

# Internet is a great connector for writers: Subhasis Chattopadhyay

By OUR STAFF  
REPORTER

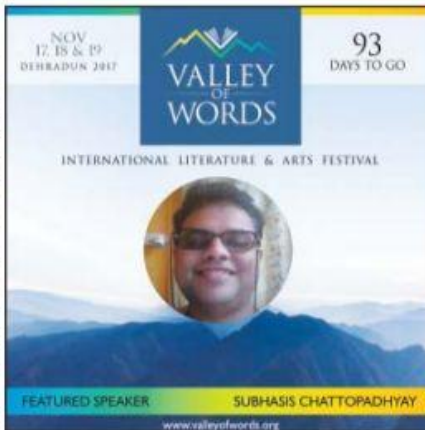
**DEHRADUN, 14 Aug:** Subhasis Chattopadhyay is a professional book reviewer with the Ramakrishna Mission. His reviews have been lauded by Princeton University Press among other Presses. He teaches English Literature at Narasinha Dutt College; by vocation he is a theologian and a psychoanalyst. His blog on the Johannine Corpus had been featured in US Blog Carnivals; he was a star blogger with Instamedia. Currently, he is studying for a Masters in Divinity from a US University.

He is to participate in the first edition of the 'Valley of Words, International Literature and the Arts Festival 2017' to be held from 17 to 19 November in Doon.

Some excerpts from a conversation with him:

**What have been your literary influences?**

*Since I trained in spiritual psychology from the Pontifical Athenaeum, Bengaluru, run by the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, I have been influenced by Saints Bruno, Ignatius*



*of Loyola and German Highland Mystics like St Bernard of Clairvaux. Later Anna Freud, Jean Piaget, Melanie Klein and Martin Seligman cast a spell on me. Earlier, from the same Ptpal Seminary I had formally studied Biblical Theology. I later went on elsewhere to read Hinduism; from that period of study I am influenced by Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Walter Brueggemann and by Sri Avinabhagupta. My greatest influence from the Seminary was of*

*Carson McCullers, Cormac McCarthy, Haruki Murakami and Kazuo Ishiguro. Noir fiction and writers like Gillian Flynn have influenced me as also the quirky but beautiful books of Stephen King. These days I find captivating writings online, especially in blogs and Amazon Reviews. And it is great that Indian bloggers have taken with gusto to this literary festival. Saving Private Ryan and Dunkirk are moving texts (sic) which have influenced me as also films*

course the exegete, Fr

*George Edayadiyil CMI. As far as literary style goes, I have been swayed by the lucidity of Frederick Copleston. Clarity of expression is very important for me. For instance, I am moved by Northrop Frye, Frederic Jameson and Terry Eagleton., but dislike Martin Heidegger's style. Great poetry continues to speak to me: especially poems by Dante, John Donne, WB Yeats, TS Eliot and Leonard Cohen. Among novelists I am moved by the dream-like quality of the prose of*

by Mrinal Sen.

**Please tell us a bit about your literary endeavours.**

*I am engaged in annotating both literary and religious texts. For instance, I am annotating the Bible; some of the Tantras, and glossing Cormac McCarthy. I have been reviewing books from some of the major Presses globally for the Ramakrishna Mission. I had earlier engaged in dialogue with Christians in the mouthpiece of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Calcutta, The Herald. These are kept at Goethal's Library, St Xavier's, Kolkata. In short, I have decided to bring a certain understanding of Christianity, Tantra and Art to a select audience, though few. I am currently editing two poetry anthologies; writing a treatise on Neo-Kantian theodicy and also planning to begin a serious blog engaging with the literary artefact.*

**What is your opinion regarding the budding writers of today who aspire for not the best but best sellers?**

*Some of them write beautifully and sensitively. Bestsellers are often the best. It is normal to write a work which will be read by many. One gets to know very talented writers online.*

*I see the internet as a great connector. Many writers are the best and are doing excellent online work. There is no tension between wanting to be the best and write best-sellers.*

**Do you think there is an upward trend in reading culture in the country?**

*We see a happy upward shift in reading due to the internet. In my experience people are reading more than before because the internet makes hitherto unavailable books available. We are in fact within a culture of reading --- reading online and offline.*

**What is your opinion on the slew of Literature Festivals cropping up across the country?**

*Most will vanish since most of these do not speak to our souls; that which within us calls out for meaning in a cooling world; for ravishment through words.*

**What are you looking forward to in the upcoming Art and Literature Festival, 'Valley of Words'?**

*I hope to meet the recluses, the ones who are purposefully slow thinkers. Those who are reluctant participants in the din; those who are subversive and defiant. Those whose works create anxiety and hope in me.*



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