kumar, Research scholars like Sudipta Ghosh (IIT Roorkee), Himanshi Sharma and Richa Dawarr (Department of English, Delhi University); and finally by Prof. Denys Leighton and Dr. Rahul Krishna Gairola. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Tasneem Shahnaaz. The two-day conference proved to be an immensely enriching and intellectually stimulating affair.

Kalyanee Rajan, New Delhi



BOOK REVIEW



Hybrid Tapestries: The Development of Pakistani Literature in English

Muneeza Shamsie, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xv+676.

This is a great book, even a magnificent one, that chronicles the story of the development of Pakistani writing in English. Shamsie draws on her earlier works such as *A Dragonfly in the Sun: An Anthology of Pakistani Writing in English* (1997), *Leaving Home: Towards a New Millennium: A Collection of English Prose by Pakistani Writers* (2001) and her articles in *Dawn* and *Newsline* from where she quotes frequently, as also the work in the field done earlier by Tariq Rahman and Alamgir Hashmi who have also been quoted frequently, particularly the former, to build this master narrative of Pakistani English writing from its early beginnings and even antecedents up to the first decade of the twenty first century. Although the subtitle of the book is, 'the development of Pakistani Writing in English' (without hyphen), I wonder why the author then chose to characterise the stream of writing as 'Pakistani-English writing' with the hyphen firmly placed between the territory and the language. It takes time for a nomenclature to get settled, but after Tariq Rahman's *A History of Pakistani Literature in English* (1990) and Alamgir Hashmi's essays on the subject, one would have thought that it has got pretty settled. The author has not explained, and she may have a strong argument for all we know, why she felt the need for a hyphenated term. Pakistani Writing in English sounds to me more capacious and unproblematic than

any other. If one has to be more specific one can also say, 'Pakistani Literature in English'. We know how the same stream of writing in India got settled to 'Indian Writing in English' or IWE after meandering through 'Anglo-Indian', 'Indo-English', 'Indo Anglian' etc. Conceptual clarity in nomenclature helps to think through phenomena with thoroughness and avoid confusion.

The trope of hybridity has been foregrounded in the title itself. This is as it should be, because this literature came into existence as a result of cultural and colonial encounters. The metaphor of 'tapestry' signals the varied influences that have gone into its making. The 'Introduction' takes a long view of the subcontinental history and takes the reader to the time of Alexander the Great that marked the beginning of the East-West cultural encounter. Alexander has been treated as a symbol of both military valour and intellectual prowess in Middle Eastern and Eastern literatures. Shamsie meticulously traces the growth of English in India through the successes of East India Company, establishment of Asiatic society and Hindu College in Calcutta in 1784, (1837) marking the end of Persian as the language of administration and the gradual ascendancy of English. She mentions Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt who began their career writing in English but attained fame by writing in their mother tongue, Bengali. English writing in colonial India really came into its own in the hands of Raja Rao, R K Narayan and Mulkraj Anand who are regarded as the trinity of Indo-Anglian literature. She roots for Ahmed Ali as the Muslim fourth, a writer who, according to her, has not been given his due in the literary histories of India. The stream of women writing in India is represented by Toru Dutt, Rokeya Sakhawat Husain and Sarojini Naidu. Shamsie also mentions how some iconic colonial texts like Kipling's *Kim* and E M Forster's *A Passage to India* continued to cast their long shadows on the writings of some of the Indian and Pakistani writers of the postcolonial era.

The book has been divided into two major parts. Part I is devoted to those who Shamsie considers as 'pioneering writers' and they are given independent treatment in fairly long chapters. These writers are: Atiya Fyzee Rahamin, Samuel Fyzee Rahamin, Shahid Suhrawardy, Ahmed Ali, Mumtaz Shahnawaz, Shaista Suhrawardy Ikrmullah, Zaibunnisa Hamidullah, Zulfiqar Ghose, Taufiq Rafat, Tariq Ali, Bapsi Sidhwa, Hanif Kureishi and Sara Suleri. Among these, the first four began writing much before the division of the country, but they have been treated as belonging to the Pakistani tradition because they chose Pakistan as their country of choice at the time of independence. Zulfiqar Ghose was born in Sialkot and his family migrated first to Bombay and after independence, to England, and still later, in 1969 to be precise, he migrated to America. Similarly, some other writers like Tariq Ali, Hanif Qureshi and Bapsi Sidhwa have only a tenuous relationship with Pakistan if we take domicile as one of the conditions of defining someone as a Pakistani writer.

Part II of the book has been named, 'Developing Genres' where the development of the three genres of Poetry, Novel and Drama has been traced from their troubled

beginnings in the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century up to 2011. The first genre taken up for treatment is poetry which has been discussed in two chapters. Apparently, Pakistani poetry in English as a substantial stream of writing came into its own first before fiction did. The opening part of the first chapter, "Poetry: Between Isolation and Internationalism" underlines the efforts of poets who plied their art with little encouragement or reward or even the possibility of publication. It lauds the efforts of pioneers like Taufiq Rafat and Kalim Umar who organized poetry gatherings and workshops to encourage younger poets. Shamsie discusses poetry groups and literary journals and anthologies in which the works were showcased. She discusses the poets under different thematic rubrics like "Poetry, Politics and History", "Cultural Dualities", "History, Legend and Lore" etc. The second chapter on poetry is given the title, "Poetry: In the Diaspora and the New voices in Pakistan." The opening paragraph will illustrate Shamsie's method of maintaining continuity and constructing helpful contexts:

