

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

for the
INTERNATIONAL WEB CONFERENCE

TRANSNATIONAL MODERNITIES: PERSPECTIVES OF THE PLANETARY

Organised by
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND IQAC
SANTIPUR COLLEGE
Santipur, West Bengal, India

29-30 May 2027
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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAY 1 — 29 May 2026 (Friday)

Time	Session
10:30 AM	Opening Speech by the Principal, Santipur College
10:45 AM	Concept Note by Dr. Anirban Bhattacharya, Organising Secretary
10:55 AM	Introduction of the Keynote Speaker by Dr. Amrita Chakraborty, Convenor
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Keynote Address by Dr. Saugata Bhaduri, Professor, Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi “Modernity on a Planetary Scale: Must we ever be modern?”
12:00 PM – 12:15 PM	Tea Break
12:15 PM – 1:15 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel I: Modernities, Bio-Power and After-Human Chair: Dr. Monirul Islam, Presidency University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Florilegium of Rupture: Baudelaire and the Ontological Dispersal of Modernity</i> by Debojyoti Dan • <i>Mapping the Posthuman: A Critical Study of Nathan Tavares “Welcome to Forever” (2024)</i> by Fiona Baskar • <i>Bio-Power and Self-legislation: Hughes’ “Hawk Roosting”</i> by Dr Ankur Konar
1:15 PM – 2:00 PM	Lunch Break
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel II: Modernities, Sexualities, and Ethnic Violence Chair: Dr. Joyjit Sarkar, Raiganj University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflecting Black Ethnic Violence During Post Slavery American Modernity Through the Narratives of Graphic Novels</i> by Priyanko Sarkar & Dr. Anamika Ganguly • <i>Modernities and Desire: Wining Chughtai’s Lihaaf</i> by Suparna Roy • <i>Leaking Modernity: Toxic Infrastructures and the Embodied Afterlives of Bhopal</i> in Amulya Malladi’s <i>A Breath of Fresh Air</i> by Anik Das • <i>Queer Subjectivity and the Heterotopia of Hell: Inès Serrano as a Disruptor of Gendered Modernity in Sartre’s No Exit</i> by Sangbartto Basu
3:30 PM – 5:00 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel III: Transnational Modernities, Planetary Crisis, and Newer Life-Worlds Chair: Dr. Sagar Taranga Mandal, University of Kalyani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Violence Beyond Borders: The Phenomenology of Perception in the Global Modernity</i> by Fattoum MOUISSA • <i>Deferred Emancipations and Uneven Temporalities: African-American Literature and the Racial Disruption of American Modernity’s Chronology</i> by Dr. Houria AGGABOU • <i>Wounded Landscapes, Non-Human Afterlives: French Colonial Ecocide and the Planetary Crisis of Modernity in Algerian Literature</i> by Benkhelifa Imane • <i>Serendipitous Immersion: Arthur C. Clarke and Sri Lanka</i> by Umar Nizarudeen

DAY 2 — 30 May 2026 (Saturday)

Time	Session
10:15 AM – 10:25 AM	Opening Note by Dr. Anirban Bhattacharya, Organising Secretary
10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	<p style="text-align: center; color: yellow;">Special Plenary Session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair: Dr. Kalyan Kumar Das, Assistant Professor, Presidency University</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dr. Tuhin Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, DePaul University, Chicago "At the End of Poros: Planetarity and the Ethics of Translation" ➤ Dr. Sumana Ray, Professor of English and Creative Writing, Ashoka University "Twig, Petal, Tendril, Leaf: Nandalal's Rasa Theory"
12:30 PM – 1:45 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel IV: Religion, Music and Modernities Chair: Dr. Sunirmal Das, Jadavpur University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ascetic Modernity: Analysing the Representation of the Aghoris as Agents of Evil in The Butcher of Benares and Reminiscences of a Seeker: Dark Face of the White World</i> by Nirmal Biswas • <i>A Spiritual Reflection of Modernity in The Circle of Karma by Kunzang Choden</i> by Mimansa Subedi • <i>Carnatic Music: Performing the Multi Modern?</i> by Adwaith S. • <i>Modernity's (the one or the many?) Areligious Pretence: Hindoo College (1817-1855) and the Question of Religion</i> by Dipanjan Muhuri
1:45 PM – 2:30 PM	Lunch Break
2:30 PM – 3:45 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel V: Indigenous Modernities, Inter-Species Kinship, and Postcolonial Temporality Chair: Ms Ishita Roy, University of Kalyani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resisting De-Aurated Subjecthood—Unfollowing Tradition in Selected Tribal Narratives</i> by Madhumita Pal • <i>Healing through the Wild: Interspecies Kinship as a Trauma Response in Hannah Gold's The Last Bear and The Lost Whale</i> by Dattatreya Datta • <i>The Absent Earth: Speaking for Soil and Silence in Badal Sircar's Bhoma</i> by Souparno Bhattacharya • <i>Samsara and Historical Time in Shehan Karunatilaka's The Birth Lottery and Other Surprises</i> by Ms. Bibhudatta Rath
3:45 PM – 4:45 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel VI: Space, Precarity, and Multi-Modernity Chair: Dr. Suranjana Choudhury, North-Eastern Hill University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fragmented Panels, Fragmented Lives: Indian Graphic Narratives and the Crisis of Urban Modernity</i> by Dr. Pallabee Dasgupta • <i>Rethinking Motherhood: Experiences of Employed Mothers Raising Autistic Children in Urban India</i> by Debarati Maity • <i>Degrees, Domesticity, and Delivery: Intersection of Income, Education, Family Life and Job Satisfaction among the Delivery Riders in Dhaka City</i> by Sashwati Sanyal
4:45 PM – 4:55 PM	Vote of Thanks
4:55 PM – 5:00 PM	Closing Remarks by the Principal

