

# RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017



Welcome to the May 2017 issue of *RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER*

**In this issue:** Recommended Reads: *Bicycle Dreaming*, *The Great Derangement*, *The Spy*

This Month: SCI-HUB

“Read the Book-Watch the Movie”: *Gone Girl*

Website of the Month: Grammar Girl

International Museum Day

Reading Club upcoming Events: Conversation with Monu Tamang, *Girl on the Train*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> RTC Book Fair, June 5-6

## Recommended Reads from the RTC community

### *Bicycle Dreaming* by Mridula Koshy

I've had *Bicycle Dreaming* on my list of books to read since attending Koshy's presentation at last August's Mountain Echoes Literary Festival. I was impressed with her work as a librarian for the Deepalaya Community Library Project, which provides library services in a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of south Delhi.

In *Bicycle Dreaming*, Koshy takes us through the dirty, maze-like lanes of Chirag Dilli, once home to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Sufi mystic Nasiruddin Mahmud Chirag and into the cramped one room home of the Saidullah's.

Noor, a young Muslim girl, has just celebrated her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday and is surprised that thirteen feels no different than twelve. Her father, Mohammad, is a kabadiwala, and Noor dreams of learning to ride a bicycle to become India's first female kabadiwali. She fills her new school journal with drawings of green bicycles.

Talib, the son, works in a call center and wants a better life for himself. As his father's situation worsens, Talib takes on more responsibility supporting the family and wants due recognition. Tensions between father and son arise and Talib leaves home, but not before Noor's carelessness causes the death of his twelve prized pigeons. Ameena chooses to leave her husband and daughter to attend to her son in his new apartment.

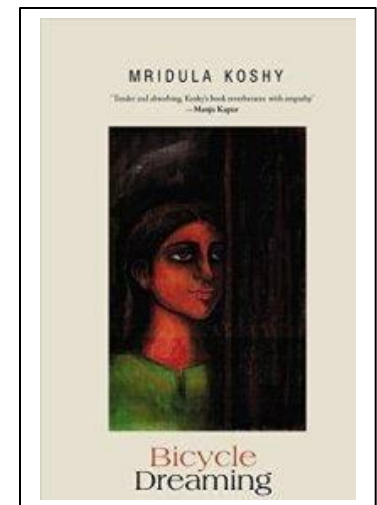
Mohammad loses his job collecting other people's discards and junk. And is forced to work scavenging for material in the large garbage heaps. He keeps his plight secret from Noor, who only notices that his clothes smell and are covered in soot, which makes it impossible for her to get clean.

Noor, angry at her mother's preference for Talib, is left to do all the cooking and cleaning in addition to attending school. She begins to understand the responsibilities that had fallen to her best friend Hasmeena, who has recently been pulled out of school and sent to her father's village. Noor misses Hasmeena and finds friendship with Ajith, a Dalit boy. The story ends on Noor's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. The year has brought about changes she hadn't imagined.

Koshy has a wonderful eye for detail and writes with compassion. It is clear from her community work that she is familiar with the working class life she writes about. **Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

**Location:**

**Call No.: FIC K86b**



#### Quotes:

*“Why was Baba bringing into the light what had been in the dark till now?”*

*“He was grateful that he was Mohammad with no other name, and not Laksman whose name guaranteed him the job of latrine cleaner. Thus it was Mohammad learned even misfortune has its high and low mark.”*

*“Noor kicked at the air and the dogs shied away, but they were only pretending to be fearful just as she was only pretending to be fierce.”*

*“She took the kind of pleasure intoning these sentiments she would have felt picking at a wound, unwilling for it to heal.”*

*“The battle of motherhood was not a battle for sons or daughters, but one against other mothers.”*

*“She wondered why everywhere she went people were in the mood to be funny when the business of her own life was so serious tonight.”*

## The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable by Amitav Ghosh

Amitav Ghosh is another writer whose sessions I attended at the 2016 Mountain Echoes Literary Festival and *The Great Derangement* another book I can cross off of my list of 'wanna reads'. Of course, after reading it, my list has increased by ten more titles! *The Great Derangement* is a thought provoking book, covering a wide variety of issues relating to climate change. Days after finishing, I continue to mull over the issues and as I write, I wonder if my review will do justice to Ghosh's multifaceted enquiry into the unthinkable. In short: Read this book!

