Original Article
ISSN (Online): 2582-7472

ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts
Special Issue on Emerging Trends and Innovations
Across Multidisciplinary Research 7(9s)

RE-PLACING MEMORY: INTERTEXTUAL COLLAGE AND MNEMONIC HISTORIOGRAPHY IN LAKSMISREE BANERJEE'S PEAHEN PASSIONS

Soumyajyoti Banerjee [1]

[1] Assistant Professor, IMI Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Received 27 February 2026
Accepted 29 April 2026
Published 08 May 2026

Corresponding Author
Soumyajyoti Banerjee,
soumyajyoti.b@imibh.edu.in

DOI
10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i9s.2026.8015

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

Indian English poetry is frequently characterised by its ability to navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity. Within this poetic landscape, Laksmisree Banerjee's Peahen Passions (2013), emerges as a fertile site for the exploration of memory as a dynamic, reconstructive force. Banerjee, a distinguished scholar, Fulbright Fellow, and classical vocalist, brings a multidisciplinary sensibility to her craft. She weaves together eco-feminism, postcoloniality, and universal humanism. This investigation expands upon the premise of her poetic practice by applying a rigorous theoretical framework centered on intertextuality and the philosophy of history. By synthesizing the theoretical paradigms of Julia Kristeva, Michael Riffaterre, and Hayden White, the analysis explores how Banerjee re-places memory through an intertextual collage that transcends mere personal recollection to become a metanarrative of internationalism.

Keywords: Memory, Intertextuality, Collage, Historiography

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. KRISTEVA AND THE TRANSPOSITION OF THE SUBJECT: THE ARCHITECTURE OF INTERTEXTUALITY

…she is here and now
she is you and me
…she is everywhere
…our *Durga,* our *Lakshmibai,* our resurrected *Christ.*

… 'Nirbhaya', pp. 17

To understand the complexity of Banerjee's poetic project, one must first engage with the evolving theories of intertextuality that underpin her work. Intertextuality is not a static concept of mere influence but a transformative process involving the transposition of sign systems (Aziz et al., 2024). This transposition serves as the tool through which history is imbibed and re-stated.

In *Nous Deux or a History of Intertextuality* Julia Kristeva states: "For me, intertextuality is mostly a way of making *history* go down in us" (Kristeva, 2002). So, while referring to the theoretical position of the intertextual it is not sufficient just to perceive it as the inter-play of varying literary or linguistic elements, namely, intertexts. For, while it is true to say that history (in its modern sense) is created by language; it is something more than that. It is a collective of ideas and ideologies about events in the past that individuals and nations share (Páez et al., 2015). Kristeva very interestingly points out that history goes down in us, one can assume it to be *passed* down in us (within the individual and national consciousness) in the form of traditions. History is thus, memory in the making. Memory and history are related concepts (Cubitt, 2013).

For Banerjee, this means that the poetic subject is never a solitary voice but an intersection of collective historical and mythical resonances. The 're-placed' memory in the text acts as a site of duality and ambivalence, where the discourse of official history is challenged by the polyphonic voices of the dispossessed (Belastegui, 2011).

2. HAYDEN WHITE AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MEMORY

The second pillar of this theoretical structure is by Hayden White. White examines the intersection of catastrophe, communal memory, and mythic discourse (Rønning, 2009). He points out that there are basically two aspects of memory, the traditionalised memory which is latent information and accounts of the past of a people stored as lore; and rationalised memory which is accounts of that past (White, 2000). Rationalised memory is essentially written and is accessible to anyone who reads it. This is where history is formed. We will however not talk about history as a linear, solid point in time. We shall conceptualise it as a corpus of interpretations of what was with innumerable links and connotations. Thus, speaking of history is, in essence, speaking of the historiography of something i.e. how a history is formed. Anne Rønning points out that "…all history is memory as perceived by the author, or, an interpretation of the past" (Rønning, 2009). So, the formation of history or historiography is driven by the subjectivity of the author. Here Ronning again points out that "Memory is only valid for the person who experiences the historical event, and is always a synthesis of facts" (Rønning, 2009). Memory and history are both re-structuring of the past (Last, 2013), and sometimes both can become distorted or can lead to several echoes of the same event leading to varied historiographies. This is done by representations which are re-constructions of the past. The representations are memory at work. The collective memory which works as a re-presentation gives rise to a historiography that is strewn into polyphony of voices. Memory is thus, not only re-presented but also re-placed (as in a poetic invocation) from its historical context *into* a new one, like that of the contemporary. Mnemonic images and ideas cross paths creating a collage of human experience. Encapsulating memory and history within the framework of the literary (or poetic) makes them *essentially* 'intertextual.