DAY 1 (PANEL I)

Modernities, Bio-Power and After-Human

Chair: Dr. Monirul Islam, Associate Professor of English, Presidency University

Florilegium of Rupture: Baudelaire and the Ontological Dispersal of Modernity

Debojyoti Dan

Faculty in the Department of English, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya

Abstract

Cognitive rationality of epistemic fallacy in Modernity creates a fractured soul in the poetry of Charles Baudelaire. This paper advances a recondite reevaluation of Charles Baudelaire's poetic corpus as a crucible in which modernity is not merely represented but ontologically destabilized and redistributed across heterogeneous domains of experience. Moving beyond the reductive paradigms of urban ennui and aesthetic decadence, the study foregrounds Baudelaire's poetics as an anticipatory site for contemporary discourses on ecological entanglement, non-human agency, and the decentering of the anthropos. Through a sustained engagement with *Les Fleurs du Mal* and the prose poems, the argument excavates a multi-scalar modernity that is at once planetary in its imaginative reach and microscopically attentive to vegetal, material, and corporeal transformations. Baudelaire's figuration of nature as a semiotic and sensorial matrix inaugurates a proto-ecological epistemology wherein the human subject is implicated within a network of correspondences that exceed rational mastery. Simultaneously, his deployment of botanical imagery—wherein the floral is imbricated with decay, artifice, and excess—gestures toward a vegetal ontology that unsettles teleological distinctions between growth and putrefaction. The paper further interrogates the poet's ambivalent constructions of gender and sexuality, reading them as symptomatic of a fractured modern subjectivity that proliferates into multiple, often contradictory, modernities.

Crucially, Baudelaire's work is situated within an emergent horizon of posthuman thought: his fascination with artificiality, corporeal modification, and the dissolution of stable subject positions prefigures the advent of the "after-human," a being constituted through intersubjective and material assemblages rather than autonomous rationality. This ontological instability is further compounded by the epistemic tensions between science and faith, which in Baudelaire do not resolve into synthesis but persist as mutually

contaminating regimes of knowledge. Finally, the paper contends that Baudelaire's aestheticization of violence and decay articulates a profound crisis at the heart of modernity—one that foreshadows the catastrophic logics of war, commodification, and ecological degradation. In its totality, Baudelaire's oeuvre emerges as a palimpsest of plural modernities, wherein the human, the non-human, and the inhuman converge in a continuous process of dissolution and reconfiguration.

Keywords: *Ecological Entanglement, Planetary Modernity, Vegetal Ontology, Posthuman Subjectivity, Crisis of Modernity*

Bio-note: Debojyoti Dan is a poet and a literary critic. He has been teaching in Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya (College) in the department of English since 2009. He has special interests in Posthuman literature and theories regarding blue humanities and phytocriticism. He was the Head of the Department in English in Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, from June, 2015 to January, 2017. He learned French initially From Rama Krishna Mission and then pursued further diplomas in French from Alliance Française du Bengal. He has several publications to his credit, including two books of poems *Enigma of Red Shadows* (2011) and *Enigma Unveiled* (2023). He has written various chapters in edited international books. Most recent being the chapter "Eliot's Hollow Men and Radcliffe's AIDA: Transcending the Binary Programmed Algorithm of Digital and Human" in the book *Rethinking Posthumanism across the Global South* published by Peter Lang.

Mapping the Posthuman: A Critical Study of Nathan Tavares "Welcome to Forever" (2024)

Fiona Baskar

Research Scholar (Ph.D./FT), Dr. N.G.P Arts and Science College, Coimbatore

Abstract

Contemporary digital evolution has fundamentally altered the boundaries of human identity, moving beyond biological limitations into the realm of digital consciousness. While traditional perspectives often view the digitization of the soul as a loss of "authentic" humanity, this study explores the post-human condition through the novel *Welcome to Forever* (2024). It examines how boundaries between human and technology are reconfigured, leading to new forms of subjective experience and relationality. Utilizing a qualitative interpretative methodology, this paper dissects how the narrative exemplifies the blurring of ontological distinctions between human and non-human entities. The analysis focuses on the protagonist's journey through simulated realities where memory is no longer a personal faculty but a programmable asset. By arguing for the concept of "Affective Posthumanism," the study investigates how digital interfaces and AI entities foster novel affective bonds, demonstrating that emotional expressions are increasingly co-produced by human desire and algorithmic processes. This perspective

highlights how representations of AI challenge conventional anthropocentric views of love and intimacy by portraying affect as an immersion within mediatized assemblages. The results of the research show that technology does not diminish one's emotional experience but instead reconstructs it through the digital sublime and algorithmically mediated memories. Posthumanism leads to greater emotional engagement with identity, emotional continuity, and self-awareness within mediated environments. Furthermore, the study portrays how AI challenges the human monopoly on emotional capacity by eliciting reciprocal emotions. Ultimately, the paper addresses the ethical implications of digital immortality, suggesting that humanity's future lies not in the preservation of the flesh, but in the enduring resilience of consciousness within a post-biological framework.