The book is divided into three sections: Stories, History, and Politics. In the first section, Ghosh tells stories that highlight today's disregard for past knowledge and how greed and development place people (rich and poor) in jeopardy. We learn of Tsunami Stones along the coast of Japan; some placed more than six centuries ago. The stones warn residents not to build their homes below them; yet such warnings have gone unheeded. Not only have homes been built but nuclear plants as well.

In History, Ghosh tackles the causes of today's climatic conditions. He has us look into how imperialism and colonialism, in addition to capitalism, have played a disastrous role in accelerating the carbon economy in the West while retarding the economic development of their colonial empires. It is a complicated, global history with often contradictory and counterintuitive components.

In Politics, Ghosh compares the text of the 2015 Paris Agreement with Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Laudato Si*. For him, the Paris Agreement represents an insipid document that ironically puts blind faith in the miracle of technological advances that "will soon make it possible to whisk greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere and bury them deep underground", whereas the encyclical, written in clear, precise language, offers no miracles, no panacea. For the Pope, it our reliance on the 'technocratic paradigm' that prevents us from seeing the deepest roots of our present failures".

Ghosh believes that "global inaction on climate change is by no means the result of confusion or denialism or lack of planning". On the contrary, he says, "the maintenance of the status quo is the plan" and our lack of action to challenge the status quo has paved the way for greater military intrusion into our lives. In the U.S., intelligence services have made the surveillance of environmentalists and climate activists a top domestic priority. While portions of the population continue to deny the extent of the problem and the majority of people go about their daily life making few changes to their lifestyle, the Pentagon and the Dept. of Homeland Security have identified climate change as 'a severe and imminent danger.' It is time to ask to what lengths the U.S. government will go to protect its standing as a world leader.

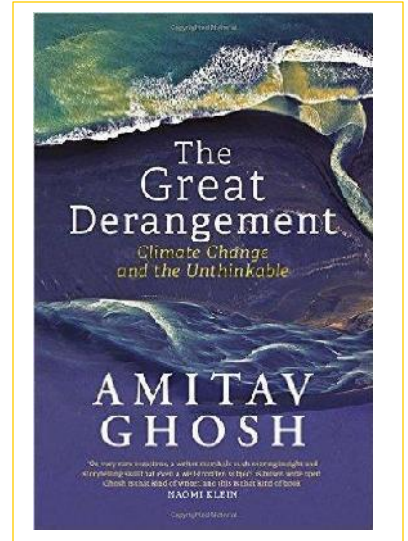
An issue that Ghosh weaves throughout the book is questioning what role literature plays in addressing climate change and his concern that writers have remained disturbingly quiet in writing about these issues. According to John Updike, serious literature ought to focus on the 'individual moral adventure' rather than concern itself with humanity in the aggregate. But Ghosh would disagree and says, "Just when global warming has become a collective predicament, humanity is obsessed with the individual and the idea of the collective has been exiled from politics, economics and literature alike."