White argues that during times of social crises, myths as discourse emanates to fill the semantic space left vacant by the failure of rational systems to account for human suffering (Kølvraa, 2011). Banerjee's poetry operates precisely in this space, utilizing myth to emplot (insert footnote) historical events, such as the 2012 Delhi gang rape or the Kargil war, within a larger narrative of human tragedy and perseverance.

3. RIFFATERRE AND THE SEMIOTICS OF POETIC INDIRECTION

While Kristeva focuses on the ideological transposition of texts, and White on the interplay of memory, Michael Riffaterre asks a very pertinent question; what makes the poetic language intertextual? He provides the semiotic tools to understand how intertexts function at a linguistic level. He talks about the relation between poetic and everyday language which is considered the 'norm.' While poetic language is pre-supposed to be a departure from everyday language, it is, in fact, nothing more than a manipulation of heterogenous socio-historical material by the singular norm governing non-poetic language as well. This is the paradox, that while poetry is referred to as a deviation, it is in fact the site where the norm is active. The norm makes the poetic practice intertextual. Riffaterre argues that poetic language creates meaning through indirection, that is, a poem "says one thing and means another" (Riffaterre, 1978). This is achieved through "displacement, distortion, or creation" of meaning (Riffaterre, 1978). J. Hillis Miller writes, "The poem, like all texts, is 'unreadable', if by 'readable' one means open to a single, definitive, univocal interpretation" (Miller, 2007).

This means that a poem's meaning *is* unequivocal, made of fragments of texts, sub-texts and con-texts. We shall refer to these fragments as intertexts.

In the poetry of Laksmisree Banerjee the intertexts keep recurring in an attempt to observe and analyse the present existential condition. This perception can result from a feeling of absence of something worthwhile in the current world and thus the tendency to look back. Looking back invokes memory and begins the process of historiography. In her work, the mnemonic collage functions as a series of semantic anomalies that force the reader to move from a literal (mimetic) reading to a higher level of significance. The hypogram[1] such as the myth of Draupadi or the image of a concentration camp), serves as the constructive matrix for the poem's meaning (Riffaterre, 1978). Following are the theoretical constructs we shall use in our analysis and their respective functions.

Theoretical Concept	Leading Scholar	Functional Application in Banerjee's Poetry
Transposition	Julia Kristeva	Converting historical events into mythic archetypes (e.g., Nirbhaya as Durga).
Hypogram	Michael Riffaterre	Using pre-existent motifs (e.g., the Pied Piper) to generate new meaning in nuclear disaster contexts.
Rationalized Memory	Hayden White	Reinterpreting the written historical record (e.g., the Partition of India) through personal and mythic lenses.
Mnemonic Collage	Interdisciplinary	Juxtaposing discordant images (e.g., Skanderborg highlanders and Sati widows) to form a metanarrative.

4. RESEARCH INQUIRIES: THE SCOPE OF MNEMONIC RE-PLACEMENT

Drawing from the theoretical bases explored earlier this study answers three specific research questions designed to probe the depths of Banerjee's intertextual practice:

1) To what degree does the *re-placement* of memory serve as a catalyst for a subjective mnemonic historiography, and how does this *intertextual* synthesis illuminate the evolving construction of national and global identities within the landscape of Indian English poetry?
2) How effectively do the Riffaterrian paradigms of *accumulation* and *descriptive systems* facilitate the synthesis of localized historical depredations (such as the "black rain" of Hiroshima or the displacement of Nandigram) into a broader metanarrative of universal humanistic archetypes?
3) Through what mechanisms does the *intertextual collage* catalyze the manifestation of an *internationalist metanarrative* that effectively subverts the abjection inherent in localized political agendas? [1]