Keywords: *Affective Posthumanism, Cyborg Theory, Digital Sublime, Hybridity, Identity, Memory*

Bio-note: Fiona Baskar is a Research Scholar (Ph.D./FT) at Dr. N.G.P Arts and Science College. Her research interests include posthumanism, digital humanities, science fiction studies, artificial intelligence, cyborg theory, and contemporary literary theory.

Bio-Power and Self-legislation: Hughes' "Hawk Roosting"

Dr Ankur Konar

Assistant Professor of English, Sir Rashbehari Ghosh Mahavidyalaya

Abstract

"Hawk Roosting", a poem about the searcher, not about the sought, marks Hughes' first significant signature in English literature, and it also stamps Hughes as an animal poet. Through the entropy of the hegemonic underpinnings, the Hawk's capitalistic narrative becomes a site where the new perception of 'bestiality' occurs to note the exclusive escape into the animal world. The epistemological rapture between the managerial trajectories of the primordialist prowess, having both the segregationist impulse and self-righteousness, continuously tries to create a sense of self-legalization. Through such transcendental identity formation of self, the Hawk's monologue marks a prioritized negotiation of placental presence of the speaker and the ethnic rampage made by the deceased director – the Hawk "makes himself the arbiter of his world" (King 115). Since Power is generally used "to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it", the Hawk's vitality and its threat heavily manipulates what Foucault terms the 'life-administering power' (Rabinow 259).

Vis-à-vis the recursion of such 'self-justifying act', readers can map the spatial rubric of the extrapolating mechanism that continuously implements an aura of violence in Hughes' poetry. The regular implementation of violence as projected through the use of

language is very much befitted because through the atavistic and instinctual violence, as Hughes himself believes, the vehement activity of the animal world will get a place to radically resist and challenge the brutality of the human world. The monitoring nature of violence simply means the implication of energy in his poetry; it is almost synonymous with revived vitality. The vivid depiction of violence, as captured in Hughes' strategic use of language, not only iterates brutality and reiterates cruelty, but it also has the implied connotation of stability through savage antics. The airtight staging ground for identity and the continuous auto-referentiality of the speaker in the poem give birth to a poetic creation of powerful potentiality that, in a way, becomes a sublimated self-expression of both the Hawk and the poet.

Keywords: *Bestiality, Identity, Selfhood, Violence, Language*

Bio-note: Dr Ankur Konar is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Sir Rashbehari Ghosh Mahavidyalaya, the University of Burdwan. He has authored *Cultural Poetics: Poetry, Society, Theory* (2012), *Kolkata and Narrative Geographies* (2019), *The Kolkata Football: History and Representation* (2022), *Contextualizing the Urban Narratives through the Socio-Spatial Dialectic* (2024) and *Shah Rukh Khan and the Railway Narratives* (2025). He has edited *Discourses on Indian Drama in English* (2013) and *Popular Narratives: Texts and Contexts* (2020).

DAY 1 (PANEL II)

Modernities, Sexualities, and Ethnic Violence

Chair: Dr. Jayjit Sarkar, Assistant Professor of English, Raiganj University

Reflecting Black Ethnic Violence During Post Slavery American Modernity Through the Narratives of Graphic Novels

Priyanko Sarkar, Research Scholar, Department of English, Sidho Kanho Birsha University & Dr. Anamika Ganguly, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Balarampur College, Purulia, West Bengal

Abstract

The black ethnic violence after the formal slavery emancipation act does not disappear from American Society at large. In other words, the post slavery American modernity translates cartographical (colonial) violence into carceral, civic and psychological regimes where black graphic novels visualize this tragic continuity through their distinct panels. Besides, in the American modernity cultural scenario, the brutal killings of black as represented through the graphic novel 'The Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel History' truly resonates both violence and resistance of black ethnic communities against white racism monopoly. Thus, this article attempts to highlight how the paradox of Black graphic novels renders visible the

post-slavery era by translating racial terror into the visual language of policing and racial surveillance, while simultaneously revealing the metaphysics of ethnic violence through Black existence within American modern culture. Besides, this essay also tries to reinvigorate how post slavery, American modernity and anti-black violence radically shift from ownership of bodies to management of populations by reorganizing slavery, social logic through laws, policing, segregation and reincarnation.

Keywords: *Black Ethnic Violence, Post Slavery, American Modernity, Black Graphic Novels, Racial Surveillance, Segregation And Reincarnation*

Bio-note: Priyanko Sarkar is a research scholar in the department of English at Sidho Kanho Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal, India. His area of research interests includes critical race theory, comic studies, posthumanism studies and cultural theory. Anamika Ganguly is an assistant professor in the department of History at Balrampur College, Purulia, West Bengal. Her area of research interest includes postcolonial theory, cultural studies, environmental history and subaltern theory.