The few novelists who have ventured to address climate change are often not taken seriously and their work is relegated to Sci-Fi (and the new genre: Cli-Fi). Ghosh asks, "Is it possible that the arts and literature of this time will one day be remembered not for their daring, nor for their championing of freedom, but rather because of their complicity in the *Great Derangement*?" Let's hope not. **Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

**Location: MAIN**

**Call No.: 363.73874 G42g 2016**

For an interesting article on tsunami stones: *Tsunami Warnings, Written in Stone*  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/21/world/asia/21stones.html>



### Quotes:

*"There are many who believe that a Malthusian 'correction' is the only hope for the continuance of 'our way of life'.*

*"As we watch the sun go down, evening after evening, through the smog across the poisoned waters of our native earth, we must ask ourselves seriously whether we really wish some future universal historian on another planet to say about us: 'With all their genius and with all their skill, they ran out of foresight and air and food and water and ideas,' or, 'They went on playing politics until their world collapsed around them.'" U-Thant (1971)*

*"God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. If an entire nation of 300 millions [sic] took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts." Gandhi (1928)*

*"Gandhi, like many others, understood intuitively what Asia's history would eventually demonstrate: that the universalist premise of industrial civilization was a hoax; that a consumerist mode of existence, if adopted by a sufficient number of people, would quickly become unsustainable and would lead, literally, to the devouring of the planet."*

*"How did a state of consciousness come into being such that millions of people would move to such dangerously exposed locations?"*

*"Our lives and our choices are enframed in a pattern of history that seems to leave us nowhere to turn but towards our self-annihilation."*

## The Spy by Paulo Coelho

*The Spy*, by Paulo Coelho is an historical novel based on real events from the life of the legendary Mata Hari, who was convicted of spying for the Germans during WWI.

The prologue opens as Mata Hari is being led out of her Paris prison cell. She has been found guilty of espionage and is about to face a firing squad. Neither bound nor blindfolded, she stands bravely, facing the twelve armed Zouaves.

Part I and II are told through her voice, via her final letter to her lawyer and one time lover, Edouard Clunet. Here, we catch glimpses of her life. Born Margaretha Zelle, she is raped by the school principal at age 16. At 19, eager to escape the Netherlands, she responds to the following ad in a local newspaper:

*Rudolf Macleod, an officer in the Dutch army of Scottish descent, currently stationed in Indonesia, seeks bride to get married and live abroad.*

Margaretha and Rudolf are married three months later. But what might have been a wonderful adventure, turns into an ugly nightmare. Rudolf, twenty years her senior, is an abusive, sadistic drunk. Their marriage lasts for nine years, during which time their son dies. Upon separation, she loses custody of her daughter.

Escaping her marriage, she changes her name to Mata Hari, remakes herself as an exotic dancer, and arrives penniless in Paris where she becomes famous for her brazen behavior and risqué performances.

In the telling of the story, Coelho drops the names of famous people of the time (such as Freud, Picasso, Modigliani, Dreyfus, and Oscar Wilde). He creatively includes a short story written by Oscar Wilde, a letter from a young deserter, Jorn, to his fiancé, and a list of Mata Hari's trunk contents.

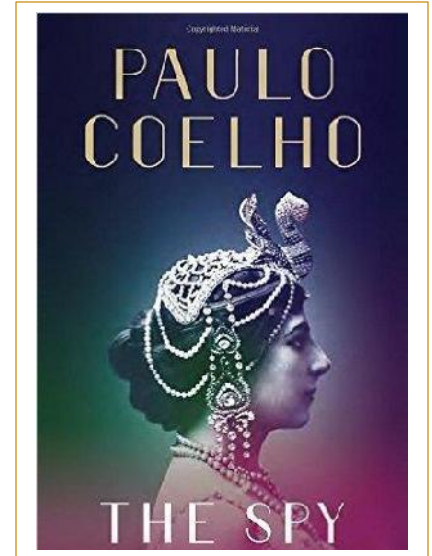
While in Germany, Mata Hari is recruited as a spy by a German officer and is given the code name H21, 20,000 francs, and three flasks of invisible ink. She soon throws the ink into the river, thinking, "This was something for children who like to play war but never imagined they would be taken so seriously by adults." Back in England, she contacts the French to offer her services as a double agent.

When Mata Hari is arrested, she profusely claims her innocence, exclaiming, "I am a prostitute yes. But a spy never."