5. LITERATURE REVIEW: INDIAN ENGLISH POETRY AND THE TURN TO MEMORY

After independence, a new wave of Indian English poetry emerged, a movement where women did not just speak but reclaimed their own stories. This was not just about writing; it was about carving out a sense of self from the heavy shadows of colonial rule and patriarchal expectations (Fatima, 2018). Banerjee follows in the footsteps of pioneers like Kamala Das, who used raw, confessional honesty to challenge the status quo. She also shares a soul with contemporary poets like Mamang Dai, who sifts through the layers of history to ensure that the unique memories of ethnic identity are not lost to time.

Postcolonial literature is often seen as a hostile conversation with the Western classics that came before it (Nayar, 2008). But as scholars like Elleke Boehmer suggest, writers are not just mimicking European styles; they are reinventing them. They engage in a delicate dance of writing and rewriting, resulting in something entirely fresh and distinct (Boehmer, 1998). Banerjee's work is a perfect example of this cultural mashup. She effortlessly weaves ancient Indian myths with the heavyweights of Western literature, including Milton, Shakespeare, and Beckett, and ties them to global turning points. It is a comparative imagination that views the world through a truly global lens.

[1] Riffaterre views the hypogram as an underlying cultural fragment, perhaps a cliché or a common proverb, that acts as the invisible seed of a work. The text does not merely describe its subject but instead expands from this hidden matrix, translating a familiar linguistic kernel into a singular poetic reality.

In the world of literature and healing, there is a growing focus on spectrality, the idea that the past never truly leaves us (Lee, 2016). In Banerjee's poetry, history lingers like a ghost. Whether it is the painful legacy of the Partition or the haunting black rain of Hiroshima, these memories are not just facts in a book; they are intrusive, living presences. Her poems serve as memory sites, quiet spaces where a community that has endured unimaginable loss can find a sense of shared heritage and a way to remember.

6. CLOSE ANALYSIS: THE HISTORICAL-MYTHIC COLLAGE IN *PEAHEN PASSIONS*

In a world of falling order and failing morals, the poet looks back (in time) to find meaning. The trauma that the nation felt on a winter night becomes the initial memory the poet turns to in 'Nirbhaya.' An event etched in the national consciousness, in the collective memory of Indians, Nirbhaya's story becomes historicised in the poem. Her story becomes the text on which the national consciousness is imprinted. The poet perceives this memory as an encounter where everyone—all partakers of the trauma—is 'linked.' Nirbhaya becomes one with everything around:

> …she is here and now
>
> she is you and me
>
> …she is everywhere
>
> …our *Durga,* our *Lakshmibai,* our resurrected *Christ.* [pp. 17]

Her oneness with everything makes existence intertextual. She becomes one with the age-old symbols of the resistance to evil: *Durga, Lakshmibai, Christ.* In an unrelated world of mutual survival Nirbhaya's memory weaves the 'texture' that incorporates seemingly discordant historical or mythical intertexts to form a collage that provides a telling commentary on the experienced trauma. The trauma felt is necessarily accompanied by loss, here maybe of national identity. This loss is *essential.* It necessitates a search for sense. For the poet it implies a journey "in a caravan of peace / to the promised land…." [pp. 18] But what is this 'promised land'? Is it the 'promised land' of Christ (for Christ and Nirbhaya have become one)?

In these lines, the concept of accumulation described by Riffaterre becomes evident as the shared meaning moves toward a sense of sacred resistance and sacrificial suffering. By bringing together the power of the Hindu goddess Durga, the historical warrior queen Lakshmibai, and the central figure of Christ, the work creates an extended cultural metaphor that validates the experience of the victim on a cosmic scale. This reimagining of Christ and Durga helps the modern reader navigate the enigmas of modern violence. Ultimately, this synthesis serves as an act of internationalism, suggesting that the trauma of sexual violence is a global concept that links all of humanity. The journey has its consequences for it is a long and perhaps an improbable one. History has too much blood. For the poet, as she writes in 'Time,' the human condition has effectively textualised the temporality of existence. Time has encapsulated history and memory. Sometimes time *is* memory. Time has, according to the poet, been hurled to death by bloodshed throughout human history.

