

# Live encounters

Free online magazine from village earth  
Volume Three December 2014

**Live Encounters is celebrating 5 years 2010-2014**



**Colette Nic Aodha**



**Vivek Mehra**



**Aryaa Naik**



**Sue Healy**



**Randhir Khare**



**Natalie Wood**



**Heather Brett**



**Noel Monahan**

**Guest Editorial**  
**Terry McDonagh**





**Support Live Encounters.  
Donate Now and keep the Magazine alive in 2015!**

Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was started in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Civil and human rights activists, animal rights activists, poets, writers, journalists, social workers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. Please help spread the free distribution of knowledge with any amount that you feel you want to give for this just cause.

**BANK DETAILS**

**Sarita Kaul**

**A/C : 0148748640**

**Swift Code : BNINIDJAXXX**

**PT Bank Negara Indonesia ( Persero ) Tbk**

**Kantor Cabang Utama Denpasar**

**Jl. Gajah Mada**

**Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia**

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

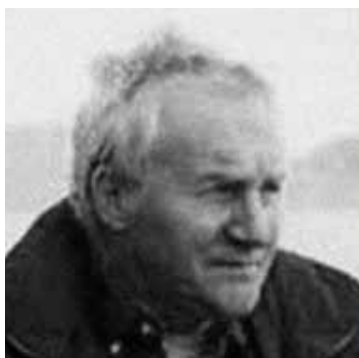
[markulyseas@liveencounters.net](mailto:markulyseas@liveencounters.net)

**All articles and photographs are the copyright of [www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net) and its contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the explicit written permission of [www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net). Offenders will be criminally prosecuted to the full extent of the law prevailing in their home country and/or elsewhere.**



# CONTRIBUTORS

Click on title of article to go to page



## Guest Editorial

**Terry McDonagh**

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published seven poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection Ripple Effect due for publication in May/June 2013, Arlen House; next children's story, Michel the Merman, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ) to be published in September 2013. He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. [www.terry-mcdonagh.com](http://www.terry-mcdonagh.com)



## A Language For Landscapes

**Noel Monahan**

Monahan has published five collections of poetry. His next collection: *Where The Wind Sleeps*, New & Selected Poems, will be published by Salmon in May 2014. Literary awards include: The SeaCat National Award organised by Poetry Ireland, The Hiberno-English Poetry Award, The Irish Writers' Union Poetry Award, The William Allingham Poetry Award and The Kilkenny Poetry Prize for Poetry. Most recent plays include: *"The Children of Lir"* performed by Livin' Dred Theatre and *"Lovely Husbands"*, a drama based on Henry James' work performed at the inaugural Henry James Literary Festival, 2010.



## On Cavan

**Heather Brett**

Heather Brett born Newfoundland, raised Northern Ireland, lives in Cavan Ireland. Poet and artist, she has been Writer-in- Residence & Arts facilitator for Cavan, Drogheda and The Midlands Collaboration of Longford, Westmeath, Laois & Offaly. Four collections to date, the first of which 'Abigail Brown' (Salmon Publishing) won The Brendan Behan Memorial Prize. Bluechrome Poet of the Year in 2006. Editor of Windows Publications since 1992, and has edited over 40 books of poetry and art, children's and adults.



## Maygar Dancer on a Wooden Box and other poems

**Colette Nic Aodha**

Nic Aodha is an award winning poet who resides in Galway in the West of Ireland. She writes in both Irish and English. She has 14 publications which include a volume of short stories, *Ádh Mór*; an academic study of the blind poet *Anthony Raftery*; one volume of English poetry, *Sundial*, published by *Arlen House Press*; two dual language collections of poetry by the same publisher; *Between Curses: Bainne Géar*, and *In Castlewood: An Ghaoth Aduaidh*. Her work is on the syllabus in Primary, Secondary and Third Level colleges. [www.irishwriters-online.com](http://www.irishwriters-online.com)



## Maurice Girodias - The Lenin of the Sexual Revolution

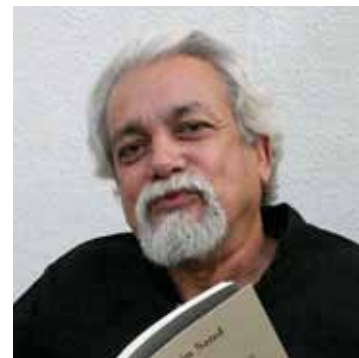
**Sue Healy**

From Ireland via 11 years in Hungary, Healy is a 2009 UEA Creative Writing MA alumna. Her short-stories have won the Molly Keane Memorial, HISSAC, Meridian, Waterford Annaghmakerrig and Ted O'Regan Arts Awards: drama credits include two BAI - funded radio plays broadcast on KCLR 96fm: *Cow* (2013) and *The Daffodil* (2014) both directed by acclaimed playwright Jim Nolan: 2013 Escalator Award Writer: received Arts Council grant to complete her debut novel which her agent submitted to publishers in 2014: artist-in-residence on Inis Oirr (2013): currently teaches creative writing at a Norfolk prison. [www.suehealy.org](http://www.suehealy.org)

## Celebrating 5 years 2010-2014



DECEMBER 2014  
VOLUME THREE



## Departures

**Randhir Khare**

Khare is an award winning author of twenty one volumes of non-fiction, fiction, translation and poetry. Executive Editor of Heritage India, the International Culture Journal, a Director of The Rewachand Bhojwani Academy and Visiting Professor to the Dept Of English, Pune University. Recently he was given The Residency Award by The Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) for his contribution to Indian Literature and the Human Rights Award for his efforts to preserve and celebrate marginal and minority cultures. [www.randhirkhare.in](http://www.randhirkhare.in)



## The Socio Economic Impact of Piracy in Publishing

**Vivek Mehra**

Mehra is currently Managing Director and CEO, SAGE publications India. He has an MBA in Marketing from Columbia University, New York and a B.Sc. in Textile Technology from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. He teaches a course on Managing a Publishing Enterprise and Publishing in a Globalised World at the Post Graduate level, at the Ambedkar University, New Delhi. Member of the CII National Committee on IP for 2013-14. In July 2013 he finally self-published his maiden novel 'Seven Shades of Grey' written in 1999. [www.notionpress.com/seven-shades-of-grey](http://www.notionpress.com/seven-shades-of-grey)



## The High Priest of Modern Song

**Natalie Wood**

Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month prior to outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She remained in regional Jewish journalism for over 20 years, leaving full-time writing to help run a family business and then completed a range of general office work. Wood and her husband, Brian Fink emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and live in Karmiel, Galilee where she continues to work, concentrating on creative writing. She features in *Smith Magazine's new Six Word Memoirs On Jewish Life* and contributes to *Technorati*, *Blogcritics* and *Live Encounters* magazine. Her stories - [Website](#) and journalism - [Website](#)



## The Mc Aloo Tikki of Women's Literature in India

**Aryaa Naik**

Aryaa is currently the Head, Creatives at Gyaan Adab Centre. Her educational qualifications include Bachelors in Philosophy from Ferguson College, Pune, Post Graduate diploma in Social Communications Media from Sophia College, Mumbai and Masters in Gender, Culture and Development Studies from the University of Pune. Her experience includes script writing and feature writing for publications such as Times of India, Femina, Life 365 and Maharashtra Herald. [www.gyaanadab.org](http://www.gyaanadab.org)



## Let's Kill All the Lawyers: Shakespeare in the Courtroom

**Aditya Bapat**

Aditya is a lawyer practicing in the Bombay High Court. He holds degrees in law from Columbia University and the University of Pune. While at Columbia, he studied Argumentative Journalism at the Columbia School of Journalism. Aditya has also worked as a research assistant on the upcoming third edition of 'Datar on Constitution' a leading commentary on the Constitution of India.



Terry is a Founding Contributor to Live Encounters. He has supported every issue for the last 5 years by 'donating' his poems to be shared with our readers across the world. In these contributions he has shown us a world that exists in a separate time, cocooned in his beloved Ireland. And for this we will always be thankful.



## A Few Thoughts around the Feast of Samhain

Karl Marx said all history was economic. To some extent the man was right, but only to some extent. There are so many aspects of life and in nature that won't be quantified, bought or sold. A number of years ago, while taking part in a literature festival on Bali, I watched a woman sprinkling water in reverential and ritual fashion that, immediately, reminded of my childhood in the west of Ireland – of my father, in particular, sprinkling holy water all around the house during storms or, indeed, on animals and crops for reasons known to him and to our ancestors of thousands of years. We believed in the power of water. Water was drawn to him and he to water.

Just recently I was honoured and delighted to be asked by The National Museum of Ireland to facilitate some writing workshops on the topic of *Samhain* – *an ancient Celtic feast of death, birth and renewal* which we celebrate on the last day of October into November 1st. *Samhain is really our Celtic New Year*. It was a rare opportunity to meet and write with a very enlightened group of people. It was a fresh wind blowing the cobwebs of the intervening years to one side. We relished in exploring a rich past only slightly hidden below the surface. We were archaeologists digging and poking about in inexplicable happenings and wayward spirits.



It is said that when one person died in a neighbourhood, two others would follow. A priest, who had no regard for old customs, had wanted to cut down a thorn bush in order to make more room for a new hospital he was trying to build. He asked several men of the parish to do the job but most refused. One or two did attempt but were unable to complete the task for some reason – one man even died shortly afterwards. The bush stood. The priest had not understood that the oak, ash and thorn are sacred Celtic trees.

A lone bush in the middle of an open field was never to be cut. When a bard couldn't make up his mind between poetry and music, he was asked by a thorn bush to listen to his heart. He did and chose poetry and, although he did continue to play the fiddle, his decision to listen to the advice of the voice in the fairy bush was vindicated by all who had heard him.

Samhain stems from the custom of dividing the year into summer and winter. Crops are safely stored and it is time to welcome a new darker season. On this one night in the year the spirits of the dead are free to wander and walk the earth. It was, and is to some extent, believed that souls return to visit their earthly homes – mischievous ones among them play tricks on the living, so we had to be careful.

These spirits come once a year, only, and don't recognize borders, walls or limitations imposed by those who feel they have the world under control. Politics, money, church or state are helpless when the spirits of the dead weave their way through the veil that, usually, divides the living and the dead. Fear and fun intermingle.

My abiding memory of Samhain was one of being scared – well, not really scared but, certainly, a little frightened. We lit candles to welcome the souls of the departed. We prayed. There was mischief in the air. In our house, we stayed at home and played games such as ducking for apples in a basin of water. You were not allowed to use your hands, so it got wet and messy. And, then, there was the barmbrack – always so full of expectation. My mother would cut each of us a slice. If you found a ring in your piece, you were in for exciting romance. That always induced giggles and embarrassment. If you got a coin, you were in for a prosperous year, but if you found a piece of cloth, your financial future was in doubt. If you got a thimble, then your chances of finding a marriage partner were slim. Some people went about the neighbourhood trying to instil fear into people by dressing up in outlandish costumes and almost always carrying a turnip on a stick with strange, demonic features cut into it. I hated going to bed.

Perhaps Marx was right after all. Samhain moved to America and came back to us as Halloween with imprint of establishment and money stamped all over it. Even in Ireland, where the Irish word for November is Samhain, not all children are aware of this wonderfully rich pre-Christian tradition. For them the words 'trick or treat' have become synonymous with Halloween.

We have come a distance and left some of these rituals behind us – but only some, thankfully. Despite their best efforts the established religions did not manage to stamp out all so-called pagan rite and ritual. They built their churches on fairy forts and preached of the evils of believing in nature and natural happenings as a source of spiritual strength. Thankfully many enlightened church leaders are acknowledging their error of their ways and returning to the true god in nature – to the gods in earth, air, fire and water.







# A LANGUAGE FOR LANDSCAPES

Noel Monahan

Celebrated Irish Poet

There are a myriad ways of defining landscape. I hope in this short essay “A Language for Landscapes” to take you through a few of my observations of how the landscape of County Cavan, Ireland has become part of my thoughts, ideas, dreams and writing. Our task is to read the story written in stone, written in the bogs, written in clay...

The earth has a much greater memory than us. Let it tell us more. The earth as window into a lost world can be found here in the landscape all about us.

Our task is to access the slow but constantly changing landscape and seascape. We know about the tides and their ebb and flow. But do we know about the sea levels rising after the last Ice Age? The landscape draws us into a deeper sense of what it means to be human. The oldest rocks in Ireland are 1,700 million years old. That is according to the fascinating book on Irish landscape: **Reading The Irish Landscape, Frank Mitchell & Michael Ryan**. Ireland had been covered with ice many times.

The last ice age began 30,000 years ago. Sea levels dropped. Ireland and Britain were joined together. When the ice melted the first rugged grass started to grow and juniper trees appeared. New land forms were left by the glaciers in our part of the world, Co. Cavan, Ireland. Ice on the move changed the old landscape forever.

Take the Drumlins of Cavan and the DINNSEANCHAS associated.





Photograph by Heather Brett

Dinnseanchas refers to the tradition of recording the origin of place-names and traditions, events and special characteristics associated with a particular place. The mythic and legendary figures of the past were associated with a specific place. Knowledge of place-names was an important part of early education in Ireland. It was essential knowledge for the Bardic Poets who were expected to recite poems regarding the origin of place-names. Part of the responsibility of the Bardic Poets was maintaining the Dinnseanchas in the collective memory of the people from generation to generation. Sources of the Dinnseanchas survive and are available in The Book Leinster, The Book of Ballymote and the Book of Leckan. Place names are important to us all. The following poem was inspired by the Cavan landscape as it emerged after the last ice age.

### DRUMLINS

When ice moved on at the end of an age,  
Piles of stones stood naked, longing for grass.  
The hills hand down root words, the people say.  
Song of utterance, underworld of names:  
Drumalee, Drumkerry, Drumamuck, Drumbo.  
Ghostly ridges of calves, sheep, pigs and cows,  
Story-book of hills, fields of fairy-tales  
Cling like a last good-bye.

