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Editorial Note

It is a great delight to successfully publish the fourth issue of our journal, *Exposure: The Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* (Vol-IV, No-I; June, 2018) after a thorough and systematic process of selection, rejection, editing, checking and re-checking blindly by anonymous reviewers and referees. This undoubtedly took a lengthy process to publish this issue finally, but the outcome is definitely an issue with seven wonderfully written and well researched critical articles from different disciplines of social sciences and humanities, along with a fascinating film review at the end.

The first article of the present issue comes from the pen of Megha K Jayadas, who critically writes on Akka Mahadevi, both a rebel of her time and a predominant figure of Bhakti movement. Here Jayadas attempts to show through the radical life, philosophy and poetry of Akka Mahadevi how the poet becomes a spiritual searcher who underwent life-changing experiences, and achieved fulfilment and eternal salvation using her single minded devotion to Lord Shiva. In the next article, Dr. Kuntol Ganguly tries to deal with the select *Upakhyans* from *Upanishad*, and brings out certain eminent analogies to delineate his philosophical observations on *atman*, the true self, the existence of which only can be attained with proper knowledge. Ananya Mukherjee, in her article, deals with the household religious tales of Bengal, also known as *bratakathas*, and by discussing the observances and rites associated with few such tales she not only highlights the issues of gender roles indoctrinated through such performances, but also attempts to depict the connection between nature and women while observing such rituals. Mrinal Kanti Das, in his article, discusses the revisionist epic works of Kavita Kane, who seeks to voice for the lesser known women characters like, Uruvi, Urmila or Menaka, all of whom emerge as the resisting tools of breaking the patriarchal prejudices at their time. A completely different approach from all

of the previous articles can be seen in the research work of Sumit Majumdar, based on the case study of a hard-hitting flood of Dakshin Dinajpur district in 2017 that actually raises a series of questions on the preparedness and resilience of the community apparently in a microcosmic level, but in reality pointing at a bigger crisis caused frequently by the natural disasters in the river irrigated India. The next article by Sankha Maji is focused on the non-fictional works of Arundhati Roy by questioning the role and failure of state, politics, capitalism and power, and arguing for the necessity of a shift from literature of diaspora and identity to literature of insurgency in the domain of Indian English literature. In his postcolonial rereading of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shdow Lines*, Satyajit Roy wonderfully deals with the ideas of identity, root, migration, nation, borders and home in an arbitrary socio-temporal space. The issue, however, ends with a fascinating film review by Prasun Banerjee, whose well-tailored and matter-of-fact style of commentaries on a brutally factual war movie of this year, *12 Strong*, not only touch the dark and grim realities of politics, terrorism and war being the global phenomena, but also unravel the reviewer's own insights and understandings of the artistry of directorial works, cinematography, technicalities, acting and performances at length.

We hope this issue will be of much help and use for the scholars and researchers of the respective disciplines, and for this we cannot express enough thanks to each and everyone associated with our journal. We solicit cooperation, guidance and any wise suggestion for the future issues of the journal from every corner of academia.

With warm regards,

Tanima Dutta

Editor

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Voice of the Body: Liberating the Marginalised in Works of Akka Mahadevi

Megha K Jayadas

ABSTRACT

Mahadeviyakka, an astonishing figure of Bhakti Movement, was a female spiritual searcher who underwent life-changing experiences and achieved fulfilment and eternal salvation using her single minded devotion. She was a complete rebel of her time, who came out of the traditional framework of the society breaking every conventional norms and fashioned her own pathway to achieve her goals. Her dominant actions, the radical and threatening life style along with her strong and intense *vachanas* fashioned several social, political and cultural revolutions.

The search for her lord 'Chennamallikarjuna' re-established the gentle and warm energy of her poetic genius. She explored the never ending complexities of human soul and wandered for more altitudes of imagination and never stepped back from her searching with absolute brilliance and curiosity. She was quite sure of the fact that man can never be wholly satisfied or pleased through his self-discipline and understanding. An extra personal approach to the Lord – of bodily unification - is must and it lies through complete passion and the noble love that removes almost all the interruptions that the ego shapes between God and devotee. This paper looks into how Akka, tried to attain her ultimate salvation with her 'physical unification' with Lord Shiva.