Human trauma is re-lived again in 'Draupadi.' In this poem, Banerjee looks back at the traditional stories of the Mahabharata through a feminist lens to bring them into a modern setting. The idea that the fire of Draupadi continues to burn uses the word still to act as a link between eras. This suggests a history of the oppressed that stretches across thousands of years.From a slightly feminist view point Banerjee revisits the rationalised memory, and re-places it in the context of the new, but with a sense of irony. Draupadi's memory becomes the intertext in the poetic expression of the subjugation of women in a patriarchal society. She boldly asserts: "Draupadi's fire still rages / to purify and equalize." [pp. 36] Use of the word, 'still', brings in the contemporary context while Draupadi serves as a mnemonic intertext. Further the poet goes on to say: "…the milk of her womanhood / defying the spineless, dying patriarchs." [pp. 36] Is this defiance the defiance of Draupadi alone? For, if it were her fire would not still have raged on: to purify the social psychology and equalise the status of women with men. It is not Draupadi's lone defiance. It is the defiance of countless women who have suffered and are still suffering the same fate as Draupadi at the hands of merciless men. It is the defiance of Nirbhaya; for, she is today's Draupadi. Her abuse *is* Draupadi's abuse, her humiliation, Draupadi's humiliation. In her memory Draupadi is actualised, forming a collage of lived experiences of women separated by millennia.

Collective memory is invoked once more in 'Kargil', a poem about the carnage of war and the resultant human trauma associated with it. Speaking of the experience of loss, the poet says: "We hear and speak the lessons of life / Of terror and trauma recycled every moment…' [pp. 39] The (f)actuality of the war has imbued the national psyche. It has

become historicised in a nation's lived experience as a shared memory. While it is heard and spoken of, the memory of the trauma is 'recycled' continuously in the minds of people who suffered the loss directly and in the nation's collective memory. So, memory here serves as a dynamic entity moving through space and time. It is re-placed over and over again and in doing so it becomes intertextual. While the actual events of the war often turn into a rigid history within the national mind, the poet reframes this memory by focusing on the personal weight of loss rather than the triumph of the state. This approach mirrors Hayden White's concept of the living archive as a space for active debate, where multiple perspectives on what truly happened can coexist.

Banerjee's global outlook is most apparent when she brings distant parts of the world together by using shared images of memory that resonate across different cultures. In 'The Highlanders for Slaughter', the poet connects the rationalised memory of the highlanders of Skanderborg and the widows on the funeral pyre in India, suffering the horror of the Sati system. She tries to make the point that human pain and suffering spans over space and time. When speaking of the plight of 'foreign' highlanders the poet associates the painful look in the eyes of the highlanders with the 'tragic vision' of Indian widows who were burnt alive with their dead husbands as part of the Sati ritual. The individual memories of the victims respectively and the collective memory which is historicised become intermingled forming a collage on the canvas of human living. The canvas becomes further crowded when the poet says:

> unmindful of the slaughter cars
> comingfaster than dooms day
> faster than the evil witches of Macbeth-land,
> faster than the butchers of Kolkata's Kalighat…. [pp. 52]

The lines liquefy socio-cultural boundaries. The comparisons the poet draws with the imminent threat the slaughter cars pose to the highlanders is very interesting. The predatory swiftness of the cars is compared to: 1) dooms day, 2) the witches of Macbeth and 3) the butchers of Kalighat. Three seemingly dissonant images are brought together to form an extended cultural metaphor. The first image is a mythical (or religious) allusion, the second is literary and the third is socio-historical. They are dissimilar mnemonic images. The reference to doomsday calls upon a shared religious memory of final judgment, while the mention of Macbeth land evokes the supernatural elements and gothic terror found in Shakespearean tragedy. These layers are joined by the imagery of the butchers of Kolkata's Kalighat, which brings the memory back to the daily life and rituals of a specific Indian city. By drawing these seemingly different images together, Banerjee builds a coherent cinematic unit akin to a memory montage. This provides a striking commentary on the predatory nature of modern doomsday scenarios. In the texture of the poem, these allusions play the role of intertexts and have the same purpose. They, thus, form a collage of interwoven memories which are re-placed from their respective origins onto the textual. Once more in poems like 'Nandigram' and 'Broken Lives', the poet uses the collective trauma of mass killings at Nandigram and Singur. The haunting memories function as intertexts in the poems.