Modernities and Desire: Wining Chughtai's *Lihaaf*

Suparna Roy

Assistant Professor, Global Institute of Management and Technology

Abstract

Michel Foucault argues in History of Sexuality how 'sexuality' is implanted as 'perverse' by transforming it into a subject for medical, scientific, and psychological discourse. Within this complex corpus of debitive sexual analysis, the fluidity is cramped through the phallogocentric policies of 'normative conducts' aligning to the role assigned to the body that is produced within the social structure. This work focuses on the intertwined dynamics of desire and sexuality through a deconstruction of Begum Jan from Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf*. Begum Jan dismantles the heterosexual reproductive framework that sustains the anatomical power, exposing how women's desire can resist or reconfigure social structures of kinship and authority. Reading *Lihaaf*, we find how her suppressed or redirected sexualities disrupt the normative expectations of maternal purity, domestic virtue, and heteronormative obedience that structure traditional models of matrifocality. Queer-Feminist Theory is not a single theory but a critical convergence of intellectual traditions. It's a method of interrogation often used to decode the political paralysis of identities within Indian cultural narratives. Situating Begum Jan within a shared analytical lens, her narrative highlights the subversive potential of desire in unraveling patriarchal constructions of woman and expands the discourse on female agency, non-normative sexuality, and counter-patriarchal storytelling in Indian literature. The modern reading of motherhood allows us to relocate the position of the mother identity, which, although remains socially centred, challenges the boundaries of patriarchal marriage. Therefore, by applying queer-feminist theory, this paper re-reads how

Begum Jan's embodiment of a disrupted femininity, where a wife's role has been deconstructed and transformed through the power of suppressed or transgressive desire.

Keywords: *Gender, Mother, Modernity, Women, Indian Literature*

Bio-note: Suparna Roy (resident of Kolkata, West Bengal) is an Assistant Professor of English (Dept of Applied Sciences and Humanities) at Global Institute of Management and Technology, and an Independent Researcher since 2022. She has obtained her Master's in English from the University of Kalyani (2020) and completed her B. ED in 2022. Besides her academic qualifications, she has a first-class in French intermediate language learning (2019), and experience teaching for more than three years in various fields. She is deeply engaged in the research of South Asian studies, focusing on Gender and Literature from an intersectional perspective. She has more than 20 publications (journals, chapters in books, anthologies), and more than 30 presentations till date. She has also completed one research project on Queer Identities and Gender Intersectionality; one under the Think India Tribal Rights Forum. She was also selected for the Doctoral Research Program under the Summer Sexuality Fellowship 2022 at California Institute of Integrated Studies under Dr. Penny Harvey and Dr. Michelle Marzullo. She is also a selected researcher in the En-gender group: <https://engenderacademia.wordpress.com/south-asian-studies/>.

Leaking Modernity: Toxic Infrastructures and the Embodied Afterlives of Bhopal in Amulya Malladi's *A Breath of Fresh Air*

Anik Das

Ph.D, Independent Researcher

Abstract

The Bhopal Gas Disaster exposes the underside of technological modernity, where industrial progress materialises as dispersed and enduring risk. This article reads Amulya Malladi's *A Breath of Fresh Air* through the lens of "leaking modernity," arguing that the disaster is not a contained event but an ongoing condition in which toxic infrastructures continue to permeate bodies and environments across time. Drawing on Ulrich Beck's theory of the risk society, the paper situates Bhopal within a global regime where hazards produced by techno-industrial systems are unevenly distributed, disproportionately burdening vulnerable populations while evading accountability.

At the level of embodiment, the article engages Stacy Alaimo's concept of transcorporeality to examine how the leakage of methyl isocyanate (MIC) dissolves the boundaries between body and environment, rendering human corporeality porous, mutable, and chemically inscribed. In Malladi's narrative, this permeability is most strikingly articulated through the figure of the second-generation survivor, whose body bears the deferred and inherited effects of toxic exposure. The "afterlives" of Bhopal thus unfold not only as memory or history but as lived, biological continuity—manifest in chronic illness, reproductive vulnerability, and altered bodily futures.

By bringing together risk theory and transcorporeality, the article argues that *A Breath of Fresh Air* reconceptualises the human body as a site where technological modernity leaks, accumulates, and persists. In doing so, the novel challenges the temporal and spatial containment of industrial disaster, revealing instead a continuum of embodied ‘slow violence’ (Rob Nixon) that extends beyond the event into intergenerational life.

Keywords: *Technological Modernity; Risk Society; Transcorporeality; Bhopal Gas Disaster; Toxicity; Embodied Afterlives*

Bio-note: Anik Das is an independent researcher based in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. He holds a PhD in English from the University of Gour Banga, Malda, and an MA (1st Class) and MPhil in English from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. He has qualified the University Grants Commission National Eligibility Test (NET), securing a Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), and has also qualified the West Bengal State Eligibility Test. He has presented papers at several international conferences and seminars and has published in peer-reviewed journals indexed in the UGC-CARE list. He has also authored the book *Inscapes of Intimacy: Exploring the Dynamics of Relationships in the Select Plays of Tennessee Williams*. His research primarily focuses on disaster fiction, pandemic literature, and the environmental humanities.