I watch them sleep  
Below woollen clouds, rivers flow, lakes rest.  
A beauty all to themselves, no fine curves,  
No straight lines, oblique packages of earth,  
Dropped, abandoned to an outspoken wind.  
Hills too old for our clocks, they stand like  
Unsent parcels waiting for the ice to return.

As you can observe from the poem above, Drumlins and Cavan Place-names are liberally bestowed with names of farm animals. Again, the slow change of nature lies at the heart of the poem and man's inability to comprehend that slow movement. The DRUMLIN BELT as we call it forms part of counties: Down, Monaghan, Cavan, Tyrone, Fermanagh.

Another feature of Irish landscape is the bog-lands. The death and birth directions are one and the same when dealing with the land. In the immortal lines of the poet Patrick Kavanagh: "The womb and tomb press lips in fondness like bride and groom". (Patrick Kavanagh The Complete Poems, The Ploughman). A landscape can put us into a new state of mind if we take time out to read it. I'd like to give time now to Bog Energy. As you may be aware, part of Cavan landscape is bog-land. It is soft. Bog derives from the Irish word bug meaning soft.

### BOG ENERGY

No walls here, a bog windwardly open  
To hummocks and loughs where life floats,  
Moss, the only building block, holds twenty  
Times its weight in water. Tiny match-sticks  
Stretch above the amber and brown, waiting  
For the wind to set the sphagnum spores  
On fire. Frogs croak, sedge quakes, curlews call for rain.  
You'll find tenebrae

Down here in dreamless dark .  
Wild heather opens a wet womb  
That will pickle a body as soon as it's dropped.  
The bog holds flesh on bone, hair  
On heads. The Clonycavan man was raised  
With gel in his hair, the Meenybradden woman  
Found aflame in a dark ocean of turf.





Photograph by Heather Brett

I cannot leave landscape without a reference to borders and the whole question of borderlands. An interest in ancient Irish Mythology is always helpful when one sets out to read the landscape. The Black Pig's Dyke, an ancient boundary or ditch punctuates the landscape as you leave Granard, Co. Longford, Ireland and head for Cavan. It is named after the legendary Black Pig who came originally from Meath, raged westward through Ireland and tore up a deep furrow with its snout. Only sections of the dyke remain. This dyke is seen as an ancient boundary line between Ulster and the rest of the country. It may also have been used as a defence system to protect Ulster land and cattle against raids from the South. It can still be traced dating back to circa 300BC- 300AD. Running South Easterly from Lough Gowna towards Lough Kinale; A section of it, crosses the N55 outside Granard, just below Carragh Church. I feel this border and ancient myth lingers on, although scattered, it still hangs in there and I see the Black Pig as an anima energy belonging to mother earth .

### The Black Pig

She has spent her entire life out here,  
Sun by day, moon by night  
Shadows hovering everywhere.

Night fall.  
Trees talk freely in their sleep,  
Every leaf a tongue to dampen:  
Her mossy ears, eyebrows of cut-hay,  
Gaping fieldmouth of stones,  
Pig's whiskers, tail in tatters.

Four legs astraddle,  
Fed from clay, watered by river,  
Rooted between places and time,  
Alone dreamer and dreamed.

Morning leans over her shoulder.  
Whins saddle her back, she has only  
To open her eyes to see her own wreckage,  
Scattered entrails of roads,  
The rain eating her heart out.

And where ever we have landscape we will have borders. I will now take you from an ancient border like The Black Pig's Dyke to the more contemporary border between the Six Counties and the Republic.

### BAILE TEORANN

Bhí na Druimlín ag druidim  
In imeall a chéile, idir an Chabháin  
Is Chontae FherManach  
Maidin Domhnaigh sna nóchaidí  
Pobail eile ar Aifreann is mise ag roth soar  
Ó Thuaidh, chun peitreal fíorshaor a fháil.

Ar mo chúl, na triúr páistí:  
Niall, Cian is Ronán  
Geansaithe *Man United* orthu.  
Thar sruth teorann bhí stopadh tráchta,  
Ordú stoptha ag saighdiúir coise Breataine  
Smear bróg ar a aghaidh, gunna  
Ina laimh, ag féachaint isteach orainn.  
Bhí orm éirí as, tóin an chair a oscailt  
Agus cad a bhfuair sé?  
*Eoraip Ó Shin Napóilean*  
Leabhair-staire, a scríobh Thomson,  
Tada eile.

Bhí bun agus barr an scéil ag an saighdiúir  
D'fhéach sé arís isteach sa chair  
Bhris meangadh gáire air:  
*Up Man United*, adúirt sé.  
Is croith sé slán linn.

### Borderlands

The drumlin hills were moving  
Among themselves between  
Cavan and Fermanagh  
One Sunday morning in the 90s  
The faithful at Mass and myself  
Free-wheeling North for cheap petrol

Behind me the three boys  
Niall, Cian and Ronan  
Wearing *Man United* jerseys  
Past a boundary stream  
We were ordered to stop  
By a British soldier, black polish  
On his face, gun in hand  
I had to get out and open the boot.  
And what did he get?  
*Europe Since Napoleon*  
A history book by Thomson  
Nothing else.

The soldier had the full story  
He looked into the car again  
A smile came to his face  
*Up Man United*, he said  
And he waved us on.





## On Cavan

*An Cabhán* – ‘the hollow’ is a Border county, in Ulster, and surrounded by six other counties Leitrim, Fermanagh, Monaghan, Meath, Longford and Westmeath. Known as the Bréifne County, Cavan nestles amid drumlins and literally hundreds of lakes. It is a traditional town, relatively quiet with a vibrant arts agenda. Drama and music are rife, and famous literati, from Cathal Bui Mac Giolla Ghunna in the 17th century to today’s published poets, all have been writing about the Cavan Landscape for nearly 400 years.

I am no different, coming from a troubled Northern town many years ago, I found solace in Cavan, a tolerance for the poetic, and a refuge for the artist. There is something in the quiet roll and spread of the drumlins that speaks to me. A linked consciousness perhaps, with the landscape. Or maybe memory. The photographs are my way of looking deeper into the land, of connecting with the spiritual, with stone and soil and growing things. For the writer, this landscape has been caught waiting and waiting and waiting...When you walk through a forest like the Cavan burren, there is an air of the primeval ...Today jostles with another time, when thin blue smoke might rise from a campfire, when men wore the skins of animals they’d killed and eaten.

This burren is all about texture... the kneaded rock...as if once it was molten and somehow instantly solidified...an abundance of softest moss; fossils, miniscule monuments to the death of ancient living cells, tiny sea creatures that gave up the ghost and fell, forged into the rock, forever caught there, aeons of time passing...this green-ness...shades of the earth...





### Testament

This was the year of the flood.  
 Even the curious Kennypottle, alive and  
 running away with itself, ventured out over the road,  
 sandbags left slumped and dreaming  
 against the doors on Railway street.  
 And I was thinking of beginnings and  
 endings; how we *stay* this wondrous road,  
 the countless that walk unseen beside us  
 the multitude that have yet to come -  
 each and every one of us seeking solace,  
 the right to be,  
 belong,  
 become.

This place of archaic stone splinters,  
 fragments the past, the here and now,  
 us: In a March light fog jostles the skyline  
 mutes the amber grass  
 and in the thickening air long dead echoes  
 rise: warm slick of salted wave,  
 ancient hush from a shroud of ice.  
 Cushion moss glows ochre green,  
 carpets stone and boulder, native ash  
 compliments the tiny purple orchid  
 shelters hare, wheatear and moth;  
 muffles the absent call of fallow deer  
 Green Man of the keep.

This outcropped earth cradles;  
 ancient field, valley and cairn combine, give  
 up the clearings to our dead;  
 a witness made of every bramble,  
 blade of grass an offered prayer.  
 Here is ceremony and peace,  
 a chant in every fractured rock  
 hum of want from the mirrored lough,  
 fall of vibrant light,  
 where portal stone, chalk hill and grave  
 align within  
 wait out this fragile trust  
 in a perfect linear reach to a solstice sun.



Sap Green and Umber Dyke

Pic © Heather Brett





Boulder bright



A thundering of green





Porous reach and sky



Fireweed...Bay - Willow on the turn





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

### Maygar Dancer on a Wooden Box.

A young girl dreams of a fairy princess  
Who dances on the crescent of the moon  
In summer, translucent form

Does a grand battement on the lid  
Of a wooden box lined with velvet.  
Inside a string of diamante

And stones shaped like a beetle  
That she pinned to her tutu, they shimmer  
In starlight, outside colored birds swim

On enameled surface, an older child  
Learned new words; mallard, Brent,  
Wood duck, and pressed them to her tongue

I imagine a Hungarian forest  
That may have sent this dancer  
To her on moonbeams

To inhabit her dreams, she sheds  
Her fairy wings and changes them  
For ballerina skin, her brows arched

Over the river Bodva  
They still carry her song, all creatures  
attracted to this music box

By the light of its symphony  
Signaling near and far, always composing  
A new melody that sets the ballerina to dance.....

Although she has been under a spell  
For hundreds of years, unable to move  
Her arabesque from its current position

Spectators cannot see  
Beyond their own joy, they watch  
History but it leaves no impression

Her step and song enchants us,  
Ignorant of her story the lore  
That is attributed to her, how she

Began life as a fairy princess,  
Transformed into a tree  
By an evil witch, one of three sisters,

One day a handsome prince  
Rescued a fox in a magic forest  
Who told him as a reward

The whereabouts of a magic tree  
And if a branch were cut  
It would break an enchantment

And he would have in his arms  
A fairy princess, he would need  
To carry water, words became truth,

The rescued princess followed her dream  
Of becoming a ballet dancer  
To dance in the king's court

She wears the ring the Hungarian prince  
Gave her on the little finger of her left hand  
He asks her to go to the beach that night

To hear Spanish drums, watch tanned  
youngsters dance, she thinks the rhythm  
Of their voices like skin pulled tight over board

**Continued...**





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

### Maygar Dancer on a Wooden Box. *contd...*

Tapped lightly with bone, but assents  
As he is her Prince and he rescued her  
From three hundred years of silence

Although any union is out of the question  
Due to a three hundred year age gap,  
She finds it hard to gauge people since

Her release from enchantment, especially men  
If they are charming she thinks they laugh  
Secretly at her lost years

She is mainly invisible to the youth  
As they have no longer any interest  
In Princes, trapped fairies or magic forests

It seems to be only her prince who remembers  
To check in on her, to give her a hand up  
When she falls, to carpet her path

She finds herself doing untypical things  
Going to parts of the woodlands  
She has never before visited

Wondering what if she had met her prince  
Prior to being enchanted, she looks  
At the silver ring the prince gave her and wonders

If he descends from great Magyar kings,  
She wears his ring on the little finger  
Of her right hand. Sometimes she finds,

Unknown to herself, seeking the prince out,  
This embarrasses her, but his greeting  
Is always warm and he is easily found,

Recites legends of all the tribes, old lore,  
Which comforts her almost as much as her dancing,  
He descended from leaves of the tree of life,

She, from the trunk, his voice is music  
sometimes at night she does a 'tendu'  
To the memory of his soft words,

She takes her ballet shoes and dances rivers,  
Mountains, lakes, she dances birds  
And finally she dances the magic forest

And inked forms inscribe themselves  
On the skin of her prince while he sleeps,  
A map to lead him to her heart

The wicked witch hears this journey of ink  
And recognizes the fairy princess released.  
Next day when the dancer awakes she wonders

What if, just once, her prince wasn't there  
Or didn't hold out his hand. In assistance  
What if she went to the beach and the only

Tightened skin was her own, stretched tight  
Over bitter disappointment. She wasn't sure  
If she trusted drums, or the fury of their beat

As if it was egging on some horrible trait,  
Perhaps all this is a dream and there  
Is no prince just an enchanted forest,

Witches and warlocks, perhaps there  
Never was a release, at the end of the day  
She just has his word for it, perhaps

**Continued...**





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

### Maygar Dancer on a Wooden Box. *contd...*

He, himself was transfigured, and the rescue  
Further enchantment, next morning Charming  
Gave her a gift of an even bigger ring

That had in its centre an amber stone  
'For protection' he told her as he gave her  
A drink of wine from a silver chalice

And placed its metal to her lips,  
She demurred since it was not yet noon,  
He told her to persist with her dance,

His father the king was besotted  
With her gift and her performances  
At the court were spectacular

And much appreciated, agreed by all  
To be gifted at the 'pirouette a la second'  
She noticed again how slim his waist

How he endeavored to fulfill all his obligations  
In his father's land, how he had a pleasant face  
And a full and giving smile. She saw a new

Star in the tent of the sky although the sun  
Was still very high, but when she went to her mews  
She noticed the coffee tasted bitter,

Vowed to grow new beans, that night she danced  
Until it was no longer light, flowers had more fragrance,  
The tree of life, and honey from bees tasted sweeter,

Her charming. Oblivious to the suspicions of the witch,  
She filled, her days with walks in the forest  
Trips to the beach, sitting in the company of the prince

Dancing for courtiers and the king,  
Now the most famed dancer in the land,  
Her own tribe had long dispersed

According to the legend of the prince,  
South to Italy, perhaps even as far as Sicily  
A place she would love to see

She went again to search for the prince  
In the forest, on the beach,  
That night she was unable to dance,

Kept seeing ancient 'Bábá' everywhere  
Her way to her prince had been severed,  
Worried her magic had been intercepted

She set out for the castle but was accosted  
By Boszorkany, her nemeses, who changed  
Her own daughter to take the place of the fairy

Princess then cast a spell and set the fairy  
To dance for the next nine hundred years  
On top of her own music box

This box renews itself every fifty years,  
It's music always entrancing  
The wooden box forever changing.





