

mention of Celia Cruz and her legacy. She also highlights the remarkable contributions of Fannie Lou Hamer, expresses her solidarity for Coretta Scott King, reminisces her close association with the Black leader Martin Luther King Jr., discusses her bitter-sweet experiences of marriage with Paul Du Feu, offers a note of gratitude to her long lost lovers and captures a verse on the instincts of survival.

Pallavi Gogoi*

GREIL MARCUS AND WERNER SOLLORS (EDS).

A New Literary History of America.

Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009,

pp: 1095, Price: US\$ 23, ISBN: 978-0-674-03594

The volume in tracing the significant literary history of America that encompasses multiple voices of the nation, both narrates and re-examines the continuously evolving American experience in a bid to explore newer aspects of growth and development in American literary history. It contains informative entries on some of the leading American writers and intellectuals such as Anne Bradstreet, Phillis Wheatley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, Edith Wharton, W.E.B. Du Bois, Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Eugene O' Neill, Jean Toomer, William Faulkner, Saul Bellow, Robert Lowell, Flannery O' Connor, Philip Roth and Toni Morrison to mention a few. Further, the volume contains serially arranged essays which interestingly captures the composite culture that defines the American nation.

In broad strokes, the reader will find a wide range of information starting from the sea journey of Christopher Columbus to America in 1507 to the American nation being placed on a world map in 1607; the Salem Witchcraft trials of 1692 to the Declaration of Independence in 1776; changing literary trends from the Gothic to Transnational Poetry; days of Jim Crow to the Civil Rights; the Cherokee Nation's decision to Democracy in America; from the Slave narratives in 1838 to the American Transcendalist movement of 1855; from John Muir's Nature writing(1879) and introduction of Motion Pictures (1888) to the

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invention of Blues music (1903); and the first black President in the history of America, Barack Obama (2008) to numerous other significant developments that has come to define newer ways of reading the history of the nation.

Gitanjali Medhi*

ACHARYA MAHAPRAGYA & A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM.

The Family and the Nation.

New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008,

pp: i-vii+i-ix+215, Rs. 250, ISBN: 978-81-7223-747-9

What makes a nation great? Is it macro economic growth, industrial growth, technological growth or a strong political system? We may put our arguments from different perspectives. But, ultimately one must return to the roots. It is people who form a nation, build a country or run a system. The next question is what kind of people can make a noble and developed nation in a true sense? Here comes the role of the smallest social group-the family. This fundamental but complex subject is discussed in the book *The Family and the Nation* by two prominent personalities, Acharya Mahapragya and Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Acharya Mahapragya is a Jain monk, Dr. A.P.J. Kalam is a visionary of contemporary India both belonging to different social backgrounds. While one had embarked the spiritual path at the tender age of ten, the other was a man of science and politics. However, their common understanding of a model Indian society, as well as, the nation, respect for some universal values that define the notion of 'Bharat' brought them together towards exchanging thoughts and ideas which are essential, spiritual and practical in nature. In the words of Dr. Kalam, "We thought over the question of how a noble nation could be formed and came to the conclusion that its seeds need to be sown in a family."

The book is divided into two parts with the titles 'The Evolution' and 'The Individual, The Family and The Nation' respectively. While the first part deals with the dynamics and evolutionary process of the Indian culture, it also delves on the idea of unity. The writings highlight the elements that led to the growth of

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American literature, like America, has long been engaged in pursuing a destiny independent from English rule or tutelage, and its history is likewise the site of key dates, turning points, decisive shifts. In 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered his lecture "The American Scholar" to the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard - a declaration of literary independence soon fulfilled by a busy half-decade (1850-55), in which Whitman, Melville, Hawthorne, Thoreau and Emerson himself all produced major books. The book's identity as a work of history with a literary flavour is confirmed in the final chapter, a series of artworks inspired by the election of Barack Obama, where the stake is American public life rather than American literature. This book is described on its cover as "America singing, celebrating itself and becoming altogether different, plural, singular, new". Luckily, the contents don't bear out this frighteningly wholesome agenda. Greil Marcus, the better known of the two editors, specialises in rich and wilful explorations of high and low culture. It's not surprising that a book with him as one of its devisers should contain articles about Bob Dylan, Miles Davis, Hank Williams and Irving Berlin, Chaplin, *Some Like It Hot* and *Psycho*. More unexpected but equally successful is the inclusion of *ess* November 1994. Alberto Moreiras. Jose David Saldivar. I draw out these parallels in order to argue for a new understanding of literary history that is just as interested in drift, variation, and fragmentation as it is interested in expectancy, reinforcement, and cohesion. Correlation, not causation, is the narrative thread of this new literary history. View full-text. Article. Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (eds.), *A New Literary History of America*. August 2010. Journal of American Studies. Paul Giles. MarcusGreil and SollorsWerner (eds.), *A New Literary History of America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009, £36.95). Pp. xxvii+1095.