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a considerable amount of interaction between Pakistan-resident English language poets and those in the diaspora. The poetry of Zulfikar Ghose appeared in local Pakistani anthologies. Alamgir Hashmi, who was teaching in western academia, remained very engaged with literary events in Pakistan and in the 1980s, returned home to Pakistan permanently. A. Hashmi brought the experience of diaspora writing into his work as a Pakistan-resident poet, as indeed did Adrian A. Hussain a decade earlier. However, towards the end of the twentieth century, this interchange faded away, although in Britain, Mahmood Jamal was active in London's poetry circles and the Lahore-born Moniza Alvi and Imtiaz Dharker became award-winning, mainstream British poets. Their work and that of newer British Pakistani poets, including Tariq Latif and John Siddique, engaged very strongly with racial politics and later, the divisive rhetoric of war, particularly at the turn of the century after the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings of New York and London respectively, which led to stereotyped images of Muslim as alien beings or fanatics. (p. 297)

Poetry is followed by novel, the preferred genre of postcolonial writing to which the author devotes four chapters. The chapters are labelled as 'Early Struggles', 'Migration, Minorities and Global Politics', 'A New Generation Writes Geopolitics and Globalism' and 'A Celebration of Talent'. After Ahmed Ali and Zulfikar Ghose there was a lull, an uncertain period in Pakistani English fiction. With Bapsi Sidhwa it seemed to rejuvenate itself. Shamsie suggests that Sidhwa did for Pakistani English fiction what, in some sense, Salman Rushdie had done earlier to the Indian English fiction with his *Midnight's Children*. Two extraordinary novelists who closely followed Sidhwa are Adam Zameenzad and Nadeem Aslam. If Zameenzad made a great impression with his Joycean novel *Cyrus, Cyrus* (1990) which dealt with migration,

exile and fabulation and was certainly a *tour de force*, Aslam made a 'dazzling debut' in 1993 with his *Season of Rainbirds*. Both continued to write good fiction while a new generation appeared on the scene who represented a veritable cornucopia of Pakistani English fiction. Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid, Uzma Aslam Khan, Mohammad Hanif, H.M. Naqvi are among the most prominent names of this generation.

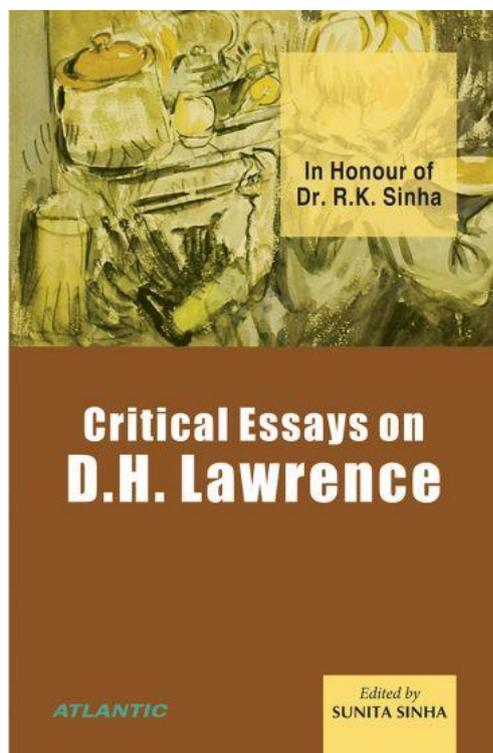
The genre that could not develop strong roots in Pakistan is drama. The author attributes it to a lack of performance tradition in Pakistan, the scourge of censorship and the zeal for Islamisation during the Zia regime. She seemed to have difficulty in putting together even a substantial chapter on it. Apart from Sayeed Ahmad who, in fact, hailed from East Pakistan there are very few homegrown playwrights with a decent corpus. The last genre discussed in the book is Literary Nonfiction under which Shamsie discusses memoirs, diaries, letters and travel narratives. This is a stream of writing that has seen substantial growth in contemporary times. Tehmina Durrani, Eqbal Ahmad and Benazir Bhutto have been discussed here along with other writers.

It must have been a nightmare for the author to organize such an enormous mass of material in a lucid, intelligible and reader-friendly structure, but she has managed to do so admirably. She has not held back any information. If at all, there is a fine excess of it, providing vignettes of social life and interesting details of the writers' personal lives. Through the subtitle of a chapter or section title she provides a short hand to understand the author or a phenomenon in question, as when she gives the subtitle to the chapter on Sara Suleri as "The First Writer of a Creative Memoir in Pakistani-English literature". As a critic, Shamsie gives the impression of being too polite and generous. She always seems comfortable to be in agreement with the critics she refers to - Alamgir Hashmi, Tariq Rahman, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Chelva Kanaganayakam, Makarand Paranjape, Rosinka Chaudhuri, Bruce King, Peter Morey, Cara Cilano and a host of others. She rarely plays the devil's advocate or take a contrarian view. Sometimes new insights come from creative, constructive, even violent disagreements. However, these are minor quibbles that do not take away from the sheer plenitude of the book which will be an essential reading for readers of Pakistani English literature for a long time to come.

M Asaduddin

(A fuller version of the review essay will appear in *The Book Review*, South Asia Special Issue, October 2017)

BOOK REVIEW



Critical Essays on D.H. Lawrence

Edited by Sunita Sinha and Published in honour of Dr R.K. Sinha.