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

### The Last Three Days.

Saturday morning vendors  
And purchasers of fish line up  
Either side of large metal trays

Down at the harbour wall,  
Open air market remains unchanged.  
Though it is still early many make their

Way to the beach, my morning walk  
Takes me to the seafront. A gift  
Of a silver ring by a one-time Prince,

Yellow and blue sapphires to adorn  
My breast, he buys me coffee, saltwater  
Leaves a stain on my skin and flames within,

A chubby lagarto in camouflage of indigo  
Crawls on a pile of stones,  
Pauses and crawls, pauses and crawls.

I heard it whisper my name,  
Unrequited in life, a lonely coil;  
Tiger eyes, tiger eyes. Sharp rocks

Seem to froth and flow with regularity  
It is the end of Summer break  
Soon everything will have Winter's paint

Even the laughter of children's steps  
Will need a new coat, I study the shape  
Of trees, search for orange blossoms

Dogs are walked in pairs, a man  
From Senegal puts a hand carved  
Ornament on my table

Locals with beach umbrellas slung  
Over their shoulders on the way to the sea  
Benches are full of elderly men and their friends

I countdown my last three days, assemble  
Gems on the dressing table, choose none.  
Consume flowers in the shape of birds,

Ivory shaped bone, cloud comfort,  
The sound of metal on metal,  
Fair skinned flesh on stone.

### Aftereffect

How is it that Eve always gets  
the Angel's share  
I see oxblood seep from her  
half opened mouth  
as she sinks her teeth  
into a Persian Prince  
while a peahen hides her shame  
in the shade of an apple tree,  
lioness and deer  
curled up at the feet  
of the First Lady of Eden.


### ?Dreaming of Annaghmakerrig

The bird who lives in the chimney is without peer at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre,  
Annaghmakerrig as are the fresh growth of bluebells, rhododendron petals that  
flutter onto gravel,

the silver of the lake away from the shade of conifers the quick step of the  
jogger the returning walker afternoon light on drumlins

copper beech with it's oxblood leaves  
the design of branches  
a persistent wasp  
or the distant buzz of freshly cut grass.



A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a light-colored, button-down shirt. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall with a pattern of small, light-colored dots or perforations.

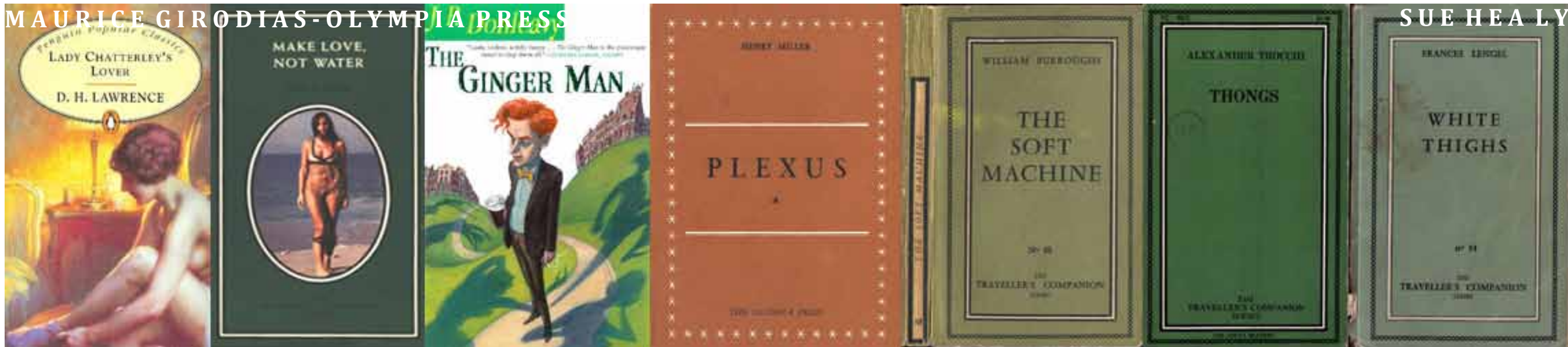
# Lenin of the Sexual Revolution

## The man who fought censorship

While the abovementioned possibly contributed, to greater and lesser degrees, to the upheavals of the period, it would probably be more accurate to say the new liberal sensibility sprung from their convergence with other movements that had been chipping away at the roots of the establishment since the 1950s. Not least of these was an on-going axe-swinging at the Anglophone world's archaic censorship laws. And the most determined axe-wielder was a Paris-based publisher, Maurice Girodias (1919-1990), whose small publishing house, **Olympia Press**, specialized in English language erotica and avant garde literature.

Known as the ‘Lenin of the sexual revolution’, Girodias often boasted that he had founded Olympia Press to ‘bait the hounds of decency’ and upset ‘Britain’s nanny judges’. While Girodias may have had an anti-establishment agenda, it is also likely that his business acumen responded to the appetite for erotica amongst the English-speaking G.I.s and Allied soldiers in Paris during the post-war years. Girodias’ ‘dirty books’ or ‘D.B.’s as he referred to them, consisted very largely of unadulterated pornography with unambiguous titles such as: *White Thighs*, *Bottoms Up*, *The Loins of Amon*, *Heaven Hell and The Whore* and *There is a Whip in my Valise*. Nonetheless, whatever his motives, Girodias’ eager willingness to publish material that no ‘respectable’ English-language publisher would handle led a number of key literary figures with controversial manuscripts to his door. Hence, in its short life, Olympia Press also published works by literary luminaries such as **Samuel Beckett, Lawrence Durrell, Jean Genet, Henry Miller, William Burroughs, Vladimir Nabokov** and **J.P. Donleavy** at a time when their work was deemed obscene in the Anglophone world.





Some of the titles published included cultural touchstones such as **Plexus (1953)**, **Lolita (1955)**, **The Ginger Man (1955)**, **Watt (1953)** and **The Naked Lunch (1959)** - books that quickly garnered acclaim in intellectual circles. Moreover, the novels' notoriety often added to their popularity and ergo, sales. By the 1960s, these factors were serving to embolden the publishing industry, which began to consider handling these risqué works after all.

Furthermore, a number of titles first published by Olympia Press became the subject of legal cases instrumental in smashing down the last barriers of literary censorship in the Western world. The subject matter of these books were to contribute to the liberated attitudes of the years to come.

Up until the revision of the censorship laws in the late 1950s and early 1960s, most books containing any frank description of sexuality and sexual acts could not be legally sold in the main Anglophone markets. As recently as 1955, a shopkeeper in a lower class part of London was sentenced to two months in prison for having in stock **D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover**. The U.K.'s, Obscene Publications Act, defined 'obscene' as that which 'depraves and corrupts'.

In the U.S.A, an important criterion for censorship was whether a book was pure enough to be sent through the post, thus giving the American Post office an important role in censorship. Essentially, however, the decision lay in the hands of the U.S. courts and depended on how they interpreted the first amendment guaranteeing freedom of speech.

Parisian publishers had long provided a home for talented writers who were pushing the boundaries of censorship in the Anglophone world.

The Irish writer **James Joyce** moved to France and *Ulysses* was published in Paris in 1922. Predictably, it was banned U.K. and the U.S.A. (but not in his native Ireland – rather surprisingly as Ireland had very strict censorship laws that outlasted most others in the Anglophone world). Other novelists followed Joyce's cue. **Henry Miller** and **Radcliffe Hall** both travelled to Paris to find a willing publisher. And in the 1930s, that publisher was one **Jack Kahane** of an earlier publishing house, the **Obelisk Press**.

A native of Manchester, England, Jack Kahane had come to France during World War One, married a French woman and had started a publishing company. Kahane had an entrepreneurial spirit and he had also written a number of 'naughty books'. He disliked the prudishness of his homeland and enjoyed 'corrupting' its youth from afar with, somewhat literary, English-language erotica. Kahane and his newly founded company, Obelisk Press, published some highly regarded books including

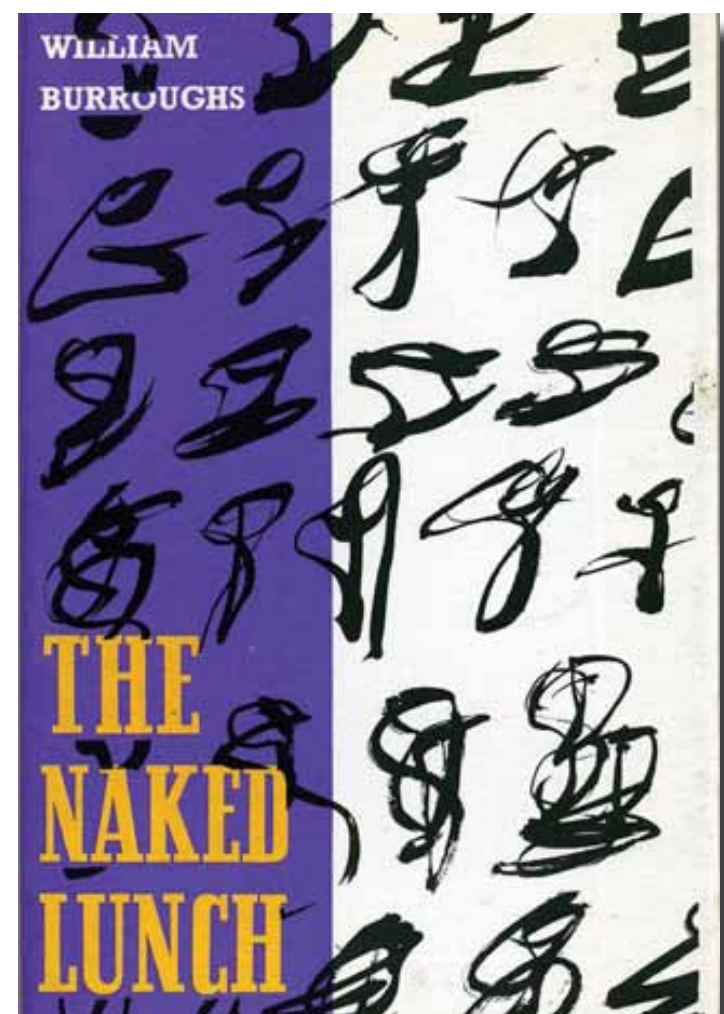
Joyce's **Pomes Penyeach** and the reminisces of whom he referred to as '**that cosmic monument of sexo-journalistico-literary bombast**', the Irish rake, **Frank Harris**.

Perhaps most notably, Kahane discovered Henry Miller and **Tropic of Cancer**. The cover illustration for this book was executed by his eldest son, 14-year-old Maurice Kahane, later known as Maurice Girodias.

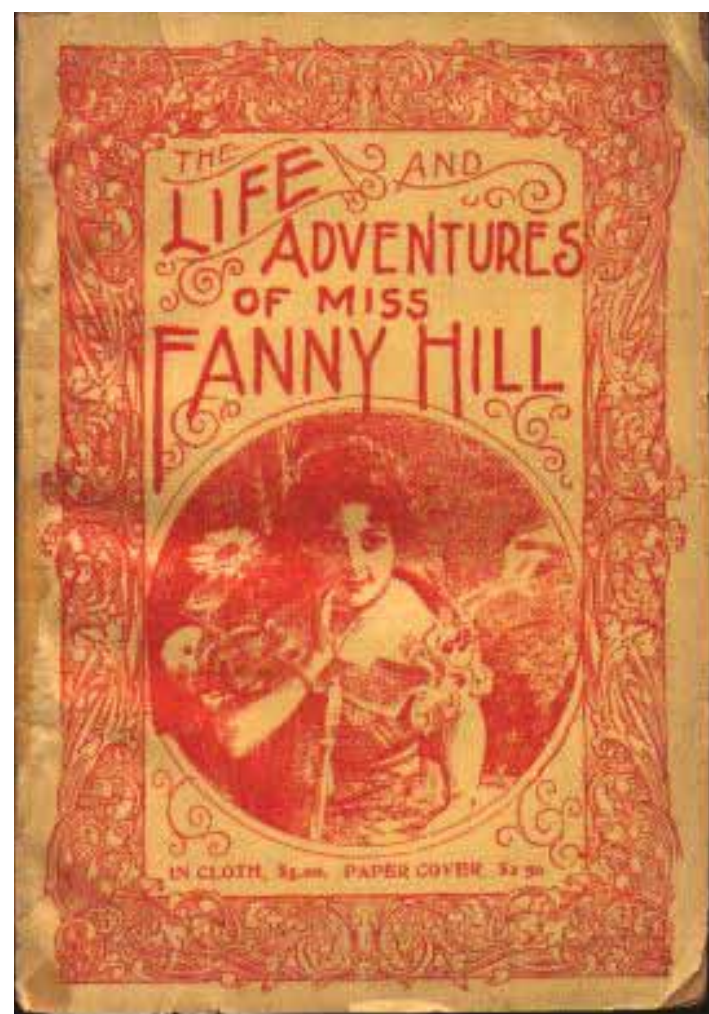
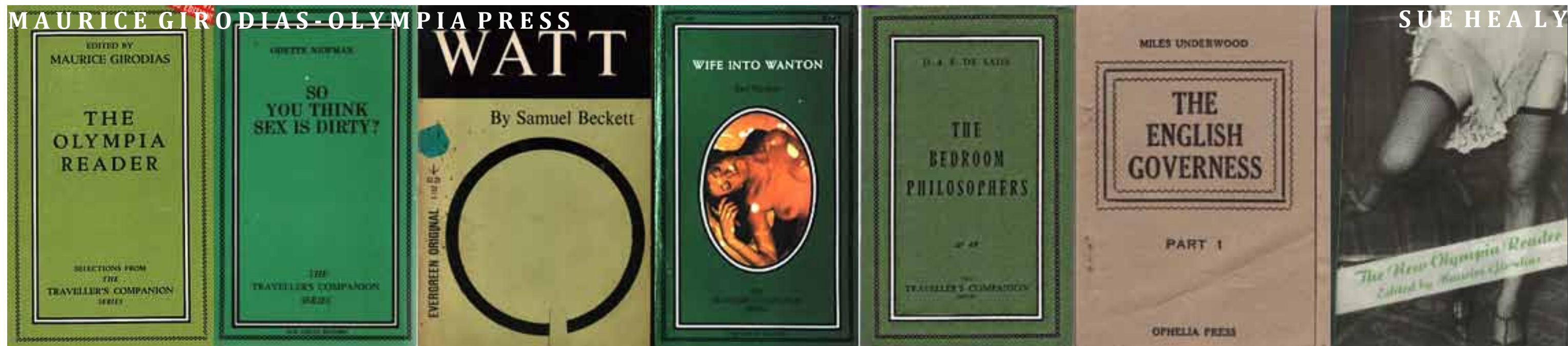
Jack Kahane dropped dead on the first day of the Second World War and the then twenty-year-old Maurice suddenly found himself in the role of family provider. The subsequent German occupation saw the young man give up his Jewish name, Kahane, and take Girodias – his mother's name.