Atman : Re-reading Select Upakhyans of Brihadaranyak Upanishad

Kuntol Ganguly

ABSTRACT

Indian philosophy is one among the oldest within the world. It began about two thousand years BC, and it has had a continuity of about four thousand years. Research on the character of the self as understood in Indian philosophy has always been interesting and instructive. Today, man, together with his advanced technology, has conquered the surface of the world, and he is ready for his greater adventure into space. But the sad truth is that man's knowledge of himself has not kept pace with the good growth in his knowledge of the outer world. This discrepancy is at the basis of all his troubles today. In this paper, I would like to concentrate on the concept of self and true self of a person that is called *Atman* with reference to the select *Upakhyans* of *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*.

KEY WORDS:

Atman, Self, Upanishad, Soul, Knowledge, Veda, Mantra.

Knowledge is meaningless without documentation. The oldest documented text is *Veda*. There are four parts of *Veda* as we all know: *Mantra*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishad*. The last one, that is, *Upanishad* is also known as *Vedanta*. The main source of Indian philosophy is *Vedanta*. Scholars generally agree that the beginning of Vedic Literature goes back to 2000 B.C or even 2500 B.C. The word "Veda" comes from the root word "Vid" which means "to know" in the widest sense and is not the name of

An Ecofeminist Reading of the *Bratakathas* in the Eastern Indian Folk Tradition

Ananya Mukherjee

ABSTRACT

Eco-feminism as a term came into existence in 1974, in Françoise d'Eaubonne's piece of writing, *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* meaning feminism or death. In this work, the French feminist has observed the environmental damage of 'advancement' and examined women's entity as a subject to evolution. Nature is often considered being silent, and the animate world is unable to listen to her language of pain and experience. In literature, there is a close connection between women and nature in terms of oppression and domination. Tracing back to the origin of this relation in Bengali literature, one can focus on the *Bratakathas* that creates a traditional bond between women and nature through the meta-narratives of ritual and performance. These portray alternating scenarios of gender discrimination and the oppression of both women and nature. These ritual tales in Bengali literature question the very concept of 'nature' and 'nurture'. *Bratakathas* in folk traditions interlink with a stereotypical presentation of a division between rural and urban where nature and women interact. These are stories of domination, not only by men over women, but they foreshadow the dominance of human world over nonhuman existence. These folk *kathas* are tales that speak of wish fulfilment, fertility, reproduction that eventually lead towards shaping female gender roles in becoming a 'good' wife and a 'nurturant' mother. These popular folk '*kathas*' that comprise in the folk customs, rituals, social beliefs—reify social ideologies that promote gender differences. *Bratakathas* in Bengal validate the presence of gender hierarchy and identity politics within the existing

Muffled Voices: Portrayal of Women in Kavita Kane's Neo-Mythological Novels

Mrinal Kanti Das

ABSTRACT

Most of the revisionist works of Indian epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* deal with female protagonists such as Sita and Draupadi. Contemporary writers like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (in *The Palace of Illusions*), Pratibha Ray (in *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi* and Mallika Sengupta (in *Sitayana*) have read in between the lines and brought out certain nuances in their characters. However, the 'lesser' women characters, who have been otherwise overshadowed by the heroines, have completely been overlooked. Kavita Kane has written on these lesser known women characters of these epics. This article takes up *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen* (on Uruvi), *Sita's Sister* (on Urmila) and *Menaka's Choice* (on Menaka). The objective of this study is two-fold, one to trace these lesser women characters' emergence from the shadows to the limelight, and second, to show how they battle and resist patriarchal prejudices of their times as also the subsequent critical neglect.

KEY WORDS:

Kavita Kane, Indian Epics, Rewriting, Neo-Mythological Novels, Women's Writing

Flood, People and Administration: A Case Study of Dakshin Dinajpur (2017)

Sumit Majumdar

ABSTRACT

Dakshin Dinajpur, a district carved out from the erst-while West Dinajpur district of West Bengal in early 1990s, is drained by a couple of perennial rivers, which beside having a nurturing role in irrigation, turns disruptive during monsoons by submerging agricultural land and compelling dwellers in low-lying areas to vacate their shelters. Year 2017 initially seemed no exception, except when things took a violent turn as water levels in all the rivers continued to shoot aggressively above 'Extreme Danger Levels', amounting to a severe flood situation which left the entire district paralysed and perplexed. The disaster also raised a number of questions on the preparedness and resilience of the community, to ponder about.