Atlantic Publishers & Distributors Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2016

Price Rs 895 (ISBN 978-81-269-2136-2)

The anthology entitled 'Critical Essays on D.H. Lawrence' is edited by Sunita Sinha and published by Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi as a tribute to Dr R.K. Sinha, the editor's grandfather. The featuring of articles in the anthology justifies the dedicating of this book to Dr R.K. Sinha with whom his granddaughter was academically connected, because Dr R.K. Sinha, Professor Emeritus, Head, Department of English, Patna University, was himself erudite scholar on D.H. Lawrence. He obtained a DPhil on the thesis on Literary Influences on D.H. Lawrence submitted to the University of Oxford under the supervision of Lord David Cecil, the then Professor of English at the University of Oxford. What has surprised me about the anthology is the absence in it of an excerpt from his research-work in D,H, Lawrence. Incorporation of an excerpt in the anthology would have heightened the quality of the anthology and the readers would have savoured a taste of his research work.

This anthology, allowing for its preliminaries, starts its journey with the thought-provoking paper 'The Primitive Woman in Modernism' by Katherine Lashley. The author of this paper begins lays a particular focus on D.H. Lawrence's novel 'The

Rainbow' and Claude McKay's novel 'Home to Heaven' to drive home her thesis. The topic of the paper 'From Heaven to Hell; On the Desire-driven Transitions Siegmund has Undergone in D.H. Lawrence's *The Trespassers*' by Billy Bin Fen Huang, singularizes the article as distinct from other papers included in this anthology. The article informs the reader that the desire-related theorizations propounded by Deleuze and Guattari, reference 'Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia' by Deleuze, Giles, and Felix Guattari (cited in the works cited), will be used to justify the permeation of Lawrence's early novel *The Trespasser* by Siegmund's desire theory.

In the paper entitled 'Chapter and Metonymic Colonialism in D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*', Mbih Rennu Mbuh examines in detail D.H. Lawrence's colonial imagination concentrated on the conceptual need to unsettle the rationale of Europe. While talking about this article in her Introduction, Dr Sunita Sinha says, 'The paper analyses his controversial - in many cases innovative - representation of colonial discourse by situating it within the consciousness of ...Anton Skrebensky in *The Rainbow*, who becomes metonymically relevant to the goals of Empire.' (P.xv). Anota Myles, in her article 'Retrospect, Introspect, Prospect: A Reappraisal of Human Relationships in the Novels of D.F. Lawrence' strives to locate particularly the man-woman relationships regarded as 'power fights', familial relationships and 'interactions among human beings within specific social groups.'(P.56). She has chosen *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Kangaroo*, *The Trespassers*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and so on to locate such relationships in.

In her article entitled 'The Lonely Pastoral', Carole Renzonelli characterizes *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as a novel that vociferates against modernity, and Western casteism that burdens the English social life in Lawrence's times, though the novel does campaign for the tradition, allowing for the touch of a nostalgia for a past 'merry England'. The novel has, so to say, established a social order. In this article the author stresses the communicative impossibility, both social and in human relationships in the backdrop of the situation obtaining in the British society after the Second World War.

The paper 'Our Modern Marlowe: Lawrence as English Outsider and Cultural Insider to American Literary Rebirth' entertains the reader to a new thought. The author holds that rejection, legal confrontation, innate restlessness, aided by sexual desire and frustration that accrues out of the desire unappeased are often considered instrumental in an undertaking of travel and a periodical staying away out of home. The author, as the title itself suggests, draws a comparison between the sixteenth century English poet and dramatist, Marlowe, and the modern poet and novelist Lawrence, both of them situated within a unique cultural Renaissance. The works of both the poets are comparatively discussed to bring home the thesis envisioned in this article. Kenneth Usengo in the article 'Atrophy in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*' deals with how the main characters, such as Morel, Gertrude, William and Paul in the novel *Sons and Lovers* set in the prime of the Industrial Revolution are gradually being atrophied as the story unfolds. They are hard put to cope with the harsh economic conditions and particularly because they are working against their interests. Jayashri Chaudhary's paper 'D.H. Lawrence: Nature, Red Geranium and

Sensual Experience' is a thought-provoking article and gives the reader an insight into Lawrence's Love of nature and his constant endeavour to search for beauty,

Charlotte Fiehn in the paper 'The Battle of Sexes: D.H. Lawrence and the Struggle for Modern Sexuality in Lady Chatterley's Lover' focuses the attention of the reader on the battle of the sexes. Though the main thrust of the paper is placed on Lady Chatterley's Lover in delineating the sexual battle, the author has picked other novels such as *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* to locate the sexual battle before directing the reader's attention on to Lady Chatterley's Lover. The discussion of the paper 'The Problematics of Gender with Reference to the Philosophy of D.H. Lawrence' by Jayeeta Ray centres on Lawrence's dictum that the 'great relationship for humanity will always be the relation between man and women' (P.149).

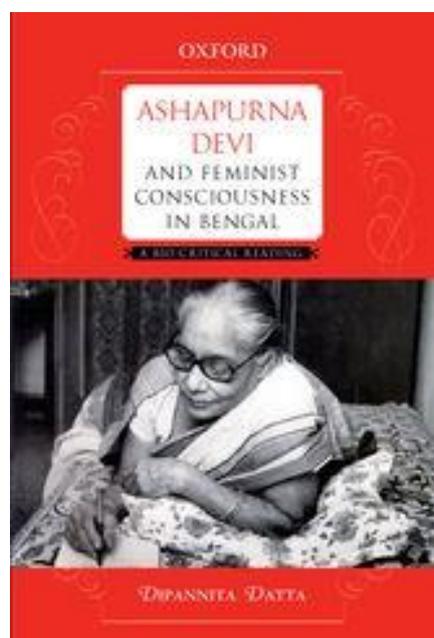
In his article 'D.H. Lawrence and Lady Chatterley's Lover', Bhaskar Roy Barman picks for discussion D.H. Lawrence's last, many critics tend to say, 'poorly written' novel entitled 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'. The hostilities Lady Chatterley's Lover has evoked 'have emanated from the awareness of the representation in the novel of the social truths and the realities of which the readers of the novel have savoured the taste.' (P.165). Arpa Ghosh in the article 'Instability of Form and Modernity of D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers' tries to treat D.H. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers* in a new light, focusing on its instability of form and modernity. Reena Mitra in the article 'Autobiography as Trajectory of Sublimation: D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*' stresses how Lawrence's autobiography enriches the novel.