**There remains suspicion as to whether or not Girodias collaborated with the Nazis and, if he did, the extent of his collaboration. Although never convicted in postwar trials, he was perceived to have been a small time collaborator and it was difficult for a suspected collaborator to find employment in post-war Paris.**

Thus, to earn a living, Girodias revived the Obelisk Press brand and published new works by Henry Miller. These editions sold in great quantities to the American G.I.s in Paris at that time. He also published new English language translations of erotic French language classics such as **The Memoirs of Fanny Hill** and the first French language edition of **Zorba the Greek**.







However, it was a Miller book that first landed Girodias in court in 1947 when he published the French language edition of **Tropic of Capricorn**. Prosecuted under the 1939 French Obscene Publications law, it was the first application of that law since the prosecution against **Flaubert's Madame Bovary** and **Baudelaire's Fleurs du Mal** a century before.

After two years, the case was dropped. Nonetheless, the litigation was a drain on Girodias' already precarious finances with the result that he was expelled from his own company. Girodias said that this episode urged him to 'attack the Universal Establishment with all the means at my disposal.'

He launched a new publishing house, Olympia Press, naming it after the controversial Manet painting of a courtesan. In 1953, Girodias became acquainted with a loose group of expatriate writers in **St. Germain des Pres** who were producing the English language literary magazine **Merlin**. By the time Girodias came along they were preparing to publish an installment of **Watt**, by **Samuel Beckett**.

Girodias saw an opportunity to take advantage of the situation whereby he would subsidize **Merlin** and in return the young writers would make themselves available to be commissioned by Girodias to write pornography.

Girodias' stable of writers included the Scots writer **Alexander Trocchi**, later noted for his novel **Young Adam**, **Iris Owens** and **Christopher Logue**, a British poet. **Richard Seaver**, future

editor and publisher, was one of the team who translated erotic French classics into English. Although all were literary minded they were not above a little literary prostitution, especially as Girodias' offer meant reasonably comfortable living in Paris in those years. **Jim Haynes**, a Louisiana native and retired Professor of Sexual Politics at the **University of Paris 8**, who knew Girodias and many of the writers, says Girodias' offer would have been hard to refuse.

"At that time in Paris, one could live cheaply and **Girodias' advance of \$250 was a lot of money. It would not be fair to say he exploited these writers, but he took advantage of the fact that these were available English-speaking writers living in Paris. Both parties benefited.**"

Olympia Press had various imprints: the **Ophelia Press**, the **Collection Merlin**, the **Atlantic Library Series** and the green-covered paper-back **Traveller's Companion Series**, the latter being the better known and most profitable. Jim Haynes first met Girodias in Edinburgh in the early 1960s, when **Haynes** was running a book shop.

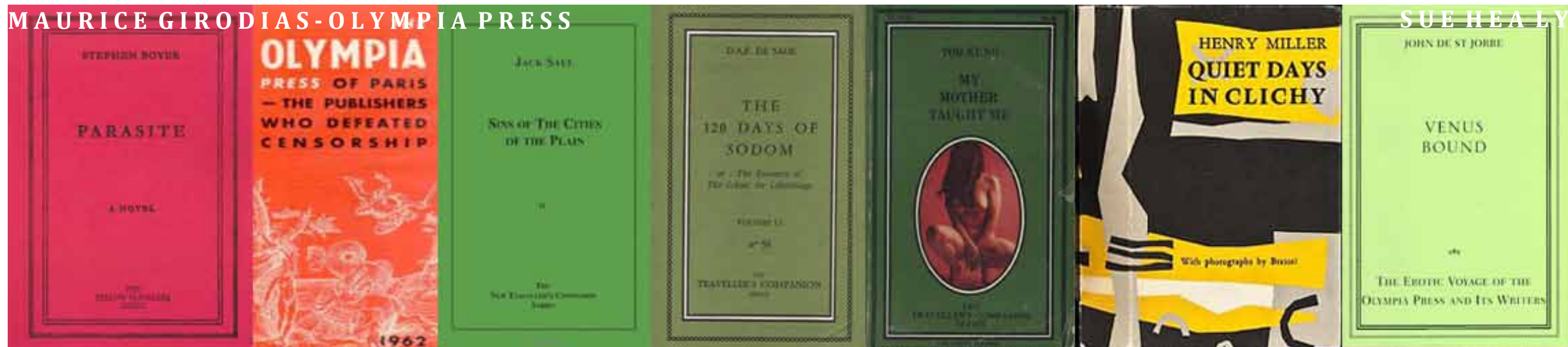
Haynes' bookshop was one of the main outlets for Olympia Press books in the U.K. - albeit illegally so. "**Girodias' books were 'under-the-counter' books, dirty books. Everyone was bringing them into the country and they were bringing sexuality to everyone. I remember them as cheap books, badly printed on cheap paper and using cheap ink. The series was a mixture of pure porn and occasional literature within some. Individual travellers brought them over from France. I sold them for a reasonable price but I know they were often sold on again at outrageous prices.**"

As Haynes recalls: "I remember many books had '**MUST NOT BE IMPORTED INTO ENGLAND OR U.S.A.**' printed across the back, somewhat ironically - it was not a legal requirement to carry this warning. It was simply Girodias poking fun at the authorities."

Rather than the 'D.B.'s, however, it was Girodias' literary discoveries that were to earn him his place in publishing history. He was introduced to Irish writer, Samuel Beckett and Girodias went on to publish Beckett's **Watt** in his literary **Merlin Collections** title in July 1953. Girodias would publish three more of Beckett's novels: **Molloy**, **Malone Dies** and **The Unnamable**.

Although it took five years to sell the 2,000 copies of **Watt** that were printed, Girodias went ahead and published the other novels as promised. **Watt was immediately banned in Beckett's native Ireland.**





Girodias' next literary discovery was also set in Ireland and also banned there upon its publication, as it was in the U.S.A. **The Ginger Man** was written by the young **Irish-American author J. P. Donleavy** and it had been rejected by more than 30 publishers, partly on account of its at times baffling, stream-of-consciousness narrative, but more because of its risqué content. **Girodias bought Donleavy's novel for £250, and published it as 'no. 7' in the newly launched Traveller's Companion Series** where it ran alongside titles including: **School for Sin, The Whip Angels and Rape** – all of which were advertised at the back of The Ginger Man. When Donleavy realized his book had been published as part of a series of erotic books, he was enraged. The outcome was almost 20 years of litigation and deep mistrust and resentment between the two parties.

**Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita** was the novel which brought Girodias the greatest kudos and it made him rich, for a time. However, as he wrote in a letter to Beckett, 'it also signaled the end of the party.' Nabokov's work had been rejected by a series of top publishers in the U.S.A. – **many of whom liked the novel but were too afraid to publish such a potentially scandalous story with its protagonist obsessed and ultimately intimate with a 12-year-old girl. Girodias published the book. Lolita was instantly popular. It became the number one bestseller in America and Graham Greene chose Lolita as one of his best three books of 1955 in a report that appeared in the Sunday Times on Christmas Day. Other journalists were not so supportive, with John Gordon of the Sunday Express writing 'without doubt it is the filthiest book I have ever read. Sheer unrestrained pornography'. The furore surrounding the novel brought it the attention of the authorities. Nabokov did little to defend the book, afraid of embarrassing his employees at Cornell University. It was left to Girodias to fight for Lolita.** Nonetheless, the success of the book provided a welcome windfall for Girodias and Olympia Press and very likely caused many an American publisher to berate themselves for not having the courage to take the book on.

On December 20th, 1956, some twenty-five books on the Olympia Press imprint were banned by France. They included Lolita and there can be little doubt that the controversy surrounding Lolita was behind the ban. Lolita was soon banned in the U.K. Girodias responded by suing the French Ministry of the Interior. Nabokov refused to help him and their relationship deteriorated from there onwards, resulting in yet more costly years of litigation over publishing rights for Girodias. The Lolita hubbub had brought fame for the Olympia brand, nonetheless. **Smuggling 'D.B.s' from Paris became a rite of passage for many students and travellers to Paris.**

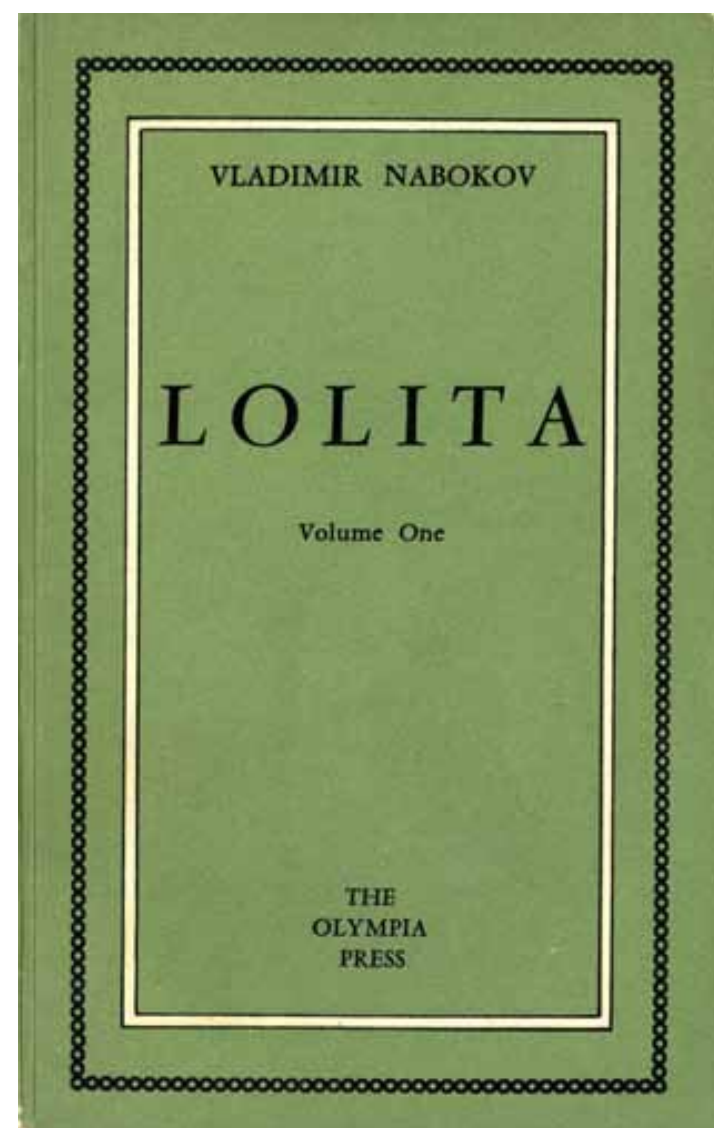
The immense popularity of these books was beginning to make the law look outmoded. And there was a growing feeling that the laws would soon change in Britain and in the U.S.A. Greene's support of Lolita paved the way for publication in the U.K. **The Bodley Head**, where Greene was both an author

and a director, approached Nabokov in June 1957 and asked for a two to three year option to publish the novel, pending a change in the country's obscenity laws.

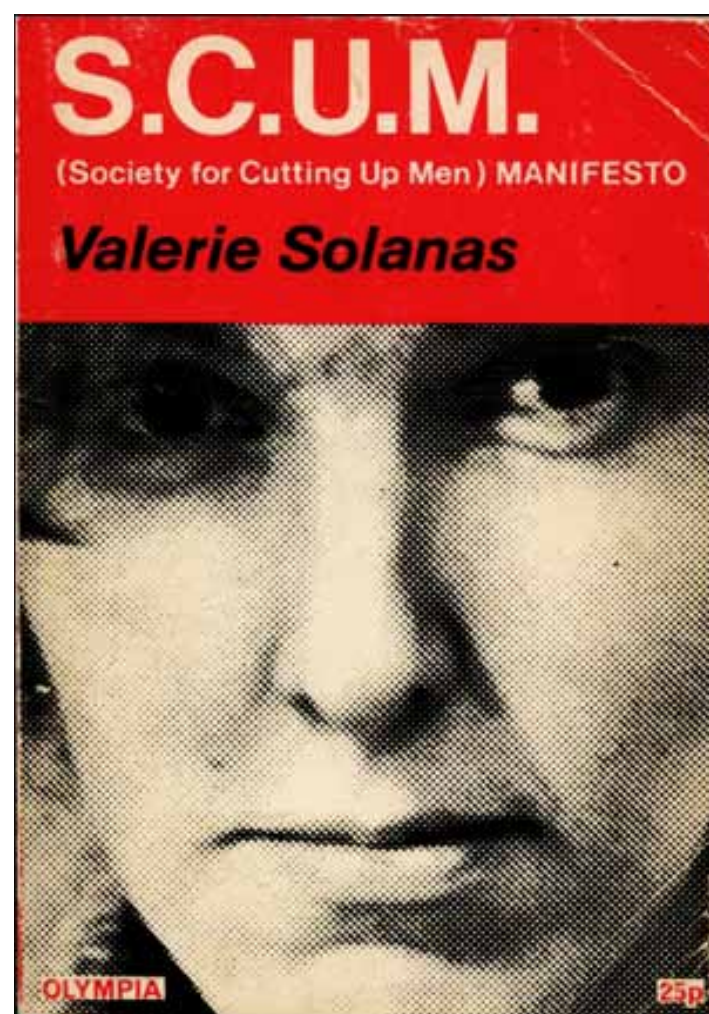
In the U.K. in 1958, the then **backbench MP, Roy Jenkins, won a private member's ballot that allowed him to introduce legislation. He chose to propose amending the Obscene Publications Act, allowing 'literary merit', as vouched for by acknowledged experts, as a possible defence against prosecution for obscenity.** By this stage, with the country awash with contraband Olympia Press tomes, there was wide recognition in governing circles that Victorian taboos could not be upheld in the late 1950s. **The new law came into effect on 21st of July 1959.** The following year saw the celebrated Lady Chatterley's Lover trial in London, which challenged the Western government's authority to suppress 'obscene' books.