Queer Subjectivity and the Heterotopia of Hell: Inès Serrano as a Disruptor of Gendered Modernity in Sartre’s *No Exit*.

Sangbartto Basu

Undergraduate student of English at Charuchandra College, University of Calcutta

Abstract

This study revisits *No Exit* to interrogate the production and destabilization of gendered and sexual subjectivity within modernity, revealing its internal instability rather than its universality. Centering on Inès Serrano, it argues that the infernal chamber operates as a heterotopic dispositif, in the sense theorized by Michel Foucault. It is a bounded yet relational site where identities are not merely reflected but actively produced, regulated, and undone, condensing the contradictions of modern subject formation. Within this enclosed structure, subjectivity is constituted through the gaze of the Other, a foundational concept in Jean-Paul Sartre. However, this paper foregrounds the gendered and sexual operations of that gaze as structuring conditions of subject formation, rather than incidental features of intersubjectivity. The reading shows how gender in *No Exit* emerges through constant performance under surveillance. Estelle’s need for male validation exposes the illusion of stable womanhood and its dependence on others’ gaze. Garcin’s failed performance of masculinity similarly reveals the fragility of identity. Neither possesses an inner truth. Instead, identity slips each time it seeks confirmation through others. Inès functions as an internal rupture within this system.

Rather than accept being watched without response, she appropriates and reverses the gaze, redirecting it toward its source. This shift transforms sight into a means of authority and knowledge. Her non-heteronormative desire exceeds and destabilizes normative structures, reforming relational dynamics within the space. The usual heterosexual order cracks under this pressure, revealing its points of failure. The paper argues that identity in *No Exit* is an effect of intersubjective performance sustained through bad faith. Sartre's hell thus functions as a critical apparatus that reveals and structurally unsettles the regulatory fictions of modernity, challenging its claim to coherence and universality.

Keywords: *No Exit, Gendered Subjectivity, Intersubjective Gaze, Bad Faith, Queer Disruption*

Bio-note: Sangbarto Basu is an undergraduate student of English at Charuchandra College, University of Calcutta. His research interests include existentialism, critical theory, and the study of subjectivity, with particular engagement with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler. He has presented papers titled "Existential Persona: Plath's Confessional 'I' as Alienated Self and Authentic Self" at an academic conference organized by Ramakrishna Mission Residential College, Narendrapur, and "Respectable Lies: Race, Power, and the Uses of the Body in Sartre's *The Respectful Prostitute*" at the Jadavpur University Women's Conclave. His work focuses on the intersections of identity, power, gender, and embodiment in literary and philosophical texts.

DAY 1 (PANEL III)

Transnational Modernities, Planetary Crisis, and Newer Life-Worlds

*Chair: Dr. Sagar Taranga Mondal, Assistant Professor of English, University of
Kalyani*

Violence Beyond Borders: The Phenomenology of Perception in the Global Modernity

Fattoum MOUISSA, Associate Professor, University of Amar Telidji-Laghouat, Algeria.

Abstract

Violence, genocide, and war have profoundly altered in the way they are perceived, experienced, and apprehended. Within the global millennium, conflicts are no longer limited to the geographical happenings or spaces, but rather they are virtually wrapped up and

charged, leading to the collapse of spatial and temporal limits. This paper interrogates the extent to which the Palestinian struggle has been reconstituted as a site of contestation within digital spheres, thereby dislocating it from exclusive confinement to physical territory. Though different forms of violence still exist on the ground, their visibility and political legacies are currently shaped through networks that circulate testimonies and events in real time. Using Merleau-Ponty's perception of the lifeworld as a perceptual frame, the paper probes how media function beyond the encrypted codes to be a means that alters perceptions and shapes ideologies. The work exposes the inherent paradoxes of modernity, in essence, its entanglement with violence and critique of the uneven global established power structures. It points to the fragmented and split nature of modernity due to the continuous stream of images and discourses. Hence, the paper rethinks modernity not as a condition but as an experience that is shaped by the changes of the global era, with specific attention to the Palestinian situation as a contemporary case. The phenomenology of violence in Gaza and the West Bank expounds how digital platforms form contending narratives and diverse responses regarding anguish in our time, echoing how violence has become an ethically and politically phenomenal unmoored from the traditional scientific or epistemic considerations. The paper proposes that while modernity promises transparency and connectivity across and within temporal and spatial borders, it instantaneously stimulates perceptive visibility through global media that are an extension to people's bodily senses and opinions and the very structures that shape today's world.

Keywords: *Modernity; Genocide; Palestinian Struggle, Phenomenology of Perception, Digital Connectivity*

Bio-note: I am an alumna of Laghouat and Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla Algeria, where I earned my Magister (specialised in commonwealth and postcolonial studies) and PhD degrees respectively. I am currently working as a lecturer at the University of Laghouat, a position I have held for the last nine years. My research interests revolve around topics correlated to postcolonial conditions, postmodern issues, and the problems of immigrants in the Western world. I worked on diaspora studies with a specific focus on Black British subjects, Arab-anglophone and transnational literatures. My work engages mostly with questions related to identity, belonging, home and the politics of (re)location, with a specific focus on marginalised groups in the world.