Part III is told by Edouard, in his letter to Mata Hari the day before her execution. He outlines all he has done in her defense, highlighting the obstacles and the prejudices against her that has made her defense difficult, confiding, "When you were on the stand, they were the ones who lied, but I was defending a publicly discredited person." As he writes, he begins to question if he has done all he could to save her.

After reading *The Spy*, I wanted to know more about Mata Hari. Coelho's account leads us to question if she was really guilty of spying, or was her only crime that of being a strong, independent woman with a penchant for lying and living a nonconformist, extravagant lifestyle. **Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

**Location: FIC**  
**Call No.: FIC C6725s**



### Quotes:

*"Here I was in paradise, living my own personal hell."*

*"I saw him raise his rifle and point it toward the running figure. I looked the other way when he fired. I want to live the rest of my life believing he managed to escape."*

*"It took me four years to learn to paint like a Renaissance master and my entire life to go back to drawing like a child. That's the secret: children's drawings."*

*"Men think God is a mathematician, but he is not. If anything, God is a chess player, anticipating His opponent's next move and preparing His strategy to defeat him."*

*"Flowers teach us that nothing is permanent."*

*"In war, the first casualty is human dignity."*

*"When we don't know where life is taking us, we are never lost."*

*"At this moment, I look back on my life and realize that memory is a river, one that always runs backward."*

*"Everyone flirts with danger, so long as that danger does not really exist."*



## ***This month: SCI-HUB***

**SCI-HUB** is an online search engine with over 58,000,000 academic papers and articles available for direct/free download.

### **Is there a catch?**

The catch is that you must know the DOI or the URL in order to access/download the article.

### **What's a DOI and how do I find it?**

DOI stands for Direct Object Identifier. A DOI provides a persistent link to its location on the Internet. When an article is published and made available electronically, the publisher assigns a DOI.

### **When should I use SCI-HUB?**

SCI-HUB is NOT the place to search for articles. It IS the place to find the full text for an article you found using Google Scholar or some other database but are unable to get the full text.

### **How does it work?**

Say you have found an article you want using Google Scholar, but there is no link to the full text

The heteroglossia of home: Re-"routing" the boundaries of national identity in  
**Amitav Ghosh's** *The Shadow Lines*  
SP Gabriel - Journal of Postcolonial Writing, 2005 - Taylor & Francis  
... In the article "The Diaspora in Indian Culture", writer **Amitav Ghosh** posits that Indians of the ... of her "special enchantment in lines" (233) gradually leads to Tha'mma's mental **derangement**, for her ... **Ghosh** uses the partitioning of the Bose family house in Dhaka to suggest the futility ...  
Cited by 13 Related articles Cite Save

This is the article I want but there is no link to the full text

**Click on the title and the URL will appear in the browser search box**

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17449850500062816>

**Go to Sci-Hub: <https://sci-hub.cc/>**



**Enter the URL: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17449850500062816>**

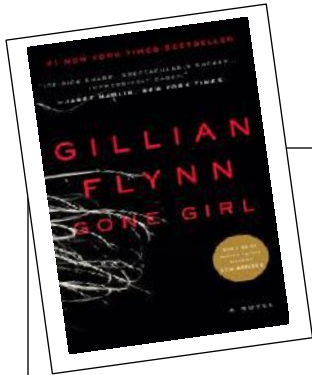
**Or the DOI: 10.1080/17449850500062816**

**Paste into the search box, click: open**

**And presto!**

**Here is the full text article:**

<http://sci-hub.cc/http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17449850500062816>



Read the book, watch the movie!

## *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn



I recently read the book *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn and then watched the movie. The book is a psychological thriller about a marriage gone bad, real bad. The story begins on the day of Amy's and Nick's 5<sup>th</sup> year wedding anniversary. Amy has gone missing.

The story unfurls through Nick's narrative as the police search for clues to find his beautiful wife, Amy and her diary, which chronicles their time together. Or does it?