Banerjee's focus on environmental disasters broadens her collection of interconnected themes to include eco spirituality and a critique of technology. In 'From Hiroshima to Fukushima', collective memory is invoked once more and the trauma of human loss is relived. The distinct intertextual allusion occurs in the following lines:

> We are celebrating
> the carnival of death
> in our waterless
> concentration camps…' [pp. 107]

The words 'concentration camp' is stamped in global-collective-memory. The words bring images of Nazi concentration camps, crammed up and waterless, meant for punishment of the Jews. In the poem, the poet alludes to those images in order to comment on the holocaust that took place at Hiroshima and genocide of Fukushima. The memory of Hiroshima, like that of Nazi concentration camps, has been historicised and rationalised. The respective collective memories of traumatic experiences create an intertextual collage. The sheer trauma of the experience of death (the 'carnival'/festivity) leads the poet to lament: "No god will come alive / To save us from our sins" [pp. 107] The lines are reminiscent of similar lines, in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, where two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, victims perhaps of the second world war, wait for 'Godot' (a symbolic messiah) endlessly. The poet's wait evokes similar pathos. The carnival of death serves as a Riffaterrian distortion of the traditional festival, a choice that highlights the absurdity and the deep sorrow of modern destruction. The intertext holds further implications of the Second Coming to

restore hope for humanity. These implied allusions help articulate the poet's viewpoint and in doing so create an intertextual collage.

In the poem 'The Lost Paradise', the poet revisits the trauma of the Chernobyl disaster. The intertextual allusions in the poem are numerous. First, the title of the poem itself is allusive of John Milton's epic 'Paradise Lost.' Second, concepts of the Paradise and its loss are allusions of a collective-religious nature. Third, the poet heightens the tone of irony from 'From Hiroshima to Fukushima' as to the realisation of a godless world:

and he said
let there be light
and darkness spread
all over, relentlessly
like the spill of Chernobyl…. [pp. 114]

The biblical allusion becomes the source of irony as the command of God becomes the source of destruction in the present-day, because this is a godless world. Biblical allusions continue in the lines: "his black rain deluged / and toppled the ark…" [pp. 114] The rains, that the biblical God sent to deluge the earth becomes black in the poem. This happens because the site onto which the mythological (or religious) memory is re-placed is an area affected by poisonous spill:

embattle innocence
wept in the sodomization
deep within the radio-active
mounds created by
his pied-piper deftness. [pp. 114]

The poet once more summons the rationalised memory of a fantasy story, that of the 'Pied-Piper', and re-places it in a novel context. The point of comparison is the skill of the pied-piper and of human carnage creating radio-active destruction. The poem brings several intertexts and puts them into a collage of random images which validate the trauma of human experience. Continuing on similar lines, the poet in 'Poison' renders a wonderful commentary on the devastation caused by poisonous spill in the contemporary world. While speaking of the horrors of such destruction Banerjee alludes to the biblical image of Satan as the serpent luring man towards his downfall. She opines that the serpent "has grown fat and formidable / drinking its own milk / of blood and venom" [pp. 116] She further goes on to say that the memories of loss 'still' linger on: "We are still dreaming of Power / at Chernobyl, Fukushima or Jaitpur" [pp. 117] The poet combines places from different parts of the globe on the basis of the similarity of lived experience, different and individual, yet similar and collective. Combining these experiences together gives rise to intertextuality. Collaborating the disparate yet analogous memories creates the collage. At its heart, Banerjee's way of revisiting memory aims to create a global story centered on unity, offering it as a remedy for the divisions and discord that pull us apart.