Deferred Emancipations and Uneven Temporalities: African-American Literature and the Racial Disruption of American Modernity's Chronology

Dr. Houria AGGABOU

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Ecole Normale Supérieure El Katiba Assia Djebar of Constantine

Abstract

The historical narrative of American modernity has conventionally been periodized through the defining features of industrial growth, urban expansion, technological advancement, liberal democracy, and the aesthetic innovations of high modernism. Such a chronology presumes the emergence of a coherent national modernity progressively shared by all people living in the United States. This paper challenges that assumption by arguing that African American literature debunks U.S. modernity as a profoundly uneven temporal formation, one in which Black life remained structurally suspended outside the nation's claim to modernity. Far from taking part in the affirmative temporality of development and modernization, African Americans were experiencing a deferred or non-synchronous modernity: a historical condition wherein the abolition of slavery did not establish a full civic modernity but rather gave birth to disguised modalities of segregation, racial terror, labour exploitation, and juridical exclusion. Therefore, Black America constituted an internal colony, a racialized Global South lodged within the industrial North, revealing that modernity was never a homogeneous national achievement. African-Americans were marginalized excluded from its promises. Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, the paper demonstrates how African American writing persistently dismantles the conventional periodization of U.S. modernity. Du Bois reveals the paradoxes of in U.S. democracy; Wright uncovers the persistence of racial primitivization at the heart of the modern metropolis; Morrison, in turn, challenges linear historical succession by showing slavery's haunting existence within the present. Across these texts and others, Black literary temporality emerges as a counter-archive of interrupted freedoms, partial citizenship, and a vicious circle of violence. By reading African American literature as a critique of national periodization, this paper suggests that the United States must not be perceived as the site of a singular modernity, but as a space of coexisting, hierarchized and plural modern times.

Keywords: *Modernity, African-American Literature, Uneven Temporalities, Racial Disruption, Internal Colonialism*

Bio-note: Dr. Houria AGGABOU is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Ecole Normale Supérieure El Katiba Assia Djebar of Constantine. Her research interests include African-American literature, postcolonial studies, race and modernity, critical theory, and transnational literary studies.

Wounded Landscapes, Non-Human Afterlives: French Colonial Ecocide and the Planetary Crisis of Modernity in Algerian Literature

Benkhelifa Imane, Associate Professor, Frères Mentouri University Constantine 1 Algeria

Abstract

This paper examines Algerian literature as a counter-archive of the environmental violence through which French colonial modernity was materially inscribed in Algeria. It theorizes that French colonialism in Algeria acted as a form of geological inscription, arguing that imperial modernity wrote itself not only on colonized bodies but into the material strata of land, desert, and atmosphere. Moving beyond anthropocentric readings of colonial domination, it argues that French imperial rule enacted a sustained ecocide through scorched-earth campaigns, the burning of villages and orchards, agrarian dispossession, and the militarized transformation of land into a technology of conquest. In short, French rule transformed Algeria into an ecological laboratory of colonial control. Such ecological devastation culminated in the French nuclear experiments conducted in the Algerian Sahara, where the desert was rendered an expendable space for imperial nuclear modernity. Mobilizing environmental humanities, decolonial theory, and scholarship on slow violence, this study reads Algerian literary representations of damaged terrain, barren rurality, and toxic desertscapes as wounded landscapes that register the nonhuman afterlives of colonial occupation. Far from functioning as a passive background, land emerges as a mnemonic witness that preserves histories often effaced from official archives. By foregrounding ecological destruction as constitutive rather than incidental to colonial rule, the paper contends that Algerian literature provincializes Eurocentric narratives of modernity by exposing their extractive, militarized, and radioactive underside, thereby re-situating the colonial Maghreb at the centre of the planetary crisis of the modern. In doing so, the study challenges celebratory Eurocentric accounts of modernity by revealing the empire's geological and radioactive residues and proposes Algeria as a privileged site from which the planetary dimensions of colonial violence may be rethought.

Keywords: *Colonial Ecocide, Non-Human Afterlives, Planetary Modernity, Decolonial Ecocriticism, Algerian Literature*

Bio-note: I am an alumna of Beijing Foreign Studies University China and Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla Algeria, where I earned my Master of Arts and PhD respectively. I currently serve as a full-time senior lecturer at the University of Constantine 1, Frères Mentouri Algeria, a position I have held for the past thirteen years, and I am in charge of the Chinese Language specialty. My research interests span Pre-modern Critical Race Studies and theatre, Comparative and World Literature, Postcolonial Studies, and Literary Theory and Criticism. I also work on North-African Anglophone literature, diaspora studies, and Arab-American and transnational literatures. My work engages questions of race, memory, exile, and cultural identity across literary traditions, with a particular interest in how marginalized voices negotiate history and belonging.