Telling a story through two voices seems to be a popular technique of late. And Flynn skillfully executes this method in a creative manner as we switch from Amy (told through her diary) to Nick, from past to present. On each anniversary, Amy devises a treasure hunt and this year she has also left clues prior to her disappearance. Nick has never enjoyed this game. Each year he fails to solve the clues that he feels have little meaning but are a mark to Amy of how much he loves her.

This year, the clues will lead Nick to a frightening realization about his wife. The author does a good job connecting the reader to the characters although ... we begin to wonder if we really know either of them as neither is quite who they seem to be. Nick is reserved and has trouble expressing his emotions and Amy is a by-product of her parent's series of books called *Amazing Amy*. But Amy of real is not the perfect daughter portrayed in their books.

*Gone Girl* seems to be one of those books "everyone" was reading for a while. Although it's not the sort of story I normally would read, I was curious about all the rave. Flynn's creative plot has lots of twists and turns and well developed characters that will keep you turning the pages as the dysfunctional relationship between Amy and Nick comes to light.

If you like a thriller, read the book and/or watch the movie. The movie, directed by David Fincher, stars Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike. It's a close adaption of the book with a variety of interesting twists and omissions. The casting is well done and Affleck easily plays Nick, a character we can't decide whether to sympathize with or dislike.

Rotten Tomatoes rated the movie an 88% and IMDb an 8.1 out of 10. The book also received good reviews and Goodreads rated the book a 4 out of 5. My rating for both would be lower, but ... don't just listen to me, check them out for yourself and let me know what you think.

The book: **Location: FIC Call No: FIC F6482g**

The movie: **MSS**

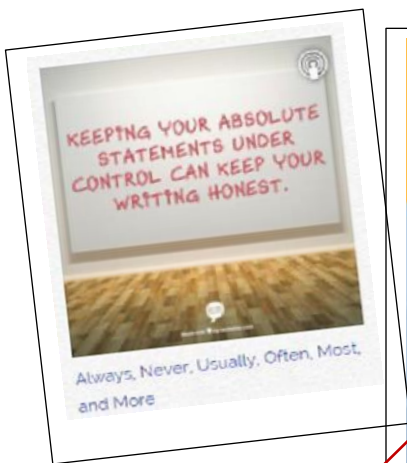
## Website of the month: Grammar Girl

<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

Grammar Girl, created by Mignon Fogarty, provides short, friendly tips to help improve your writing. The site is a fun, educational way to keep up to date with new grammar rules and the latest news in the world of words. In addition, It's a handy, informative site whether English is your first or second language.



## Did you know?



Very Interesting!

A central "BREAKING NEWS" banner with an orange header and a blue background. The text reads: "MAJOR AP STYLEBOOK CHANGES". Below this, it lists: "Singular 'they' now acceptable when rewriting would be awkward.", "'He' is no longer allowed as gender-neutral.", and "Frequent 'flyer' instead of 'flier.'" The hashtag "#ACES2017" is in the bottom right corner.

Reviewed and approved by:  
**Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

A sign-up box with a white background and a blue border. The text reads: "Sign Up for Our Newsletters", "Never miss another tip! Join our list to get updates from your favorite hosts delivered straight to your inbox", and a yellow "Get Started" button.





## International Museum Day: May 18

Did you know there was such a thing as an International Museum Day? It was established in 1977 and is celebrated each year on May 18. Have you visited these museums in Thimphu and Paro? If not, what are you waiting for! I've included just officially named museums here, but these are just a small sample of the many wonderful cultural and heritage sites in the area.



### National Museum, Paro

Have you been to a Teschu and wondered what the different masks represent? Here's your opportunity to find out about the various attributes of the animals that are said to confront us after death. While at the museum, enjoy the lovely views overlooking Paro Dzong and the valley.