Enkelena Shockett in the article 'Psychoanalysis and D. H. Lawrence' strives to psychoanalyse the characters in the novel 'Sons and Lovers' and their relationships from the perspective of Freudian psychoanalysis. Nehar Fatima in the article '*Women in Love: Between Old and New*' strives to explore the psychological development of the characters in the novel. The article entitled 'End of Another Holiday: In the light of Rasavada' deals with Lawrence's works, 'steeped as they are in human emotions', analysed in the light of 'Rasavada which is a theory that is based on human emotions' (P. 214). Beena Agarwal in her article entitled 'Interrogative Psycho-cultural in the plays of D.H. Lawrence' speaks about his plays – *A Collier's Friday Night*, *The Daughter-in-Law*, and *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd* which when presented in Royal Court Theatre in 1968 established the identity of Lawrence 'as a modern dramatist of immense possibilities.' (P. 233)

The last paper 'A Tale of Two Women (Sinning and Sinned Against) Anna Karenina and Lady Chatterley' jointly written by Harish C. Gupta and Tapu Boswas comparatively discusses Anna Karenina and Lady Chatterley, singling out their common traits.

Dr Bhaskar Roy Barman

BOOK REVIEW



Ashapura Devi and the Feminist Consciousness in Bengal: A Biocritical Reading

Dipannita Datta

OUP, ISBN: 978 0198 0999 9 4, 2015

The book engages with a critical discussion on feminist consciousness in India, perhaps in South Asia, as to the attributes of feminist challenge and success, and the facilitators of the process. Ashapura Devi (1909-1995), author of more than 300 books, writing continuously for 70 years in Bengali, never attended school. She married at the age of fifteen, lived as a contented wife, mother and householder and wrote her fascinating novels and stories using whatever time she could find. During an interview with Partha Chatterjee, cited in the volume, Ashapura Devi says her writing was encouraged by her husband and in-laws even while she attended, gladly, to the demands of a large household. In fact, according to Devi, "I wrote in between my domestic chores. I stopped my writing to find out what item would be cooked for the day.... How can one finish saying everything? Life moves on without a pause. Times are also changing.... So I continued writing about life, I cannot write about politics, offices, or the judiciary." No complaints from Devi - only reflections on how regional and domestic experience yielded the substance of her world-view.

Dipannita Datta, writer, translator and feminist scholar in her own right, probes the multiplicities in the life of Ashapura Devi to show that traditional roles are not incompatible with women's creativity, and that Devi's novels, essays, letters and interviews illustrate a forceful sense of identity and selfhood. Articulate and thoughtful, Devi is quoted as saying, "Women need a special kind of self-sufficiency

[and this] can come only with the consolidation of female power.” Datta's 'bio-critical reading' gives an unusual structure to the book. It opens with three insightful chapters by Datta placing Ashapura in the context of the societal changes unfolding in Bengal during her lifetime, including the reform movement and the national uprising, then Datta moves into the more intimate biography of a young woman's evolution in domestic space, and she finally elaborates upon Devi's unique ways of challenging hegemony. The opening sections take up about 140 pages and are followed by one section containing essays by Ashapura Devi and letters written by and to her, and another section comprising of important interviews with Devi by eminent writers and critics. Altogether, the book combines impressive research and perspectives, and valuable archiving and analysis. For those enquiring into Ashapura Devi, Indian literature, and issues of feminism in South Asia, this is a commendable source book and more.

Dipannita Datta's chapter “A Critical Overview” shows feminist awareness of the contradictions that Ashapura Devi may exemplify. Devi may seem to be complicit with the ‘silencing projects of imperialism and patriarchy’ in accepting her domestic priorities in which her only complaint is that she could not receive formal education but learned to read Bengali from her book-loving mother. Through a phrase often referred to, “ja dekhi, tai likhi” (I write what I see); Devi appears to favour the normative realism framing women's writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Moreover, living in Calcutta under the sway of an imperial government, Devi seems to accept the principles of colonial modernity. Where, then, can we find the resisting writer, the woman whose novels and magazine serials were eagerly awaited by hundreds of readers; an author who was avidly pursued by beseeching publishers? Datta's comment is worth pondering over: “In trying to adopt an alternative strategy to be heard, Ashapura Devi chose to explore her marginalised position and voice it in her writings. Her agenda was to create a space for women where their plight would be voiced and consequently be transmitted in order to be heard” (10).

How does this 'alternative strategy' work? Ashapura Devi's magnum opus, the trilogy, *Pratham Pratishruti* (1964), *Subarnalata* (1967) and *Bakul Katha* (1974), captures the narratives of three generations of women. Beginning with feminine subjugations during the colonial period, Devi gives details of the antahpur culture that 'prevented women from becoming visible to the public', but speaks firmly through the woman's voice. If such writing is compared to women's fiction in English literature, about which Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic* is the classic feminist interpretation, one can see the contrast. In the British writing cited, the stereotypical images are of women as angels or as monsters; in Ashapura Devi's strategy, the systems of patriarchy are exposed by using the collective voice of the women of the antahpur. Devi's domestic geography gestures towards the larger world with the next generation taking up the nationalist struggle. Feminism, in such a context, functions by linking the home and the world rather differently from the exploration of the sexual psychology of the British writers.