KEYWORDS:

Disaster, Disaster Management, Flood, Administration, Partition, Pundras, Resilience, Capacity Building.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 dissected the province of Bengal into West and East Bengal, and quite notably on similar lines, the district of Dinajpur which carried the legacy of being a part of Kingdom of *Pundravardhana* or the country of the *Pundras*, fell on the boundary line and got divided into two distinct districts (Ghosh, 1004). Western part of Dinajpur came under West Bengal and was named as West Dinajpur, and the

From Narratives of Diaspora and Identity to Literature of Insurgency: A Study of Arundhati Roy's Non-fictional Writings

Sankha Maji

ABSTRACT

The present paper examines the necessity of the shift from literature of diaspora and identity to literature of insurgency in the domain of Indian English literature with special reference to Arundhati Roy's non-fictional writings. Indian English writings mostly focused on the issues of nation, nationalism, identity, culture, diaspora, nostalgia and so on from its beginning and what was missing is a strong critique of the fundamental concept of nation, state atrocities, notion of empire, corporate globalization in today's world especially in India. Arundhati Roy from her first novel *The God of Small Things* made a comprehensive research on the issues of postcolonial violence, state absolutism, hegemony, and the subaltern dissidence that ultimately metamorphose into various forms of insurgency. The colonial policy of usurpation and exploitation is present in the post-independence era through different modes of hegemonic and coercive techniques. Tribal lands and resources are appropriated in the name of development projects. People are turned into '*Homo Sacer*' in the words of Giorgio Agamben or bare human beings deprived of the basic demands of life. When the subalternised people try to resist they are silenced by different state apparatuses. Roy exposes the deformities of the largest democracy of the world and lays bare its lies and hypocrisies. In the light of Roy's writings this paper attempts an impartial

The Concept of 'Home': Postcolonial
Reading of Amitav Ghosh's
The Shadow Lines

Satyajit Roy

ABSTRACT

Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* attempts a reconstruction of memories concerning the ideas of home and quest for identity. It also speaks of the emotions of human beings associated with their home, establishes the concept of home designating as a shelter, a means of comfort, peace, love and safety. Through the narrative of *The Shadow Lines* Ghosh shows how 'home' as a mythic place, plays an important role in every human being's life. In addition, Ghosh interweaves the colonial history of 20th Century India and its devastating effects on the natives. A postcolonial reading of this novel is done in this paper to explore the consequences of political and cultural difficulties that generally every decolonised nation faces and at the same time this paper would try to expose the state of 'inbetweenness' or 'unhomely' of the formerly colonised people who were the victim of displacement during the partition of India in 1947.

KEY WORDS:

Postcolonialism, Identity, Diaspora, 'Home', 'Inbetweenness'.

FILM REVIEW

Beyond Military Exploits and Gunfire: Reviewing *12 Strong: The Declassified True Story of the Horse Soldiers*

(Starring: Chris Hemsworth, Michael Pena, Michael Shannon,
Navid Negahbon)
Prasun Banerejee

ABSTRACT:

Based on a military campaign that took place after 9/11 attack, in the North-Western theatre of Afghanistan -*12 Strong* is an accurate, no-nonsense, brutally factual war movie that keeps the audience absorbed till the dying seconds. The director Nicolai Fuglsig has been spot-on in narrating the fraction-ridden Afghan politics after the last Russian had tank rolled out of Kabul in 1989. The rise of Taliban, the Taliban-Al-Qaida nexus and the post 9/11 desperation of the U.S. to avenge the destruction and deaths have been depicted frame-by-frame, with not a shot extra. Stellar performance by Chris Hemsworth, stunning cinematography and fluid storytelling have ensured a permanent place for this movie in the Hollywood's Hall of Fame reserved for all-time great war movies. A touching story of converting a mission impossible into a mission possible.

KEYWORDS:

Afghanistan, Taliban, Al-Qaida, Northern Alliance, 9/11 attack, Hollywood, Military Operations, U.S. Special Forces.

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