### Postal Museum, Thimphu

I have to confess, I love stamps and postal museums. And although, I was initially hesitant to watch the 45 minute film about a present day postal worker who delivers mail to a remote area, I'm glad I did. His story is fascinating and the rugged scenery he traverses appears both treacherous and spectacular. Of course, afterwards... I spent a fortune in stamps, but that's part of the fun, right?



### Bhutan Textile Museum, Thimphu

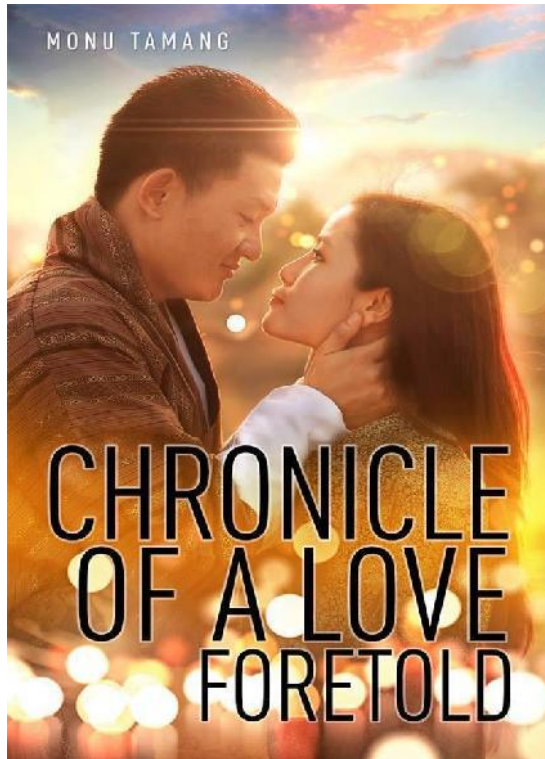
When I first went, I watched the video (more than once) showing how to wrap a kira. I decided I was glad for Velcro and hooks, without which I may not be wearing a kira daily to work. The museum houses a lovely display of hand woven pieces from the different areas of Bhutan. Special exhibits are regularly held, enticing you to enjoy more than one visit.

### National Folk Heritage Museum

I visited this museum recently with family when the trees were in blossom and a cute family of kittens were making themselves at home in the large wooden bin of unhusked rice. After we finished climbing the various levels of a traditional Bhutanese home, there's a nice place to sit outside or indoors and enjoy traditional Bhutanese food. Sometimes... it's just nice to play tourist, no matter who you are.



## Reading Club Guest Lecture: Monu Tamang



The Reading Club would like to invite the RTC family to join us for a conversation with Monu Tamang, author of *Chronicle of a Love Foretold* and the newly launched book, *The Morning Sun*

Everyone is welcome to attend!

Venue: Executive Centre

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May**

Time: 4:30PM – 5:30PM

For further information please contact:  
77841589/17858722

### What's the Reading Club reading?

On Tuesday, May 9, a small group of Reading Club members met to discuss *The Great Gatsby*. Some of the topics we discussed were: Prohibition and the time period, Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, symbolism in the book, the difference between 'new' and 'old' money, differences between the book and movie, and how the movie brought to life the book and the era.

We also selected our next Reading Club title: *Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins. Members wanted a book that met the following criteria: it was a thriller, written by a British woman. Hence we picked *Girl on the Train*, a psychological thriller that takes place in London, told in first-person narrative from the point of view of three women: Rachel, Anna, and Megan.

Join us this month in reading *Girl on the Train*. We plan to meet on 13 June to discuss the book and watch the movie. The book is available on the MSS. NOTE: The book database on the MSS is currently under construction. If you need help in downloading the book, please contact library staff. Or send me an email [amckinney@rtc.bt](mailto:amckinney@rtc.bt) and I will send you a copy.

### Apostrophe:

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual RTC Book Fair, June 5-6 (Monday – Tuesday) 10:00-6:00**

Looking for a good summer read?

A gift for someone special?

Come to the RTC Book Fair @ Space Infinity!