

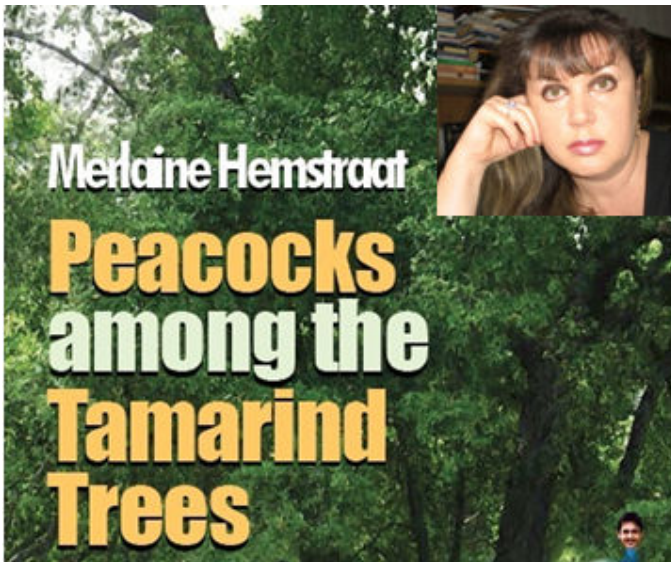
India a new publishing stop for foreign authors

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Merlaine Hemstraat's new novel "Peacocks among the Tamarind Trees" is a love story involving two doctors from Canada and India.

Is there a trend of writers from Europe and America coming to India to get their books published and earn recognition?

The question got new focus at the launch of Canadian writer Merlaine Hemstraat's



new novel "Peacocks among the Tamarind Trees", a love story involving two doctors from Canada and India, here recently.

"Writers from other parts of the world come here looking for a bigger audience and accolade," says senior Indian Express journalist Dilip Bobb who attended the launch of Hemstraat's book published by New Delhi-based Palimpsest.

Indian writers would throng the West to get their books

published but with e-books posing an ever-increasing challenge to publications there, industry experts indicate a reverse flow may have just begun.

The big and burgeoning Indian book publishing market and the country's effervescent literary culture have begun to attract both established and new writers from the either side of the Atlantic.

"If Jeffrey Archer came here to promote his new book earlier this year, now it is Hemstraat's turn to launch her book in India," says Bobb.

The trend, he says, was going to get stronger in the coming days.

"Indeed, India has emerged as the third biggest publishing hub after the US and the UK. If the title and story of Hemstraat's book are anything to go by, India looms large over the literary landscape as an influence," says the veteran writer.

Pointing out that one of the major characters in her novel is an Indian doctor, Hemstraat said that for her India was "a discovery of new ideas and values. To get published in India is both an opportunity and honour".

Bhaskar Roy, CEO, Palimpsest, points out that writers as a community are living in a borderless world.

"Contemporary Indian fiction, has captured the nuances of the country's socio-political reality much better than academic books," says Roy.

In this context, he mentions Subhashini Dinesh's debut novel, "My Iron Wings" (Palimpsest) which recounts the tension and uncertainties in Indian society in the wake of the economic reforms in the early nineties.

The book launch was followed by a lively literary conversation between Hemstraat and Dinesh.

Both agreed that women writers are increasingly occupying more space in the writing world because of their sensitive portrayal of the world around.

"Peacocks Among the Tamarind Trees" is a story of a group of men and women from different parts of the world, all associated with the medical profession, who join a rural clinic in the wilderness of Africa.

Faith Valencia, a young and beautiful doctor from Toronto, meets a dashing Indian surgeon, Dr Aditya Raina, in this clinic. Just when they have begun discussing marriage, Aditya breaks the terrible news – he is suffering from a rare, incurable disease.

Faith has an easy way out – of sending the ailing man packing and going back to her former lover, Dr St. Martin, an extremely talented French doctor. But she takes a different route – marries Aditya and then goes on to find a cure for him. And finally, the couple comes home to India.