Serendipitous Immersion: Arthur C. Clarke and Sri Lanka

Umar Nizarudeen, Associate Professor, Department of Higher Education, Kerala University

Abstract

Arthur C. Clarke has often been called the “Prophet of Science Fiction.” His residence in Sri Lanka since the 1950s, and his status not only as a luminous science fiction stalwart but also as an underwater explorer and proponent of space exploration, segues into his interest in enlightened spirituality—particularly in relation to his exploration of the Trincomalee temple. The immersive experience of the Tamil saints of the Bhakti period in the Chola Empire fed into the energies of imperial expansion, leading to dominance over the Indian Ocean rim regions in South and Southeast Asia. The “Azhvar” saints of ancient Tamilakam literally meant the “immersed” (in God). The mystical tone in Clarke’s short story *The Star*, written in 1956—the same year he emigrated to Sri Lanka—makes for compelling reading. The story also incidentally won him major international awards and remains part of the syllabi of many literature courses in South Asia and elsewhere. The narrative delineates the fate of a distant star—a supernova marking the extinction of a great civilisation—which also manifests as the Star of Bethlehem. The story poignantly captures Clarke’s progressive engagement with a form of enlightened mysticism of immersion, through which he synthesizes new lifeworlds from the ruins of a once Edenic world in the aftermath of World War II. The haptics of a new, fluid medium—space and space exploration—allowed Clarke a greater degree of freedom to manoeuvre in his creative articulation. The oceanic spirituality of the Indian Ocean poetic milieu, which Sheldon Pollock describes as the “Language of the Gods in the World of Men” (2009), lends itself to a mystical maturation and a healing of the discontents of industrial rationality and its decadent ethos. Clarke, who served in the RAF during World War II, may be said to have escaped shell shock through the fluidity of the medium of aeronautics and space exploration; his pacifist goals in later life resonate with the Indian Oceanic ethos of renunciation and nonviolent *ahimsa*.

Keywords: *Colonial Ecocide, Non-Human Afterlives, Planetary Modernity, Decolonial Ecocriticism, Algerian Literature*

Bio-note: Umar Nizarudeen is an Assistant Professor with the Kerala Government’s Department of Higher Education. He did his PhD in Bhakti Studies from the Centre for English Studies in JNU, New Delhi, under the supervision of Prof. Saugata Bhaduri. He has a postgraduate degree from Goldsmiths, University of London. His poems and articles have been published in the EPW, Vayavya, Muse India, Culture Cafe Journal of the British Library, The Hindu Open Page, The New Indian Express, The Bombay Review, The Madras Courier, FemAsia, Sabrang India, India Gazette London, Ibex Press Year’s Best Selection, DC Books bulletin, etc.

DAY 2 (PANEL IV)

Religion, Music and Modernities

Chair: *Dr. Sunirmal Das, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Jadavpur University*

Ascetic Modernity: Analysing the Representation of the Aghoris as Agents of Evil in *The Butcher of Benares* and *Reminiscences of a Seeker: Dark Face of the White World*

Nirmal Biswas, Ph.D Scholar, Dept. of English, University of Gour Banga

Abstract

This paper examines the literary construction of the Aghori ascetics as the figures of menace and deviance in modern narrative discourse. Traditionally, the Aghoris belong to a Shaiva ascetic lineage grounded in non-dual philosophy and the rejection of binaries such as pure/impure and sacred/profane. Yet in modern literary imagination, the Aghori ascetics - Mahendra Singh and Tailanga Swami in the novel *The Butcher of Benares* (2014) by Mahendra Jakhar; and, Triloknath and Asurnath in the novel *Reminiscences of a Seeker: Dark Face of the White World* (2017) by Kapil Kumar Bhaskar - have been represented as the agents of evil symbolizing danger, horror, material greed and disorder. This study explores how the images of the Aghori ascetics under the influence of modernity generate fear, material desire and ideological anxiety. The analysis draws on the Indian aesthetic school of thought. Using Bharata Muni's Rasa theory, the paper argues that these texts rely on *bhayānaka rasa* (fear) and *bībhatsa rasa* (disgust) to shape the reader's response. Cremation grounds, skulls, and ash-smearred bodies found in the referred texts are presented not as spiritual symbols but as devices producing dark suspense, uncanny and horror. Through Abhinavagupta's concept of *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (Universalisation), the study demonstrates how individual fear becomes a shared cultural response, making the Aghori's appearance collectively threatening. The paper also employs Abhinavagupta's theory of 'aesthetic experience' to show that the texts in focus detach terrifying imagery from its sacred context and convert it into spectacle. It further uses Ashis Nandy's critique of colonial modernity, where indigenous traditions are labeled irrational or dangerous. The mindsets of the novelists often recast ascetic nonconformity as a social threat.

Keywords: *Asceticism, Literary Imagination, Colonial Modernity, Ideological Anxiety, Rasa Theory*

Bio-note: Nirmal Biswas is a Ph.D. Scholar in the Department of English at University of Gour Banga. His research interests include Indian aesthetics, modernity studies, religious and ascetic traditions in literature, postcolonial theory, and cultural representation.