The poet once more turns to the memory of national trauma, an event felt at the core of the Indian nation in the poem "After Gandhi': the partition. Bringing in the figure of Gandhi, as she does in several poems is the first marker of intertextuality as Gandhi serves as traditionalised (he is the mythical figure like the Gods of traditional folklore) and rationalised (his life and actions are recorded in history and in the national psyche) simultaneously. While remembering the horrors of the Indian partition, the poet says:

Turbans, caps, head-covers
ripped open with skulls and wombs,
…their mad fury of Cains and Abels
obliterated forever
our *Rama-Lakshman* story. [pp. 118]

Allusions to the Bible and mythological accounts are evident in the memory of Cain and Abel. Their story is re-placed to refer to the terror of riots and mass genocide that took place during the partition. But allusions continue further as the 'mad fury' destroys India's sacred story of 'Rama' and 'Lakshman'—a story of brotherhood. Like Cain and Abel, Rama and Lakshman are also mythological figures. Both these myth-as-memory serve as intertexts creating a collage with a sense

irony: that such genocide would happen in Indian, a land devoted to the idea of fraternity since antiquity. Once again the poet reiterates the oneness of the traumatic experiences of humanity in the lines:

after many holocausts
after many ayodhyas…
after many gujrats and after many such
junglemahals…. [pp. 118]

Regions and experiences from across the globe are actualised and re-placed as memory-at-work in a beautiful intertextual collage. While holocausts, ayodyas, gujrats and jungle mahals are conflicting in their spacio-temporality, their combination into a parallel historiography, forming an intertext, may be seen as the poet's step toward the developing ideology of 'internationalism.'

Experiences of trauma or loss necessarily entail a coming to terms with it. For Banerjee, it means searching for evidence of immutability and permanence. For her, it is a quest for oneness that will serve as a cure to disparity and dissension. This is where as a poet (driven by a particular ideology) she embarks on journey to find that 'promised land' we spoke of earlier; a land where unity will exist among humanity; where boundaries will collapse. The poet's ideology of internationalism constitutes the smallest factions of individual memory which she eloquently transmutes into a holistic collective experience.

In 'Of Mother and Trees', the poet remembers her mother. She speaks of the bitter experiences she had to endure at the hands of the patriarchy. The memory of her mother is re-placed from the past onto a new context. The context is that of a collective experience: of womanhood. To make her point Banerjee the draws parallel to the experience of Anne Frank in Nazi concentration camps: "My Mother was perhaps born / on the same day as Anne Frank." [pp. 30] Drawing such a parallel fuses the two experiences together forming an intertextual collage. But Banerjee's vision extends further as goes on to say that just as Anne's dreams were unfulfilled throughout her life, so were the dreams of her mother: "Her dreams lived throughout her / full life, forever unfulfilled" [pp. 30] Here, Anne and the poet's mother become one; they merge just as texts do. The vision, the poet tries to achieve, is that of a trans-cultural internationalism. In the poem 'Light', the poet makes her point clearer. The line, "Breathing in worlds within worlds, Living in worlds beyond worlds….", is a reminder that existence is plural. Its plurality entails a layered structure where worlds hold other worlds, just like texts hold other texts—that is the point we are trying to make in this paper. While the poet looks for traces of 'worlds beyond worlds' we beg to ask the question: what kind of a world and where is it? Is it once more a search for that "promised land" where the ideal of internationalism could be lived? The poet looks for an intertextual metanarrative. Her search leads us to the poem, 'Poetry of Life', where in elegiac tones the poet says: "All poets remain buried / in the cenotaphs of hatred…" [pp. 59] When the poet says 'all poets' she means 'all' irrespective of where they belong to. Socio-cultural boundaries collapse and an intertextual metanarrative takes shape: that of a long cherished internationalism. For in the poem, the "Tagore's, Faiz's, Shelley's…/… have merged…." [pp. 59] Their merger not only implies an intertextual collage (a merger of their memories) but also the establishment of a vision where these poets, from different places and different times inter-fuse with each other. This represents a global perspective that moves across cultural boundaries, drawing on the memories of those living far from home and the overlapping layers of time to reveal our shared human experience. In the poem 'Gandhi: The Father', the figure of the mythic Gandhi (a traditionalised memory) is brought back. While it serves as an intertext it further creates a collage in the following lines:

He was rent apart, cut open
Partitioned and killed
But he ascended while he descended
And remained invincible….' [pp. 90]