The Lady Chatterley's prosecution in 1960 was a great show trial with prominent writers and academics and even a bishop appearing as a witness for the defence. It is worth noting that Olympia Press had earlier published an edition of Lawrence's masterpiece. Similarly in the U.S.A, a case heard in 1955-57, established that if the work can be show to contain '*redeeming social importance*' publication maybe permitted.

**Allen Ginsberg, who had associations with Olympia Press via his promotion of William Burroughs, made use of this amendment in his 1957 trial defending his poem, Howl.**







Grove Press, whose owner **Barney Rosset**, was Girodias' American counterpart and friend, also made use of this defence when publishing Lady Chatterley's Lover in 1959. At the time, the post-master-general was quoted as saying 'if this book is not filth, pray tell me what filth is.' The book was banned. Grove Press immediately took a counter-action, seeking freedom of distribution through the post. The judge noted **'the record...indicates general acceptance of the book,'** and allowed postal distribution.

But it was an Olympia Press title, **Naked Lunch** by **William Burroughs**, that was the subject of one of the last big censorship trials in the U.S.A. **Due to its 'obscene' language it was banned by the Boston courts in 1962. The ruling was overturned by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1966. The Appeals Court found the book did not violate obscenity statutes, as it was found to have some social value.**

Haynes recalls the impact of this verdict: **"From then on anything could be published if it was deemed to be of literary worth and have 'socially redeeming value'".** This was known as the SRV clause. So, as long as a preface was written by some academic, you could publish what you wanted – and you could always find a willing academic, no matter what you wanted to publish." Ironically, the demise of censorship also heralded the end for Olympia Press. With the remarkable success of Lolita and The Ginger Man as well as the Miller books, mainstream publishers were willing to 'take the risk' now that Girodias had tested the waters.

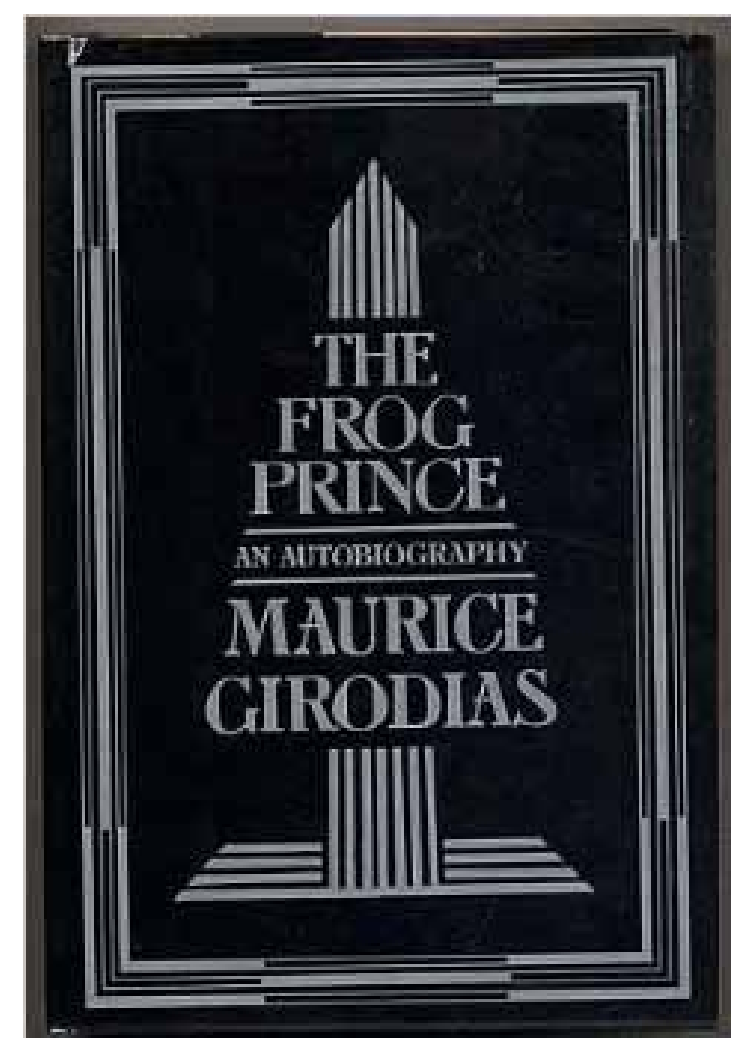
And as soon as there were lucrative contracts to be had, Girodias saw his writers flee Olympia Press. The Olympia Press was declared bankrupt by 1965 and Girodias went to New York blaming his misfortune on the Gaullist regime that had returned to power in 1958. Girodias launched an American Olympia Press, although this venture never had the success of its Parisian incarnation.

A noteworthy twist to the Olympia story occurred in 1970, when the Olympia Press title was being auctioned in Paris, Girodias travelled to the city in the hope of buying his company back. He was outbid every time by a stranger, a woman, who eventually bought the company. Unbeknownst at the time to Girodias, she was Mary Price, wife of his litigious nemesis J.P. Donleavy.

**It should be noted that even though Girodias' move signaled the end of the Girodias' run Olympia Press of Paris, he continued to court controversy in New York.**

Girodias published the S.C.U.M. Manifesto (1968) by radical feminist Valerie Solanas and narrowly escaped being shot by her (when Solanas could not find Girodias, she went in search of Andy Warhol and shot him instead).

He also attracted the wrath of Henry Kissinger by publishing **President Kissinger**, a fantasy satire, and soon found his U.S. visa in review. **He returned to France and died in his native Paris.**







# DEPARTURES

The cyclic experience of departing and arriving and departing again works like the rising and falling of tides within us all. This new cycle of poems by the renowned poet Randhir Khare explores the shifting waters within in achingly beautiful cadences, which create moments of finding and losing in epiphanies of dark and light.

*Randhir is a Founding Contributor to Live Encounters. For the last 5 years he has staunchly supported us by 'donating' his poems and writings, often previously unpublished. The energy of Mother India seeps through his lyricism and embraces the readers. We are thankful for his generosity - Editor*

## Paper Poem

Paper-sheet folds into a parakeet  
Rises with a cry off the desk  
Out of the window  
Into the green  
Where foliage heaves with a sleeping wind  
And yellow-butterfly shade silent with birthing alphabets  
Waits for the touch of a falling feather  
To become  
A poem.

Paper-sheet stretches into a stream of sky  
Seeps out  
Dissolves into the blue  
Where kites weave their longing  
Along cloud crags  
Then plummet to pools where rain  
Still smelling of oceans  
Waits to tell  
Its story.

Paper-sheet dissolves into a puddle of spilt tea  
Map of my life  
Spirit-country flooded with great whorls of remembering  
Floating dreams  
Dead who refuse to die  
Poppy fields of joy  
Clouds of green parakeets

Water stories  
And longing.





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

### Last Rain

You left suddenly  
And now the air is clear  
Dry grass whispers float in the night  
Nestling among dog barks

I remember your arrival  
Smelling of oceans and faraway lands  
Gull feathers and sleep  
And your body hovering above me  
Damp and trembling  
Descended on wings of angels

So much has passed between us  
Since then my friend –  
Storms floods molten earth  
Silver sails gliding over my city  
And a ravaging wind  
Uprooting trees

Now that you have returned  
To your ocean-home of beginnings  
I slip back to my old dry ways  
Kernelled in silence

I am that which you found  
You are that which I lost  
And between finding and losing  
Love hangs like a gull  
Above the blue calm.

### The Way Home

The way home leads out of this city  
Into the hills  
Where rain sleeps in pools green with dreaming  
And cold mornings nibble at skin  
And toothless fortresses mouth full with sky  
Breathe mauve clouds that stream along ridges  
Dissolving in the arms of trees  
Moss clothed and silent.

There in orchid shade  
Where wrens wrest music from  
Fluted throats  
And the boar noses ooze fragrant with root breath  
All that I am - is, all that I was – is,  
All that I ever will be – is,  
Among coloured pebbles, bird feathers, snails,  
Lies my home, my heart.

### Yes

Yes this is all I have to say  
Now that tears and forgiveness  
Slide like car lights off the skin of smog  
And hunched guilt drags its feet away from me  
And the rain has receded to a cemetery of storms  
And the hand of an old friend holds mine no more  
And waiting is over

Within me the skies are crystal blue  
Birdless cloudless starless moonless  
It is the hour of now





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

### Where The Path Bends Into The Woods

Where the path bends into the woods I stop and wait  
 River's breath rises to meet me  
 Like a lost companion walking back to life with a smile  
 Evening now, the hour of bells.

The long day's sun reclines on the shoulder of a hill  
 Slips into its arms  
 Smelling of old apples and feathers of dead birds  
 Misty with the voice of a lost summer crowded with swallows.

I do not believe this journey ends in ashes or in earth  
 For the dark holds stories of universes  
 Floating in the air around us, within us -  
 Planet spirals, comets, stardust,

Unspoken words, dreams,  
 Layer upon layer of seasons,  
 Hills waiting to seed the earth and be born again  
 With great upheavals of change.

Here we wait through this darkness of owls and jars,  
 Whilst strangers swim with the tides in our blood  
 And the wind whispers the fate of lost galleons  
 Tossed in the night-torn oceans of the sky.

### Departures

When the old morning keels over  
 Sprawls on the city  
 Limbs limp across streets  
 Head resting on a distant hill  
 Rain frayed heart wheezing  
 I leave my day in a closet  
 Among clothes books smiles memories  
 Old postcards brushes paints promises  
 A rock carved statue of an unknown god  
 Unfinished dreams waiting to repeat themselves  
 Three pebbles from a mountain stream.

I drink a cool draught of honey light  
 Step out into other lives  
 Become the evening.

### September

Peeling black soles of clouds  
 Blue skin bare  
 Wind walks through orchards of birds  
 Freckled with sunlight  
 I look inwards through the crystal ball  
 At galleons drowned in star dust  
 And a sailor serenading the passing of storms





Police raid pirated books' shops at Morris College T-Point, seize books worth Rs 10 lakhs.  
Photograph and news report [www.nagpurtoday.in](http://www.nagpurtoday.in)



## The Socio Economic Impact of Piracy in Publishing

Vivek Mehra

Managing Director and CEO of [Sage India](http://Sage India)

Publishers have something tangible to lose with piracy. Authors and other types of content creators also have something tangible to lose. But one has rarely investigated the degradation of thought process and the loss of culture, heritage and most of all, human value.

Perhaps my argument sounds far-fetched and when I began thinking along these lines, I tended to dismiss the conclusions I seemed to be arriving at. The arguments can be extended to the entire developing world, particularly in nations that are struggling to rise above poverty. I will however choose India and include Bangladesh and Pakistan since they too were part of undivided India.

Piracy is simply defined as taking without permission or consent. The word pirate conjures up images of the high seas and swashbuckling tobacco-chewing sailors; both fighting for goods that were being 'unlawfully' seized. But in publishing the image of a 'pirate' is obscure. It changes with geographies and it changes with content.

Piracy doesn't begin in factories or printing presses. Piracy actually begins at home and in schools. Before the digital age and when I was going to school, I remember being asked to create collages around themes. A favourite one in the 70s was on poverty. I remember as far as the 7th Standard and later being asked to use specific magazines to cut articles, pictures and other relevant materials. Each of us had to provide a list of the magazines and newspaper we used. Many times we were told the names of specific publications simply because the focus was on the research and NOT on the artistic value. This simple act addressed two clear points that go into the making of EVERY copyright law on this planet. The first is acknowledging the source of the material and the second is clarifying the use of the material. I don't need to talk about projects today; schools don't care how it's done.



The 60s through to the 80s abounded with tales of individuals who ‘studied under lamp posts or candle light’ to get an education. They then went on to succeed in life. But piracy played a big part in that education being acquired. Since most couldn’t afford textbooks, pirated versions or much worse ‘guides’ surfaced. Pirated versions were easy to spot. The covers were close to the original, the paper was cheaper and the price far lower than the original.

So where and how did the thinking change?