Yet Ashapura Devi said she was not a social reformer but a mere witness to social change. The essays in the book are startling for their adherence to ground level reality while Devi dreams of women's emancipation. As Datta explains, "Ashapura's essays delve deep into the tensions, conflict, ambiguity, and tragedy that had been naturalized in the historical process and show that women can get past 'the gruelling grind of their working world, and fulfill the demands of the changing times and public life'" (145). Far ahead of her times, Devi is talking about women's right to property, to equity and justice. Education and self-sufficiency are the keys to a dignified identity, and laws will not deliver what women need in social practice, she says. One may recall that Devi's Subarnalata articulates some of these issues, but it is left to Bakul of the new generation to project the possibilities of the future.

Another section contains the rare material of letters that are gentle, personal, and sometimes merely functional. The charm of old-time epistles lies in the unselfconscious revelation of the author in multiple roles. As a mother to Sushanta, she sends loving advice on his birthday, as a writer to a scholar-researcher in Prague she sends her books, as a contributor to a journal editor in Calcutta she enquires about the publication date of her work. Happily reproduced is a letter from a young Jhumpa Lahiri, aged 26, to 'Respected Ashapura Devi' seeking permission to translate seven short stories and discuss them critically. (One may add a footnote that Lahiri expressed her admiration for Ashapura Devi as recently as 2014).

Dipannita Datta has not only collected valuable material but also translated Ashapura Devi's prose writing with marvellous felicity. While novels and stories by Devi are popularly available, the intellectual heritage that comes through essays and interviews is seldom passed into translation.

The vision of this book is to present Ashapura as a composite interpreter of the woman's condition in Bengal over a large span of time. In this, the writer and her times are inextricably linked. Datta's perspective is of a thoughtful feminist biographer who respects yet critiques a prodigious Bengali author. In the process she paves the way to an international readership for Ashapura Devi and the likelihood of seeding cross cultural debates on feminism.

Malashri Lal

Malashri Lal is currently the Convener of the English Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi. She retired last year from her positions as the Dean of Colleges, Dean, Academic Activities & Projects and also Chairperson, Research Council at the University of Delhi.

(This review was first published in THE DAILY STAR, Dhaka, Bangladesh, on September 16, 2017)



CALL FOR PAPERS: CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

IACLALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

February 8-10, 2018

**CO-HOSTED BY DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, ALIGARH MUSLIM
UNIVERSITY**

Tolerance and Bigotry: Contestations in Indian Literatures in English

Long after the shadow of the 'postcolonial' stayed its course in the history of literature's encounter with the political, the question of reception has still remained a thorny one. Placed against the red-hot outrage surrounding a Santhal writer's place within his own community at the 'margins', it is important that we re-open the spaces of cultural consumption to a more searching scrutiny – beyond markers of political certitude and rehearsed idioms of correctness. Insofar as this latest controversy traces its origin to debates around the textuality of tribal languages, it is important to mark this moment as unsettling a self-assured postcoloniality *at* the peripheries. The latter are no longer unproblematic sites for resurgence and mimicry. Structures of epistemological violence are imported from the sovereign fetish of the 'canon' and re-enacted with vengeance, till the excluded participate in their own expropriation. While the empire was writing back its own fantasies of 'tolerance', the subaltern performed to a script of 'bigotry' that has long been its historical destiny. The marks of injury that establish parallels between a Perumal Murugan and a Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar – or a Wendy Doniger and a Taslima Nasreen – are equivalent, but not identical. The effects of their violence are utterly unequal. But, might an apolitical humanism of 'tolerance' be enough to tame a national culture into foregone templates of 'diversity' – or, to civilize the subaltern into this culture? Must the 'centre' and the 'margins' dance to the same anthem of 'tolerance' – or, must their difference be recognized in an other script, an other text, an other history and an other nation?

Thinking about Tolerance and Bigotry critically poses questions of identity, subjectivity, difference, alterity, hybridity, ambivalence, liminality, interstitiality, and so forth. How do we account for the diverse modes of citizenship and the different ways of being and acting within the idea of tolerance? What are the genealogies of tolerance and bigotry in modernity? Are they willy-nilly ascribed within the religious and the secular? Why and how do the burdens of tolerance and the scourge of intolerance/bigotry fall on minorities-- ethnic, religious, sexual, linguistic etc.? What are the evaluative rubrics at stake in understanding the conflicts and tensions between the self and the other, free speech, freedom of thought, the sacred as against blasphemy/censorship, taboos, the profane, etc. Finally, what role does the literature play in negotiating conflicts and differences in a multicultural, multireligious, and multilingual country like India? These are but few among the pressing questions that the conference would like to address.

The conference, located in the historic Aligarh Muslim University, seeks to investigate how Literature in India has narrativised the complex interactions stemming from deep seated divisions. From negotiating colonial modernity to asserting multiple nationalisms, from contesting caste hierarchies towards a politics of the Dalit, from narratives of military invaders to the unwritten tales of indigenous peoples and tribals, from the inherent patriarchal values of human civilization towards an assertion of an entire spectrum of genders; the subcontinent throws up a vibrant matrix of polyphonic multilingual literary endeavors. Located in the heartland of the country, this conference proposes a complicating of concerns outlined but not limited to the following:

- The Principle of Tolerance and India
- Limitations of Tolerance and Censorship
- Non-State Players and Censorship
- Literatures of Intolerance and Reception in the Indian Context
- Tolerance while Contesting: Literatures from the subcontinent
- Tolerance and Bigotry in ► Dalit Literature
 - Gender/Sexuality
 - Public/Private Spaces
 - The Sacred and the Profane
- Religion, affect, reason, and tolerance/intolerance
- Tolerance discourse and minority literatures in India.
- Teaching tolerance: Pedagogical potential of tolerance narratives.
- Liberal bigotry?
- Linguistic and other markers of identity/difference.