The lines are allusive of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; a collective-religious memory. Even while voicing the trauma that Gandhi suffered, like that of Christ, the poet inches closer to her ideology of internationalism, where figures merge in a unity of experience. In 'Niagara Revisited', the poet's vision of internationalism creates an intertextual collage by bringing natural elements together. The Niagara and the Ganga are referred to as "immortal sisters." Their sisterhood reminds us of the sisterhood of the poet's mother and Anne Frank. Their (the rivers') 'unfolding story' is a story of common bondage, common experience and a common goal, born from a common "infinite mother." The greatest poetic expression of an envisioned internationalism is found in the poem 'International Anthem (A Song).' In the poem

the poet emphatically states: "Where nations meet and minds merge / Where souls meet and suns emerge…" [pp. 44] The place where nations meet and minds 'merge' would surely become intertextual to say the least. It would be a canvas painted with a collage of various colours of humanity. But it will also be a place where the norms of humanity would break, for in the contemporary world such a place impossible. This is the epiphany that the poet has and she further goes on to say:

> You come to me, I come to you
> With faith and devotion
> here is but one world…. [pp. 45]

The inter-cultural collage results in a prophetic utterance and dreams of oneness, of internationalism. The unitary existence the poet envisions in having just 'one world' is possible when there is faith and devotion, and this is where the poet comprehends the failure of human ability.

In 'The God and the Gopinis', the poet speaks of the mythic 'Krishna'—a character from the Indian epic Mahabharata. Bringing in Krishna's character is a mythical (religious-collective-memory) allusion and serves as an intertext. She imagines the music of '*Krishna's* melodies' enchanting the souls of his *gopinis.* However, the figure of the mystical Krishna, since it serves as an intertext, is summoned to comment on the postmodern condition of man thus: "Not knowing the infinite truth of illusory dances of change, / Unaware of the imminent death of godhood" [pp. 66] The point being that since the postmodern man has killed god (or godhead) mythological memories only serve as distortions of the truth. When nations break and create boundaries of separation dreams of the 'promised land' of Christ or Krishna (where eternal music flows) might just be an elusive impossibility. The poetry reaches its powerful peak in International Anthem (A Song), as the poet envisions a promised land where nations meet and minds unite.

7. CONCLUSION: MEMORY AS A FORCE FOR GLOBAL ETHICS

Riffaterre suggests that the true weight of a poem often comes from a hidden core or a minimal unit known as a matrix. This central idea might not even appear directly in the text, yet it acts as the source for the entire descriptive network of the poem. In the collection titled Peahen Passions, we can identify this core as the figure of the Peahen herself. She is a mysterious and vital presence who deeply values her independence and serves as a global representative for a more hopeful world. This central figure gives rise to a rich system of themes that include the rhythms of nature, the strength of eco feminism, the depth of classical music, and a commitment to international unity.

The poet uses a technique of gathering similar images to build a deeper meaning across her work. For example, the recurring presence of fire, whether it appears in the ancient stories of Draupadi, as sacred offerings, or as the burning of pine trees, establishes a shared sense of purification and change. At the same time, references to characters like the Pied Piper or the world of Macbeth serve as foundations for a much larger figurative expansion. These allusions multiply the meaning of the writing far beyond its literal dictionary definitions. We see this in the jarring transformation of a life giving element into a carrier of death, such as the black rain of Chernobyl. Similarly, the joining of the goddess Durga, the warrior queen Lakshmibai, and the figure of Christ represents a powerful convergence around the idea of sacred resistance against harm. By reimagining old fables like that of the Pied Piper, the poet reinterprets traditional skill as the dangerous and lethal efficiency of modern nuclear technology. In this way, the Peahen remains a free and seeking spirit that generates a vision centered on global liberty and peace.

This exploration of Peahen Passions reveals that the act of reclaiming and reframing memory is not just a literary trick but a renewing force for our modern age. By blending various theoretical insights, we can see her layered imagery as a sophisticated way of documenting history. This tool allows the poet to navigate the complex and often confusing pathways of the past. The images rooted in memory within her poetry, ranging from a statue of Gandhi standing at a crossroads to the radioactive remains found in Chernobyl, work to bridge the gap between the extreme opposites of life and death or good and evil. Her work proves that neither our memories nor our recorded histories are perfectly objective. Instead, they are a mix of facts driven by the unique perspective of the author. In a world struggling under the weight of historical power struggles and the deep scars of modern life, her global vision offers a hopeful message of unity.