Poverty and all its cousins (read low income, et al) change life’s priorities. As a nation, the priorities are divided between protecting borders and feeding citizens. India didn’t and continues not to tax books. But the deficit between its domestic consumption and domestic production has only widened as population has grown. This gave rise to scarcity of everything. Scarcity brought price rises and price rises brought piracy. As a society we started changing only for the worse. Families prioritised spending based on essential need. Nurturing was secondary. A typical household spent most of the money on food followed by clothing, then came education and finally housing. Education was important but NEVER a necessity. It was common to see children of rich families drop out of high school or college to join the ‘family business’. I remember growing up hearing “the educated work for the rich”. It is in this mind-set that piracy started settling in. Those who wanted the education struggled to afford it. The government spent money on building institutions but corruption ensured libraries were stocked with remaindered goods. Quality was sacrificed on the altar of price without even a second glance.

The 60s through to the 80s abounded with tales of individuals who ‘studied under lamp posts or candle light’ to get an education. They then went on to succeed in life. But piracy played a big part in that education being acquired. Since most couldn’t afford textbooks, pirated versions or much worse ‘guides’ surfaced. Pirated versions were easy to spot. The covers were close to the original, the paper was cheaper and the price far lower than the original. But the ‘guides’ were even more dangerous. Authors or rather writers, simply reworded portions of the original and came out with ‘originals’ at a fraction of the true cost. Individuals who used these versions imbibed a false notion that they were doing nothing wrong. Their objectives were noble and that is all that mattered. This mind-set then manifested elsewhere and continues to do so. From a minor disregard to copyright stems the disregard to basic law.

Drive on the streets and you can see every motor law being flouted with abject impunity. It is now “OK” to jump a red light when there is no policeman around. It is “OK” not to wear seat belts if there is a slim chance of being caught. It is “OK” to hang the helmet on the bike because policemen will not be stationed on the route one is travelling. And worst of all, it is “OK” to break the law and then fight with an individual who is actually obeying the law.

The menace doesn’t stop there. As a society we are “OK” with ignoring other laws. We are “OK” with expanding commercial space, or even constructing an extra floor knowing fully well, a little ‘greasing’ is all that’s needed. In so many facets of life we don’t even give corruption and bribery a second thought.

But the ‘guides’ were even more dangerous. Authors or rather writers, simply reworded portions of the original and came out with ‘originals’ at a fraction of the true cost. Individuals who used these versions imbibed a false notion that they were doing nothing wrong. Their objectives were noble and that is all that mattered. This mind-set then manifested elsewhere and continues to do so. From a minor disregard to copyright stems the disregard to basic law.

| DEMAND-SUPPLY GAP                                   |         |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Piracy in publication of books. Figures in Rs crore |         |         |         |
|   | 2007-08 | 2009-10 | 2011-12 |
| Gross supply  | 18,347  | 24,884  | 34,820  |
| Gross consumption                                   | 22,232  | 30,474  | 43,154  |
| Piracy estimate                                     | 3,885   | 5,590   | 8,334   |
| Piracy percentage                                   | 17.47%  | 18.34%  | 19.31%  |
| Source: CII study                                   |         |         |         |

**20% books sold are pirated: Study** - India’s growing passion for reading is matched by a growing trend of publication of pirated books, threatening creation of intellectual capital while disseminating poor content among readers, including school children.  
- [Basant Kumar Mohanty, The Telegraph, Calcutta](#)

INRs 1 Crore = \$US 162,500 (approx.) Loss due to piracy is 8,334 crores!



Piracy impacts the growth of the nation. For once forget the actual revenue loss. The loss to the nation is larger than the loss to the exchequer. A Bengali book published in Kolkata is pirated in about 48 hours across the border. While Bangladesh has an impressive record on many indicators including health care, on piracy it is one of the worst offenders. It is true they don't figure in any primary research but in publishing circles this is a well-known fact. The publishing industry in Bangladesh is nothing more than a series of photocopying shops.

As a nation and as a species we have become "OK" with protecting ourselves at the cost of a fellow human being. And yes, it starts with a pirated book or guide or publication that no one ever talked about. A parent patted the child on the back for spending less and the child reinforced the notion that nothing was wrong.

Piracy impacts the growth of the nation. For once forget the actual revenue loss. The loss to the nation is larger than the loss to the exchequer. A Bengali book published in Kolkata is pirated in about 48 hours across the border. While Bangladesh has an impressive record on many indicators including health care, on piracy it is one of the worst offenders. It is true they don't figure in any primary research but in publishing circles this is a well-known fact. Undivided Bengal has a rich cultural heritage. In fact the first Asian to win a Nobel Prize in literature came from Bengal (Rabindranath Tagore). But since Independence Bangladesh doesn't have any literature to talk about. It's true the nation is very young but in a young nation, its culture holds the societal fabric intact. Bangladeshi writers prefer publishing abroad at the cost of native Bengali writing.

The publishing industry in Bangladesh is nothing more than a series of photocopying shops. The objective is NOT to criticise Bangladesh or the publishing industry there. It is more to instil a sense of pride. They have a great cultural heritage and I know there are thought leaders, cultural stalwarts and great writers lying dormant in Bangladesh. It's the society through the government that needs to create an environment to nurture literature. As a publisher I am aware about the level of piracy.

As a citizen of the world I know the cost of losing cultural heritage is bigger than the monetary loss I might face. There isn't a single case of piracy that we have filed in Bangladesh. Through various international programs we provide content for free to educational institutions. True awakening will happen only when they become aware of the damage that they are doing to themselves.

There is another element that profits from piracy and uses the gain to damage society even further. Ask law keepers in India - pursuing pirates (read printing presses, or distributors) is low on their priority. They believe organised crime, murderers, terrorists, thieves, etc. are far more important and they are. What is sad is that the same law keepers can't see book and digital piracy as linked to organised crime.

Here is how this works—India like many Asian countries doesn't tax books and other types of print publications. The business therefore is rarely tracked. While printing presses and printing business are easy to identify, distribution is virtually invisible. So every time a young lad is selling a pirated book on a traffic crossing, who is funding this enterprise? Leave the cities and venture into smaller towns, railway stations, bus stands and even local markets flooded with pirated books. Someone is profiting from this.

When we talk about publishing we primarily talk about English language publishing. But there are more Indian language literate individuals across India, Nepal, Pakistan and even outside the sub-continent. Within South Asia there are sufficiently open trade routes for printed material to move (Bangladesh has some restrictions). It's scary to think that with an innocent act of purchasing pirated books, an individual is contributing to organised crime, some of it even leading to funding terrorists.

There isn't hard data but the scale of the operation points towards organised crime. Here are things that make this lucrative for organised crime.

1. This business is completely transacted in cash.
2. Margins are in excess of 100% of cash invested.
3. There are no laws governing storage or transportation.
4. The product line is viewed positively (as opposed to liquor and or tobacco).
5. No one really objects to sales, distribution and consumption.

When we talk about publishing we primarily talk about English language publishing. But there are more Indian language literate individuals across India, Nepal, Pakistan and even outside the sub-continent. Within South Asia there are sufficiently open trade routes for printed material to move (Bangladesh has some restrictions). It's scary to think that with an innocent act of purchasing pirated books, an individual is contributing to organised crime, some of it even leading to funding terrorists.

We don't need laws and law enforcement. We first need awareness. I am sure someone reading this article might think I am seeing ghosts where there are none. The question to ask oneself is, am I really seeing ghosts? Take a hard look around you. People guard encroached space more than they guard their own homes. We have scant regard for traffic lights and other laws even as basic as those governing hygiene. The digital age has made even publishing houses and educational institutions turn a blind eye on copyright violation. We are truly eroding the very fabric that is holding us together.

The need of the hour is not about non-payment for content or to acquire rights to use it. There are sufficient laws to assist that. We need to teach the next generation to act responsibly. Acknowledging where the content in use has been taken from will help bring about a change in the way we think. Schools must pledge not to use copyrighted material without permission. I can assure you publishing houses would gladly give permission freely, just to be acknowledged as the source from where the content originated.

At the end of it all, it is up to us as citizens of this global village to understand the consequences of our actions. Do we really want to leave a world built on lies and on the works of an unknown few?

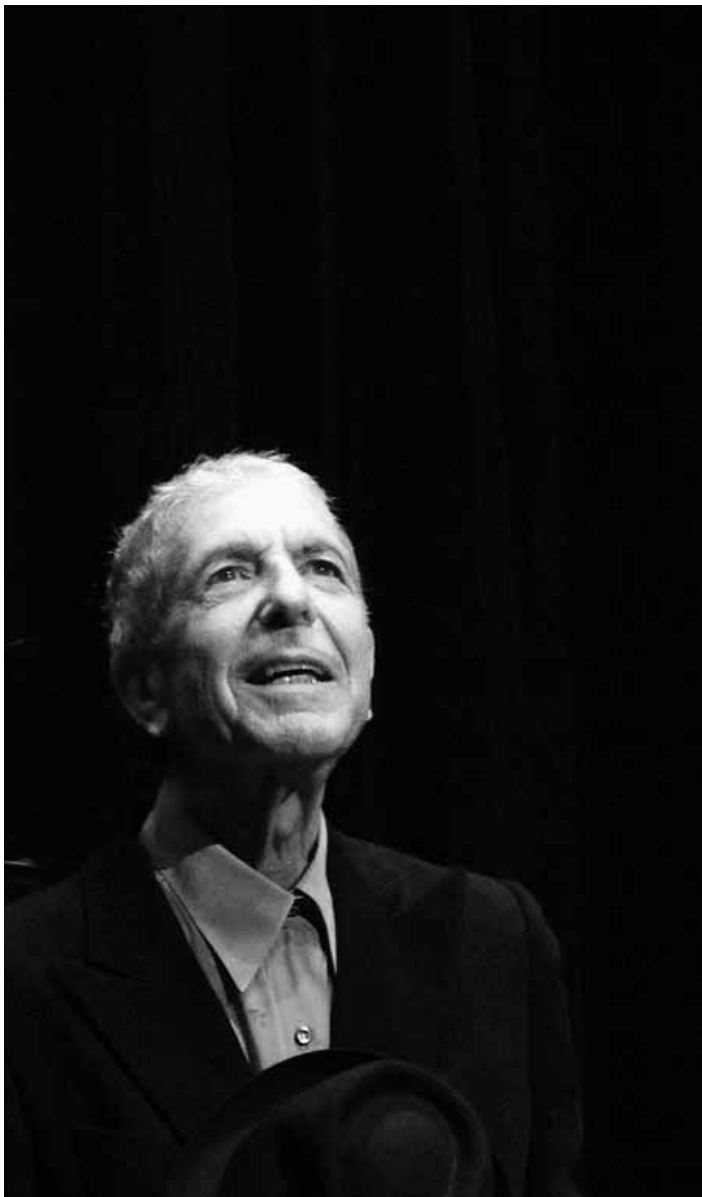
Would we sit quiet if it were our own work?

I think the answers are for each one of us to decipher.





# The High Priest of Modern Song



Among the forests of words devoted to the life and work of Canadian singer-songwriter, [Leonard Cohen](#) is a website that takes a wry look at his many nicknames.

But I prefer my own - the 'High Priest of Modern Song'. How else to describe an artistic renaissance figure whose output – like his family name – is informed wholly by his Orthodox Jewish roots?

But how may we also describe a very human individual who's wedded to his Jewish faith, bolted to his art, but now aged eighty, has never committed to a steadfast relationship with any of his lovers – even the mother of his children? Cohen's work and life form part of the mental landscape of so many ordinary people, it is difficult to discuss him without being accused of either repetition or cliché. But here, nothing daunted, is my own view of him as a fellow Jew.

The cover image on his latest album, *Popular Problems*, cuts a lean, lupine figure, dressed as I've seen a thousand other elderly Jewish gentlemen, walking gamely to and from synagogue several times during a Sabbath day. So I can imagine his arriving at morning services, then removing his trilby to reveal a skull cap, reciting the traditional blessing as he wraps himself in his prayer shawl and then reading the Ma Tovu prayer - which he also recited at his 2009 concert in Ramat Gan, Tel Aviv, Israel.

But artists don't think like ordinary mortals! So we have the cerebral and elegiac Cohen wrestling with an erratic, even raffish existence in a private world off-stage.

His [Wikipedia entry](#) reminds us how often he has used the Hebrew bible (Torah) and Jewish cultural imagery as sources for his work, citing by example songs like *Story of Isaac* and *Who By Fire* and also his second collection of poetry, *The Spice-Box of Earth*, whose title alludes to the Saturday night rituals performed as the Sabbath concludes. The entry also devotes a separate section to the famous 1984 song, *Hallelujah*. I venture further that it remains Cohen's most popular single song because it examines his unending personal struggle - the clash of religious devotion with sexual temptation, symbolised by conflating the two stories of King David and Bathsheba and Samson and Delilah, then blending them most magically with his musical expertise.

Here he gives those new to Jewish thought a look at the distinction between the temporal and divine or '[the holy and the broken](#)', as described by music journalist, Alan Light in his book about the song. But there are two further interesting side issues I want to discuss.