The conference is open only to members of IACLALS (visit www.iacials.com to know how to become a member).

Abstracts (250 words) to be sent to iacialsconferences@gmail.com by **September 30th 2017**.

Acceptance will be intimated by October 15th 2017.

Complete papers to be submitted by November 30th 2017 (All papers will be considered for the **CD Narasimhaiah Prize for the Best Paper** read at the conference unless specified otherwise).

Registration to be completed by January 5th 2018 (details will be sent with acceptances).

MEENAKSHI MUKHERJEE PRIZE

IACLALS also announces the next edition of the Meenakshi Mukherjee Prize for the Best Paper published in the previous year by a member of the IACLALS. Please submit your published paper with all details to iacialsconferences@gmail.com by November 1st 2017.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FUTURE OF WOMEN '18

You are welcome to submit your abstract to the International Conference on Future of Women '18 which is scheduled to be held from 06th -07th of February 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia under the theme "*A Prospect for Greater Vision.*" In comparison to the years in the past, the world has evolved with the development of science, information, and technology that has led towards the upliftment in the status of women and their involvement in the field. The level of contribution extended to various sectors is immense from the part of women resulting in initiatives and innovations. The Future of Women '18 is believed to be the focal point of contact for persons representing the industry that speak for women, their engagement, the issues, drawbacks faced in society and in the pursuit of finding solutions.

The International Conference on Future of Women '18 invites all researchers to submit abstracts of their research paper to be eligible to be able to present at the Conference under the following tracks but not limited to ;

- Women as Entrepreneurs
- Reproductive Health Challenges
- Women and Future of Education
- Women, Violence, and Victimization
- Women, Development and Global Economy
- Women, Law and Policy
- Rhetoric and Women's Rights
- Gender, War and Peace
- Feminist Pedagogies
- Gender, Science and Technology
- Leadership
- Political participation
- Cyber World
- Climate Change
- Adaptation
- Aging issues
- Gender Equity
- Sports and Leisure
- Media and Journalism

All abstracts should be sent at abstract@futurewomenconference.com. You will be able to send abstracts for all modes of ORAL, POSTER and VIRTUAL. View the conference tracks.

Registrations must be done online, and those who register on or before the Super Early Bird deadline may enjoy special discounted rate in terms of registration fees.

If you have any inquiries with regard to Dates and its implications, please Contact us at info@futurewomenconference.com

abstract submission deadline	14 th November 2017
Abstract acceptance notification	Within two weeks
Early Bird registration deadline	12 th December 2017
Conference registration final deadline	9 th January 2018
PP Presentation due on or before	23 rd January 2018
Conference day	6 th - 7 th February 2018
Conference network dinner:	6 th February 2018
Post Conference tour:	8 th February 2018
Full paper submission deadline	28 th February 2018

UNIVERSITY OF KERALA

Diaspora Reimagined: The Politics of Representation

Reimagining diaspora involves envisaging new frames of understanding movements of populations, global flows of capital and labour, ever-changing world markets, as well as massive leaps in technology. Through academic engagements, the phenomenon has traveled far from its monolithic conceptions - as uncomplicated theme and over-employed metaphor - to offer new and varied critical tangents in the past decades. In constantly being envisioned and produced, the diasporic mode has, in turn, produced, defended, and co-opted texts, geographies, and subjects; a protean process that assumes diverse contours over time, space, and cultures.

Diaspora Reimagined: The Politics of Representation, organized by the Center for Cultural Studies in collaboration with the Institute of English, University of Kerala, is an insightful exploration of the reflexive interstices offered by diaspora into urgent, ubiquitous global forces. In an age fraught with tensions between transnational capitalism and virulent nationalisms, between luxuries of globalization and privileges of citizenship, between liberal social ideations and conservative cultural revivals, a problematized poetics of diaspora and the representations it brings forth into the popular imaginary is imperative.

The Three Day National Seminar will be held from October 11 to October 13, 2017 at the Seminar Hall, Institute of English, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram. 250-word abstracts of proposed presentations can be sent to ioe.nationalseminar@gmail.com on or before 30th September 2017.

Queries may be directed to the above email.

*Seminar Coordinator:
Dr. Meena T Pillai
Professor and Director
Center for Cultural Studies
University of Kerala*

Theorizing Space: Three Day National Conference on the Intersections of Space and Culture

Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology in collaboration with Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Kerala and **Littcrit** will be organising a conference on “Theorizing Space: Three Day National Conference on the Intersections of Space and Culture” from 12th December to 14th December 2017, at IIST, Thiruvananthapuram. The three-day national Conference (14, 15 and 16 December 2017) will look at the intersectionalities that occur during the divergences of various readings of Space (For details, see the brochure)

Venue and Date: IIST, Valiamala 14th- 16th December 2017

Important Dates

Last date of Registration	October 15 th 2017
Short listing and informing short listed registrants	November 7 th 2017
Registration fee for faculty members	Rs 2000/-
Registration fee for research scholars	Rs 1000/-

Scope of the Conference:

1. The three-day conference will provide a platform for academic discussions and debates for research scholars and faculty from reputed universities and academic institutes from all over India.
2. This conference will give a great opportunity to the academics to meet and interact with doyens from various related fields of space science, philosophy, art, cultural studies, etc.
3. The conference will also be showcasing the research work of paper presenters in the form of a book
4. *Littcrit* will be dedicating a special edition on “Theorizing Space”

Plenary Sessions will be handled by Prof. Udaya Kumar, Prof. Pradeep Nayar, Prof. M V Narayanan

Call for papers: We invite original, unpublished papers on the topics mentioned above or related areas for presentation at the conference. Each candidate will get

fifteen minutes for presentation and five minutes for discussion. Select papers with exemplary content will be published by *Littcrit* as a special issue in December 2018. We will also bring out an anthology of unpublished papers with ISBN number. Submit your papers in MLA Format (7th edition).