Ultimately, the poetry of Banerjee functions as a living archive that challenges traditional or overly simplified versions of history. She offers a way of understanding that crosses cultural lines and shines through every part of her writing. Her search for a promised land remains a goal that gives us a sense of safety, value, and wholeness. Even if such

a place feels difficult to reach, it remains the vital heartbeat of her work. The act of revisiting memory in this collection is an ethical mission and a sincere request for human friendship in an age that often feels like it is on the brink of collapse. By braiding together the threads of literature, music, and learning, she lights a path toward a more peaceful future where the diverse pieces of the human story can finally come together in a unified experience.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

Aziz, A., & Qasmi, N. U. Q. (2024). Intertextual modes and postcolonial critique: A study of integration and interfigurality in The Centre (2023). Panacea Journal of Linguistics & Literature, 3(1), 292–305.

Banerjee, L. (2013). Peahen passions. Authorspress.

Banerjee, L. (2020, October 14). Gandhi at crossroads. Borderless Journal. https://borderlessjournal.com/2020/10/14/gandhi-at-crossroads/

Belastegui, N. (2011). Between order and transgression: Ambivalence in the novels of Anthony Burgess [Doctoral dissertation, University of Liverpool]. University of Liverpool Repository.

Boehmer, E. (Ed.). (1998). Empire writing: An anthology of colonial literature 1870–1918. Oxford University Press.

Cubitt, G. (2013). History and memory. Manchester University Press.

Fatima, N. (2018). A survey of feminism in some women poets of Indian writing in English. The Criterion: An International Journal in English, 9(1), 74–80.

Kristeva, J. (2002). Nous deux or a history of intertextuality. The Romanic Review, 93(1–4), 7–21.

Kølvraa, C., & Ifversen, J. (2011). Myth and history: Politics in European integration – The myth of the fathers. Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 19(1), 111–125.

Last, J. (2013). The nature of history. In I. Hodder, M. Shanks, A. Alexandri, V. Buchli, J. Carman, B. Last, & G. Lucas (Eds.), Interpreting archaeology: Classical considerations, theoretical contexts (pp. 141–157). Routledge.

Lee, C. (2016). Haunting effects of spectral spaces in postcolonial literature. Research Scholar: An International Refereed Journal of Literary Explorations, 4(3), 20–32.

Li, J. (2009). Intertextuality and national identity: Discourse of national conflicts in daily newspapers in the United States and China. Discourse & Society, 20(1), 85–121.

Miller, J. H. (2007). The critic as host. In D. Lodge & N. Wood (Eds.), Modern criticism and theory: A reader (3rd ed., pp. 278–285). Pearson Education.

Nayar, P. K. (2008). Postcolonial literature: An introduction. Pearson Education India.

Páez, D., Bobowik, M., Liu, J. H., & Basabe, N. (2015). Shared beliefs about world history and cultural context: A theoretical review and a collective-level analysis. In F. García (Ed.), Contextualizing human memory: An interdisciplinary approach to understanding how communities and nations remember the past (pp. 102–124). Psychology Press.

Riffaterre, M. (1978). Semiotics of poetry. Indiana University Press.

Rønning, A. H. (2000). Some reflections on myth, history and memory as determinants of narrative. In B. Stråth (Ed.), Myth and memory in the construction of society (pp. 163–175). P.I.E.-Peter Lang.

Rønning, A. H. (2009). Some reflections on myth, history and memory as determinants of narrative. Coolabah, (3), 143–151.

White, H. (2000). Catastrophe, communal memory and mythic discourse: The uses of myth in the reconstruction of society. In B. Stråth (Ed.), Myth and memory in the construction of society (pp. 49–62). P.I.E.-Peter Lang.

Writers International Edition. (n.d.). The storied journey of Prof. (Dr. Ms.) Laksmisree Banerjee: A scholar, poet, and cultural ambassador. https://www.writersedition.com/the-storied-journey-of-prof-dr-ms-laksmisree-banerjee-a-scholar-poet-and-cultural-ambassador/