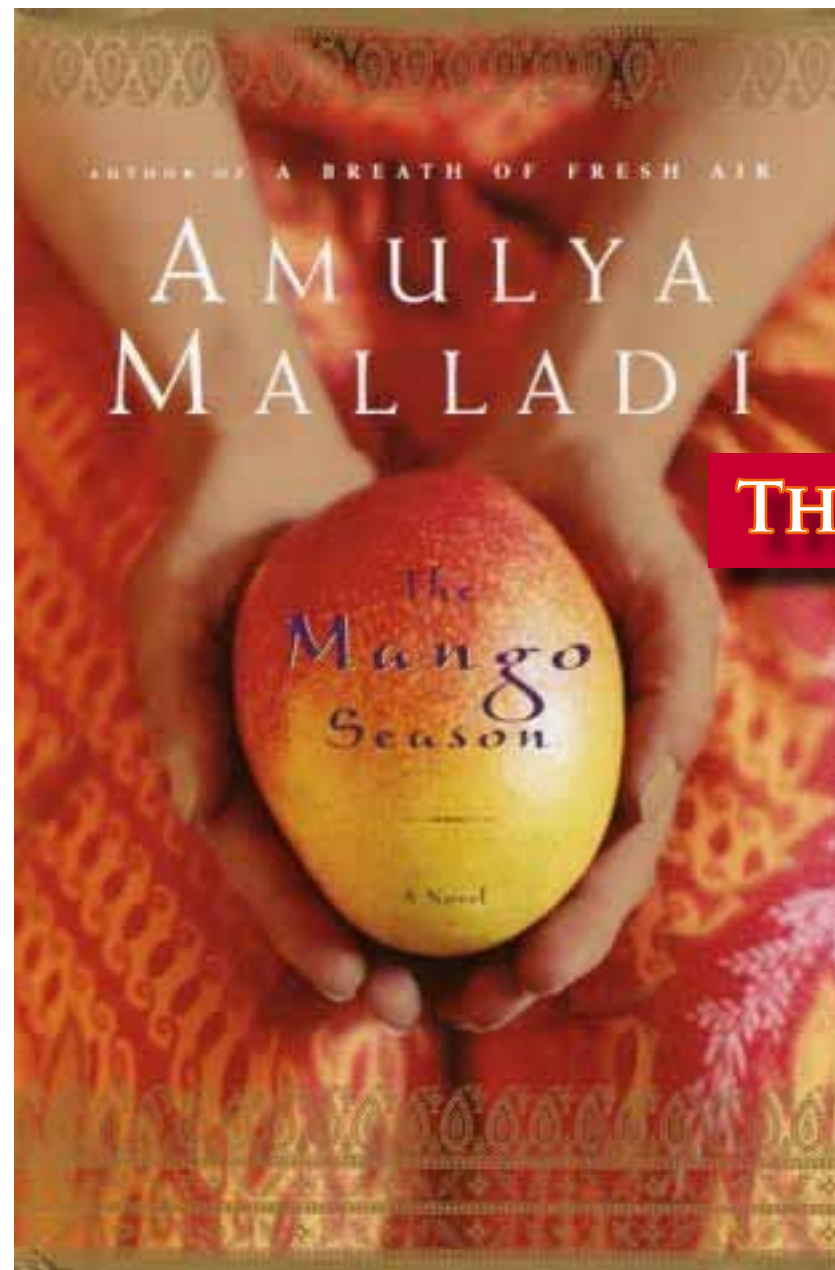
The first is Cohen's involvement in Zen Buddhism and that he sees no split from his Jewish faith but rather that "in the tradition of Zen that I've practiced, there is no prayerful worship and there is no affirmation of a deity. So theologically there is no challenge to any Jewish belief".

The other – superficially - has nothing to do with his Jewish faith but is how he referred to [Kelley Lynch](#), formerly his manager, friend and even briefly his lover after she was jailed for harassing him. They were not the words of a plaintiff but the sermonic admonition of a priest.

Cohen's florid romantic life is well-documented. He remains unmarried, but while the mother of his children, Susan Elrod is Jewish it seems that Adam, a fellow singer songwriter and Lorca, a photographer and videographer do not take their heritage as seriously as their father. It remains to be seen whether any of Grandpa Leonard's descendants will be given his mantle to wear.

Meanwhile, even at 80, Cohen continues composing and performing and *Popular Problems* took only a few weeks to hit No. 1 in 29 countries on the iTunes chart.





*Indian chick lit* is more like a Mc Aloo Tikki burger, with the frills and packaging of a McDonald's burger, at the centre of which lies a *desi aloo tikki*.

## THE MC ALOO TIKKI OF WOMEN'S LITERATURE IN INDIA

**"Indian bookstores these days are stocking up on a new kind of English language novel, the kind in which twenty something urban women put their careers first, ridicule arranged marriages and wrestle with weight gain."** - *Washington Post* in 2006 on the ascent of *desi chick lit* novels in the Indian market. The genre was initially trivialized and dismissed as a marketing ploy or accused as Western cultural imperialism or a throwback to pre-feminism.

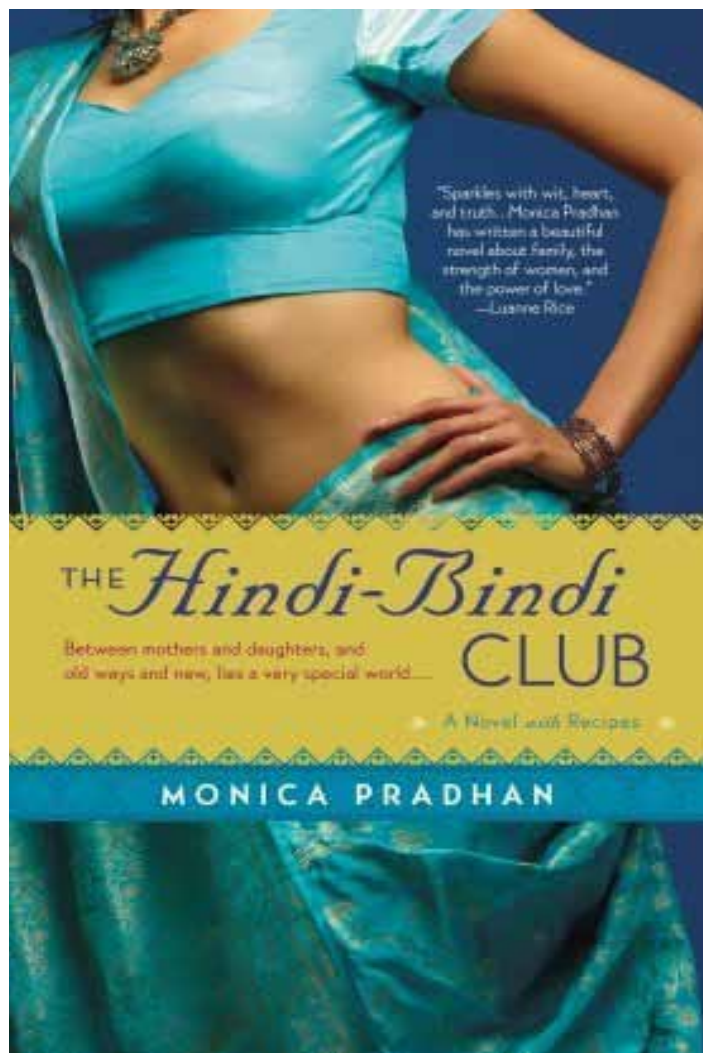
It has been ten years since novels like Swati Kaushal's breezy "Piece of Cake," (2004) familiarized the genre of Indian chick lit and it can be safely said that it has not only proved to be extremely adaptable but also very popular and has tapped into the larger socio-economic shifts in the country.

The stories of the new urban Indian women who are single, have a career and are willing to have fun, take risks and find a man their way, and not necessarily their family's way struck a chord with the young Indian women of neo-liberal India where traditional values collided in unexpected ways with a new economic order.

The Indian chick lit is more like a Mc Aloo Tikki burger, with the frills and packaging of a McDonald's burger, at the centre of which lies a *desi aloo tikki*. This resonates in the genre's adaptation to Indian themes like arranged marriage, matrimonial advertisements and interfering parents, along with the staples like love, work, bitchy bosses, brand names, weight loss and addiction, that mark the distinctness of the universal '*chick-lit*'.



*Desi chick lit* novels seem to be providing a ground for women to negotiate the anxieties of tradition and modernity. The notion of conflicting desires which reflect the challenges facing young women as they navigate careers and relationships, independence and commitment, with commodity culture and traditional values, strike a chord with the young urban independent professional women.



Literary circles, be it in the East or West have often termed the genre as nothing more than “trash”, “fluffy, mind-numbing garbage”, “formulaic vapid prose”, and so on. However, in the wake of globalization and the changing Indian landscape, *desi chick lit* novels seem to be providing a ground for women to negotiate the anxieties of tradition and modernity. The notion of conflicting desires which reflect the challenges facing young women as they navigate careers and relationships, independence and commitment, with commodity culture and traditional values, strike a chord with the young urban independent professional women. The genre explores the reality of the new woman and the theme of urban loneliness.

Advaita Kala, author of the book *'Almost Single'* (2006) which fortified the popularity of the *chick lit* genre in India and did a 20,000 print run in a year said in an interview, “A generation ago, marriage was the only route to independence from parental control in India. Now women are working, living alone in the cities, hanging out with women friends, drinking, dating and having fun in spite of the enormous social pressure to get married.” The protagonist of Kala’s novel, Aisha is a 29-year-old large-framed young woman obsessed about the handsome Karan Verma and bitches about her boss. Hers is the story of every 25-plus career woman looking to shed the single tag without going the arranged way.

Among other popular books in this genre, *'The Mango Season'* (2004) by Amulya Malladi is another book that presents young woman’s desire to break tradition. The heart-wrenching novel

Journalist Ben Mizra, “Indian writers and Western South Asian writers have and are producing some of the best *Chick-Lit* out there. Writers like Preethi Nair, Kavita Daswani, Anita Nair and many others are engaging in a literary revolution. Essentially, that’s what *Chick-Lit* is all about – revolution – but not in a radical sense, *Chick-Lit* is by no means communism’s red-headed sister. It’s a much more subtle and much more intelligent revolution than that.”

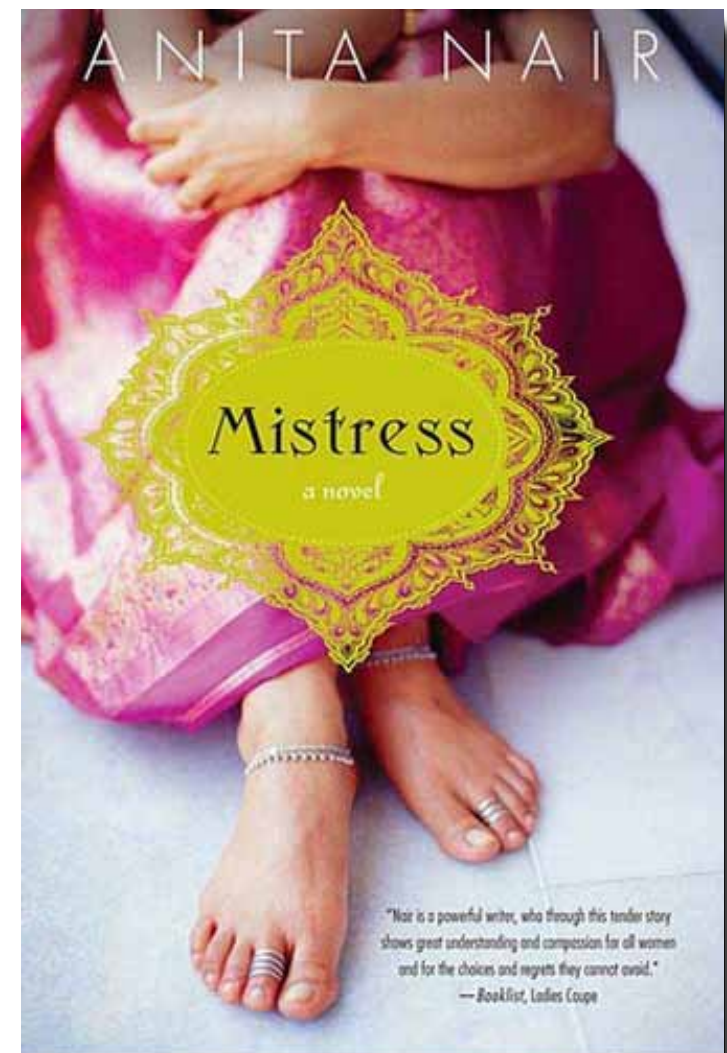
shows a detailed contrast between old and young women while making clear the consequences of straying from tradition.

Highlighting another significant aspect of a married woman’s woes, *'Mistress'* (2005) by Anita Nair is a novel of family betrayal and secrets which is a deep tale of sexual frustration, passion and emotional turmoil.

Building on the confusion that comes with the tag of a “global citizen”, *'The Hindi-Bindi Club'* (2007) by Monica Pradhan is all about coping with adulthood when you’ve had a culturally mixed upbringing. The book is about three women managing to find the middle ground between two opposing cultures.

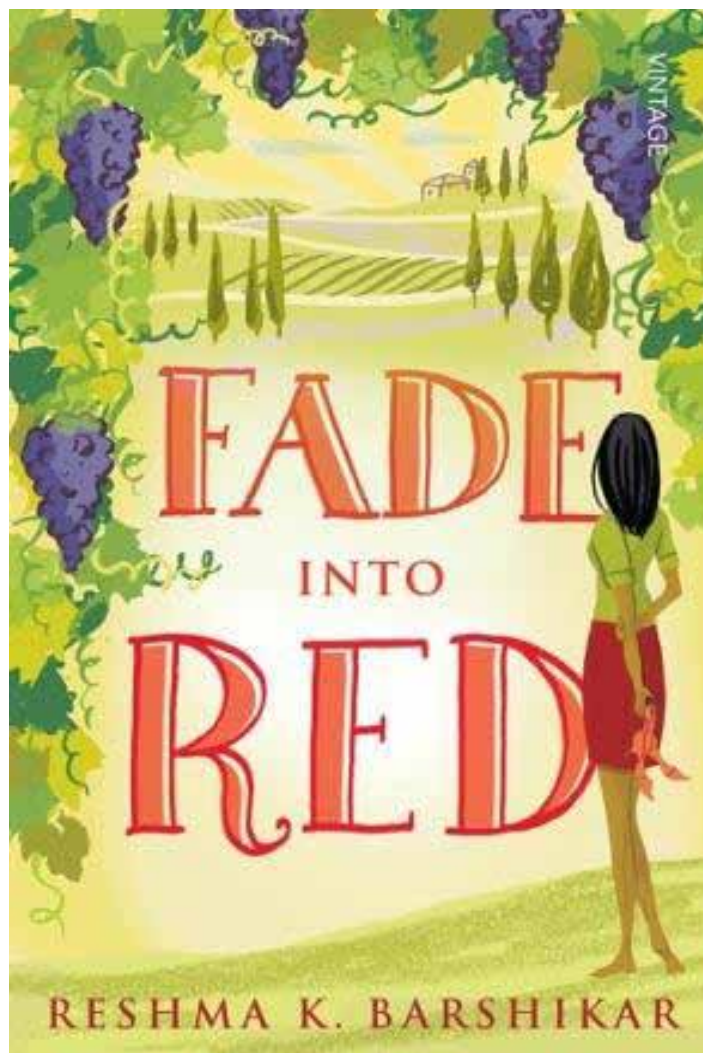
The contemporary breed of Indian women writers are creating a niche for themselves Readers are demanding of their writers and a poorly written novel will not sell.