Please send your abstracts and full paper to spaceconference2017@gmail.com

Last date for the receipt of the abstract-	31-08-17
Information on the selection of abstracts	30-09-17
Last date for the receipt of full paper and online application	07-11-17

Contact

Dr. Babitha Justin
Assistant Professor
Department of Humanities
Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology
Department of Space, Valiamala
e-mail id babithajustin@gmail.com
Phone number-[9447636677](tel:9447636677)

Dr. Gigy J. Alex
Assistant Professor
Department of Humanities
Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology
Department of Space, Valiamala
e-mail id gigyjalex@gmail.com
Phone number - [9446011903](tel:9446011903)

BHARATI COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Thoreau and the Transcendentalists: Their Philosophy and Related Concerns

Department of English, Bharati College and India International Centre mark the bi-centenary of the birth of Henry David Thoreau with a National Conference titled Thoreau and the Transcendentalists: Their Philosophy and Related Concerns to be held on March 15-17, 2018.

CFP: The year 2017 marks the bi-centenary of the birth of Henry David Thoreau (12 July 1817) whose writings – especially his essay on civil disobedience – changed the course of history through its powerful advocacy of passive resistance, a form of nonviolent protest later adopted in India by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, in the USA by Martin Luther King, and in South Africa by Nelson Mandela, among other national leaders. Gandhi declared that he never spent a night in jail without opening his trunk and re-reading the essay. Further, as an economist promulgating in the

opening chapter of 'Walden' the doctrine of a radically different value system, Thoreau laid stress on a life of simplicity. This provided a blueprint for Gandhi's famous image of himself in a khadi (home spun) loin cloth at his charkha (spinning wheel) that broke the backbone of England's economy. Thus, quite apart from Thoreau's international reputation as a writer, India is indebted to him for his profound influence on Gandhi, resulting in the freedom movement led by him.

The three day conference is a salute to Thoreau for this, as well as for his awareness expressed of the close links between the current of his thought and the philosophy of India, as may be seen in the satisfaction he felt in the symbolic (as well as literal) confluence of "the pure Walden water" "with the sacred water of the Ganges" in the form of ice exported to "Madras and Bombay and Calcutta", affording relief to the "sweltering inhabitants" of these cities ("Walden", "The Pond in Winter").

A defender of individual liberty, an ecologist and environmentalist who saw the steam locomotive as a "devilish Iron Horse," a naturalist, a professional land surveyor, a maker of pencils that equalled the best imported from England, a philosopher, thinker, an explorer of the New England area, and, above all, an outstanding writer, Thoreau's life and work as well as the Transcendental movement that he, Emerson, Channing, and Margaret Fuller, among others, pioneered, needs our critical scrutiny, more so today than ever before when political, social, cultural and ideological pressures are becoming increasingly importunate. Not that such pressures were unknown to Thoreau: strongly opposed as he was to the institution of slavery and to the execution of John Brown the abolitionist, Thoreau described him as "a man of rare common sense and directness of speech and of action" ("A Plea for Captain John Brown"). When Thoreau was jailed for refusing to pay the tax for the Mexican War, Emerson asked him, "Henry, why are you here?" Thoreau replied, "Waldo, why are you NOT here?"

Research Papers are invited, largely upon, but not limited to the following sub themes:

- Ø Thoreau and Gandhi
- Ø Thoreau the Revolutionary
- Ø Forever Changed by Thoreau
- Ø Thoreau the Transcendentalist
- Ø Influences on Thoreau
- Ø Thoreau, social justice and environmental justice
- Ø Individualism, Idealism and Thoreau
- Ø Thoreau and Solitude
- Ø Relevance of Thoreau in the Anthropocene
- Ø Thoreau and Walden
- Ø Thoreau the Intellectual

Ø Reading Thoreau

Research papers should not exceed 5000 words in length. They should be in 12 point size, font- Times New Roman, with 1.5 line spacing.

Research paper submission dates extend from **September 16, 2017 to October 31, 2017.**

Acceptance of papers shall be notified on November 15, 2017.

The papers will be circulated in advance among all the paper readers, whose actual participation in the conference will be limited to a 15-minute summary of his/her paper, followed by a panel discussion.

Certificates for paper presentation/participation would be handed over in the valedictory function of the conference.

The selected and peer-reviewed complete papers will be published as an edited volume with an ISBN number.

Papers should be addressed to:

Conference Director:

Dr Mukti Sanyal
Officiating Principal,
Bharati College(University of Delhi),
New Delhi- 110058

Conference Convenor

Ms Naila Anjum
Department of English,
Bharati College (University of Delhi),
New Delhi 110058,
91-9911692993

Email id: thoreauconference2018@gmail.com

WAACLALS

West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

Call for Papers

1st International Conference of the West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (WAACLALS)

University of Benin, Benin City , Nigeria: 19 - 22 February , 2018

West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (WAACLALS) which was founded in 2015, is the regional branch of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS). It was officially admitted into the global body the next year at the last triennial conference in Stellenbosch, South Africa. WAACLALS encourages research and scholarship across disciplines in commonwealth, transatlantic and postcolonial studies. It seeks to stimulate and advance the interaction of researchers, scholars, writers, artists and critics who are engaged in the aforementioned areas of interest within the region.

WAACLALS therefore calls for papers for its maiden international conference.
Confirmed Speakers:

Femi Osofisan, professor emeritus and playwright, Nigeria
Professor Oga Steve Abah, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
Professor Hyginus Ekwuazi, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
Professor John Egwugwu Illah, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria
Professor Ehimika A. Ifidon, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria
Slavery and Postcolonial Dis/Engagements

Slavery might tend to represent notions of a past that Africans and particularly West Africans wish to forget. The reality however is that a memorialisation of this past creates in the present, imageries of shifting political geographies as well as contestations of changing identities. Slavery also conjures tales of trauma and magnifies a subtle annihilation of the West African might. In a way, the continued migrations of West Africans and the mediatisation of the reasons has gradually opened a floodgate of debates which, in various manners, questions a variety of tropes on commonwealth/postcolonial literature and at times, offer a polemical rationalisation of a seeming phenomenal reality that might be argued to require a round of academic inquiry. The idea of slavery is not absolutely located in the past. It persists even today, and un/questionably shapes the future. It has been rendered in lore, sang, painted, performed and even visualised in hues and shades. It has been reverberated across many divides. Interestingly, it has been distorted, orchestrated in harsh lights and brilliantly subdued in sombre colours allowing little room for a vibrant interrogation without necessarily invoking sentimental reactions and politically in/correct responses. This conference seeks to emphasise that slavery presents a binary of sorts: master/slave; oppressor/oppressed; neo-coloniser/neo-colonised; northern producer/southern consumer; havesmore/haves-not. We may elaborate that what the late reggae superstar, Bob Marley, framed as “mental slavery” may be presently conceptualised as the subjugation of the mind of the electorate through a manipulation of the instruments of traditional and digital media.

Thus, this conference tends to re/imagine slavery as a modern phenomenon subsumed as a relic of the past. It is in this light that the conference invites proposals which might closely be aligned but not limited to the theme and sub-themes:

- The location of Slavery and shifting geographies
- Oral literature and imageries of slavery

- The festivalisation of slavery
- Slavery, Identity and Social Dis/Connections
- Slavery, the media and contending stories
- The politics of reparation
- The transatlantic dis/engagement of slavery
- Slavery and the socio-political economics of scale
- The industrialisation of slavery
- Visual memories of slavery
- Slavery and the dynamics of migration
- Sex, prostitution and engendering slavery
- Performing slavery
- Slavery and the mis-education of the West African
- Historicising slavery and West African literature
- Slavery and collective trauma

Interested persons should send proposals of maximum 250 words as attachment for presentations lasting no more than 20 minutes to waaclals@gmail.com with the subject WAACLALS2018 CONFERENCE. Please include name, contact information, institutional affiliation, a brief biography (max: 75 words), technical requirement (where applicable) and a list of keywords (5).

Selected papers will be published in the association's journal, The Griot. The deadline for proposals submission is 31 October 2017. Acceptance will be communicated by 7 November 2017.

Conference fees

Four categories of conference fees are available:

- a. West and Central Africa: US\$75.00
- b. Other African regions: US\$100.00
- c. Outside Africa: US\$125.00
- d. Postgraduate students: US\$40.00

Importantly , all participants must pay membership fees of US\$40.00 (Postgraduate students:

US\$20.00). All payments must be made prior to the conference.

For enquiries about the conference, please contact:

Marcel A. Okhakhu (marcel.okhakhu@uniben.edu)

or

Israel M. Wekpe (israel.wekpe@uniben.edu).



PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS

Basu, Tapan and Tasneem Shahnaaz. eds. *Crossing Borders: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Society in Honor of Amritjit Singh*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Print.

Chaubey, Ajay K. and Ashvin I. Devasundaram. eds. *South Asian Diasporic Cinema and Theatre: Re-visiting Screen and Stage in the New Millennium*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2017. Print.

Divya, N. *The Transitional Body and Self in India: A Study on the Selected Fiction and Writings of Sudhir Kakar*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2017.

Dattaray, Debashree, Epsita Halder and Sudip Bhattacharya. eds. *Following Forkhead Paths: Discussions on the Narrative*. Kolkata: Setu Prakashani, 2017. Print.

Durairajan, Geetha and Prem Kumari Srivastava. eds. *FORTELL: Journal of Teaching English Language and Literature*. 35 (2017). Print.

Kishore, Usha and Jayadeep Sarangi. *Home Thoughts: Poetry of the British Indian Diaspora*. Allahabad: Cyberwit.Net, 2017. ₹200

Pillai, Meena T. "Bearing Witness: Malayalam Cinema and the Making of Keralam." *Beyond Bollywood: The Cinemas of South India*. Ed. M.K. Raghavendra. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2017. ₹499

---. "The Many Misogynies of Malayalam Cinema." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 52.33(2017). Print.

Rao Garg, Shweta and Deepti Gupta. *The English Paradigm in India: Essays in Language, Literature and Culture*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Print.

Sarangi, Jayadeep. *Faithfully, I Wait: Poems on Rain, Thunder, Lightning at Jhargranm and beyond*. Allahabad: Cyberwit.Net, 2017. ₹200

Satpathy, Sumanyu. *Will to Argue: Studies in Late Colonial and Postcolonial Controversies*. New Delhi: Primus, 2017. Print. ₹850

Srivastava, Prem Kumari, Pratibha Rai, Saumya Shukla. eds. *Spiritual Ecology And Sustainability: Practice and Confluence*. New Delhi: AuthorsPress, 2017. ₹1200

Srivastava, Prem Kumari and Gitanjali Chawla. eds. *Re-storying the Indigenous and the Popular Imaginary*. New Delhi: AuthorsPress, 2017. ₹900