Journalist Ben Mizra, who has written for everyone from the *Huffington Post* to *Hello Pakistan* wrote in a recent blog post “Indian writers and Western South Asian writers have and are producing some of the best *Chick-Lit* out there. Writers like Preethi Nair, Kavita Daswani, Anita Nair and many others are engaging in a literary revolution. Essentially, that’s what *Chick-Lit* is all about – revolution – but not in a radical sense, *Chick-Lit* is by no means communism’s red-headed sister. It’s a much more subtle and much more intelligent revolution than that.”





"When you meet us you don't care about the fact that we are ambitious, that we have no interest in making idlis. We live in this shitty city where it rains half the year and we have to pretend we love it. And some of us like living alone. And then we live alone for so long that we have cats! But we can't just throw our cats away because you decide to change your mind about the cat."



A recent entrant in the land of bindi, sari and Gucci is the book *Fade into Red* by Reshma Krishnan Barshikar which was launched at *Gyaan Adab Centre* in August 2014. It is about an Investment Banker in Mumbai juggling an eccentric quintessential Tamil family, a fading career and a long-distance relationship that seems to be going downhill. The book celebrates her independence, instinct and her grit and determination to take the ethical path at the crossroad of her career, even if it means that the decision might just leave her without one. The story fractures the myth of a balancing act that a woman is expected to perform with the precision of a trapeze artist in order to have it all – career, personal life and the perfect man- the protagonist cannot manage it all and ends up losing out on the 'the perfect guy'. She speaks for every urban woman trying to juggle a career and personal life and the negotiations that accompany the joys of love when she tells her love interest: "When you meet us you don't care about the fact that we are ambitious, that we have no interest in making idlis. We live in this shitty city where it rains half the year and we have to pretend we love it. And some of us like living alone. And then we live alone for so long that we have cats! But we can't just throw our cats away because you decide to change your mind about the cat."

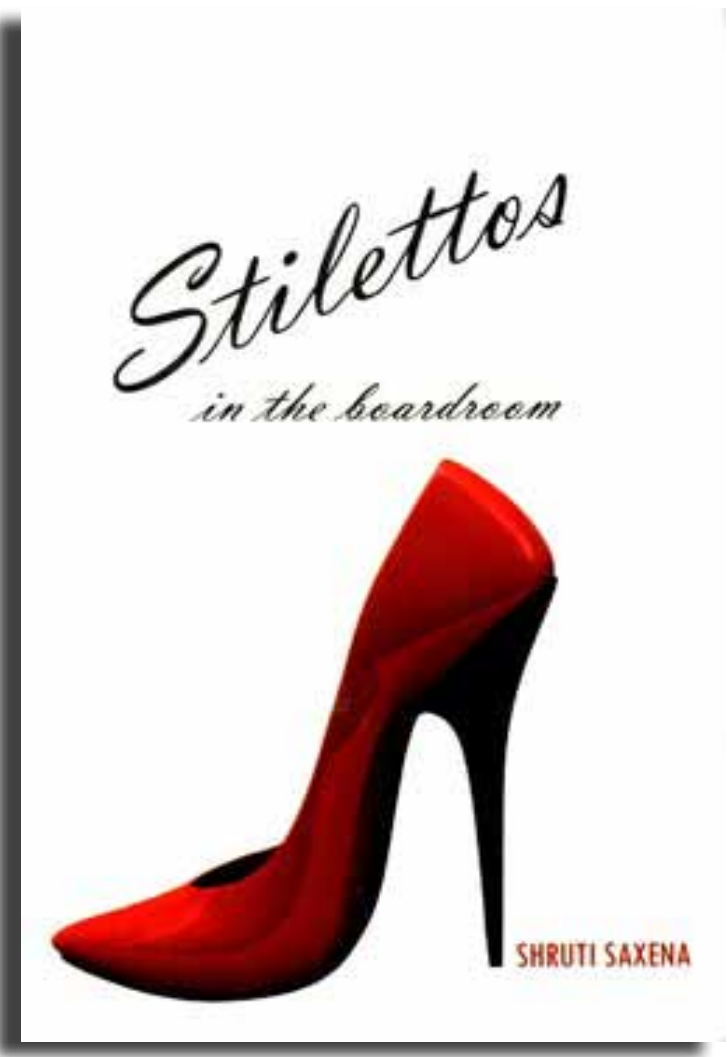
The grit and determination of the women is not just limited to their ambitions but also lies in their will and courage to stand up for themselves and implicate those who have wronged them. In Shruti Saxena's *Stilettoes in the Boardroom* it is gradually revealed that one of the main

If you peel the layers of self-deprecating humour, the pressures of being a good daughter, chaste and marrying at the right age, being a successful career woman who stands for gender equality, and the mapping of a social shift in India; at the heart of it *chick lit* is really a cosmopolitan fairy tale. Here, the endings are happy and the princess almost always ends up with a charming prince; the only difference is that the white horse is replaced by a white Ferrari.

characters, Arya left her previous place of employment after implicating several members of the management in large-scale sexual harassment and abuse. The man she considered her boyfriend had attempted to drug and molest her: "She had come out of her last company a complete mess, but not without first logging an integrity complaint against not just Sihaan but his whole gang of miscreants who drugged girls at parties and lured them to the very same rented apartment where Arya had been taken. From the managers to the highest strata of the organization, a good number of people were involved in this racket. Sihaan had been stupid enough to reveal to her their names and those of the girls who had gladly volunteered for unplanned and undeserving promotions within the company."

*Desi chick lit* has become a way for women to express themselves in popular culture, to explore the roles they play in larger society, to come across as strong, flawed, ambitious and vulnerable, to acknowledge their flaws and have the ability to laugh at them.

However, if you peel the layers of self-deprecating humour, the pressures of being a good daughter, chaste and marrying at the right age, being a successful career woman who stands for gender equality, and the mapping of a social shift in India; at the heart of it *chick lit* is really a cosmopolitan fairy tale. Here, the endings are happy and the princess almost always ends up with a charming prince; the only difference is that the white horse is replaced by a white Ferrari.







## Let's Kill All the Lawyers : Shakespeare in the Courtroom

It is fair to guess that Shakespeare did not like lawyers. In fact, it's hard to arrive at a different conclusion when confronted with Hamlet's derisive "Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillities, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?" On the other hand, it is also fair to hit upon the opposite conclusion: the gruff directness of "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers" from *Henry VI, Part II*, is, after all, widely misquoted. This is Dick the Butcher's line, who is part of a group attempting to establish anarchy. Killing all the lawyers is the first step to destroying the rule of law in England. Jack Cade, Dick the Butcher's leader, is given other lines with similar shock value: "My mouth shall be the parliament of England" and "Away with him, away with him! He speaks Latin". In short, Shakespeare meant the 'kill the lawyers' line to be a compliment for lawyers.

Lawyers, on the other hand, have an unequivocal love for Shakespeare, expressed in numerous arguments, exchanges and judgments. It's not hard to see why. Plays like *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice*, with their themes of justice and mercy, are replete with material for courtroom jousting ("You speak an infinite deal of nothing!"). Others like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are too ingrained in the language to be left out of an English conversation for long. One more obvious reason for the Bard's popularity in courts is netted in Frank Baum's *The Master Key* by the Demon of Electricity, who is trying to convince the protagonist Rob that despite being a demon, he is "a good thing", -

"Then take the words of Mr. Shakespeare, to whom you all defer," ... "Do you not remember that he says:

'Thy demon (that's thy spirit which keeps thee) is Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable.' "

"Oh, if Shakespeare says it, that's all right,' answered the boy."

For some reason that has no grounding in logic, Shakespearean wisdom is almost always uncritically accepted and rarely challenged – great ammunition for courtroom duels. In [Nallapati Sivaiah](#), the Supreme Court traced the "dying declaration" rule (which treats statements made by a person about the cause of her death as admissible in court even without a pre-administered oath), back to this passage from King John:

Retaining but a quantity of life,  
Which bleeds away,  
Even as a form of wax,  
Resolveth from his figure,  
Against the fire?  
What is the world should  
Make me now deceive,  
Since I must lose the use of all deceit? Why should I then be false,  
Since it is true  
That I must die here,  
Live hence by truth?"

A quotation from Shakespeare in a judgment may also indicate that the judge expects the case to be published and cited. Why bother with impenetrable lines written in old English if only the litigants and their lawyers are going to read the judgment? Displays of erudition are best preserved for big occasions. In one of the cases arising out of the 2G licences scam, Justice AK Ganguly of the Supreme Court [declared](#)-

"The position of Respondent 1 in our democratic polity seems to have been summed up in the words of Shakespeare, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.'"

'Respondent 1' being the Prime Minister of India.



In launching into damage control on Mr. Shakespeare's behalf, two rules are violated here: an attempt to improve on a Shakespearean quote is doomed to failure (though an attempt to reduce to a Shakespearean soliloquy may be hilarious, as demonstrated by Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Laurie in [this sketch](#).); moreover, feminism is quite a different thing from (it is in fact the very opposite of) indiscriminate praise heaped on all women.

Another example of momentous-occasion-Shakespeare-quoting came during one of the hearings in the [Italian Marines case](#) in March of 2013. The Attorney General was reading out the *note verbale* from the Italian embassy, demanding that the Supreme Court allow its ambassador to freely move inside and out of the country: "The Embassy of Italy... has the honour to remind the Ministry of External Affairs of the obligations relating to the protection of diplomatic agents enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of April 18, 1961..." the note began. The Chief Justice interrupted mordantly: "This reminds us of the word 'honourable' used to describe Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar!" The Ides of March indeed for the Italian Ambassador.

More topically, when a nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court [sat down in 1993](#) to decide on how judges are to be appointed in India, no less than three of Shakespeare's plays got air-time: *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*. One can fairly assume that the proposed Judicial Accountability Act, meant to dismantle the 'collegium system' approved in that case, will owe less to English literature. But one never knows.

Amidst all this Shakespearephilia, sometimes it gets missed that quoting from Shakespeare is not a risk-free enterprise. Anti-Semitism, racism and misogyny are commonplace in the plays and sonnets. *Hamlet*, the most influential play of all time, is notably harsh on women: Elsinore was not a good place to be a girl. The line that best exemplifies this sexism is surely Hamlet's causticity in the wake of Queen Gertrude's incest: "Frailty, thy name is woman!" It would take a brave judge to flirt with quoting this line in the modern age. And yet, there it is in a [Supreme Court case from 1997](#):

"Frailty, thy name is woman", was the ignominy heaped upon women of [the] Victorian Era by William Shakespeare in his great work *Hamlet*. The history of sociology has, however, established the contrary, i.e., 'fortitude', thy name is woman; 'caress', thy name is woman; 'self-sacrifice', thy name is woman..."

In launching into damage control on Mr. Shakespeare's behalf, two rules are violated here: an attempt to improve on a Shakespearean quote is doomed to failure (though an attempt to reduce to a Shakespearean soliloquy may be hilarious, as demonstrated by Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Laurie in [this sketch](#).); moreover, feminism is quite a different thing from (it is in fact the very opposite of) indiscriminate praise heaped on all women.



*The Bombay High Court/Photograph Aditya Bapak*

Here's the Bombay High Court quoting the same line, [in a 1995 case](#)-

"'Frailty, thy name is woman' is spoken of sensual spell of women demobilising equanimity of even historic personages like sage Vishwamitra. On the face of tempting spell of enchantresses hardest sheath of high degree of equanimity of mind, not only of mortals are susceptible to passion but Gods seems to be hardly any better."

Whatever this means, turning sexism to creepiness is no mean achievement. (Incidentally, this was a rape case. The judge also quoted Shakespeare for the line "My chastity's the jewel of our house, bequeathed down from many ancestors.")

On a more cheerful note, the Delhi High Court (tellingly, a female judge) tackled the 'frailty' line [a lot better](#)-

The speech generalizes the attribution of weakness from one particular woman to womankind.

A good riposte, and not a bad piece of literary criticism either. It also helps make my next point, which is that the Bard's wisdom is best confined to the world he devised in his plays. Since these pieces were mainly not designed for general application, they can often act as poor guides for deciding real life cases. Dostoyevsky derided "that cursed Shakespeare who will poke his nose where he is not wanted". Literary works can act as mood providers for boring facts or polish for arguments, but they should never have to play the Prince of Denmark.

The ultimate inessentiality of the iambic pentameter to courtrooms is underscored by a courtroom exchange quoted in Vicaji Taraporewalla's *Tales from the Bench and the Bar*. Rustom Kolah, an old Bombay lawyer, was strenuously arguing a tax case before the High Court. After hearing him for a while, the Chief Justice remarked-

"Mr. Kolah, the lady doth protest too much methinks."

Kolah responded with perfect gravity, "There is no lady in my case."



[www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net)



Free online magazine from village earth  
Volume Three December 2014

**Live Encounters is celebrating 5 years 2010-2014**



Photograph/Mark Ulyseas