A Spiritual Reflection of Modernity in *The Circle of Karma* by Kunzang Choden

Mimansa Subedi, Research Scholar, Dept. of English, North-Eastern Hill University

Abstract

The concept of modernity is always linked to ‘change’ across cultures, religion and societies. Literature, especially the novel demonstrates the plurality of cultures and reshapes the understanding of modernity and its implications in different cultures, regions and societies at different points of time. In novels deeply reflecting societal changes, understanding modernity in different societies engages the readers to alternate views of cultures, traditions, religion and philosophy. *The Circle of Karma* by Kunzang Choden through the spiritual journey of the protagonist shows changes brought about by modernity (economic, infrastructural change) in the rest of the society. It fuses economic modernity in society in terms of economic and infrastructural changes in roads, populations, emerging new classes with spirituality, religion and gender leading to spiritual development in the protagonist. Anthony Giddens, in his book *The Consequences of Modernity* provided four basic dimensions to modernity “capitalism, industrialism, surveillance, and military power” (Giddens 1990) as essentials leading to modernity which influences other areas and social changes in Euro- American societies. This paper examines how the novel *The Circle of Karma* has intersections from the above pillars to bring change in society, but also reflects on the spiritual dimensions of change for the individual, along with changes in Bhutanese society. It also reflects that the materialistic dimension of modernity is balanced by spirituality and religion across time, gender, through the protagonist Tsomo, breaking the barrier of time, space and land. Through the coming of age, the novel records the transition through time of the character and society, not just in terms of economic modernity, but modernity percolates at the grassroots level of the society and also fuels spiritual change in the female character Tsomo. It shows the change in landscapes, people with the materialistic ‘modernity’. It also takes help from the Geocritical framework of Bernard Westphal in analyzing space. This paper presents a critical outlook on material aspects of modernity and change in agricultural societies with the influx of time, combining the disruption in society through modernity and how spirituality balances it. Modernity changes the economic restructuring, but spiritual traditions and philosophy still bring back the anchor of modernity to the beginning of time. This paper seeks to understand the implications of modernity in the novel *The Circle of Karma*, as it reflects the underlying changes brought about by infrastructural reworking. It explores the intersections of gender, religion and philosophy in a patriarchal society, treating the dynamic nature of time, land, and space as essentials for understanding modernity.

Keywords: *Modernity, Materialism, Patriarchy, Religion, Spirituality, Gender*

Bio-note: Mimansa Subedi is a Research Scholar in the Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya. She is interested in exploring the rural life of the Himalayan regions through folk traditions and oral culture.

Carnatic Music: Performing the Multi Modern?

Adwaith S., Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala

Abstract

This paper looks at how Carnatic music, one of the classical South Indian music traditions, got reinvented in “modernity”, or in the late 19th century and the start of the 20th century. This specific time frame is chosen and is defined as “modernity” (in its western conception) owing to the institutionalised and fundamental changes that happened to the music tradition at this time, when the Indian renaissance was unfolding, and its influence was seen in different dimensions of society, like the social, political, economic and cultural. The research specifically looks at the shift that happened to the music tradition with respect to the three major poles, namely, patronage, performance and pedagogy. This shift, thus, happened to Carnatic music from the “pre-modern” to “modern” world in the wake of the nation-building project of India, is analysed, evaluated and understood, leading up to the present condition of the music. Here, the notions of “modern” and “pre-modern” are defined and understood in the Western light. This Western idea of modernity is rooted in the ideals of secularism, rationality, inclusivity, etc., which came up as a result of the Enlightenment project.

By understanding Carnatic music in its contemporary form in the “modern” world, this scholarly endeavour opens up a discussion on many pertinent questions, like: Is Carnatic music “modern” in the Western conception of modern? Should the reinvention of Carnatic music be understood in the Western conception of modern, or is it modern in its own sense as opposed to the Western notion of it? If yes, what is the definition of such a modernity? How is it different from the Western counterpart? All these questions will help us understand the progression of the Carnatic music tradition clearly. It aids in understanding and assessing the development of such a modernity in its present state, thereby throwing light on a deeper understanding of the music tradition.

Keywords: *Carnatic Music, Modernities, Nation-Building, Religiosity*

Bio-note: Adwaith Rugmini Sreekumar is a research scholar at Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India. I have completed my bachelor’s degree in Physics from the University of Kerala and a master’s degree in English from the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. My research lies in understanding the performativity of Carnatic music through the Sangeet Sabhas of Chennai. I am interested in Carnatic music, performance spaces, migration, the sociology and history of music.

Modernity’s (the one or the many?) Areligious Pretence: Hindoo College (1817-1855) and the Question of Religion

Dipanjan Muhuri, Ph.D. Research Scholar, The University of Burdwan

Abstract

Established in Calcutta in 1817, Hindoo College, the first, modern, secular institute of western education not just in Asia but anywhere in the world, was a citizens' initiative. Notwithstanding the secular curricular emphasis coupled with the strong ethos of discouraging religious discourse, the entire life of Hindoo College was indelibly marked by the tension between the orthodox doctrine of its Hindu managers and the radical subversion of religious dogmatism by its pupils. This paradoxical imaginative configuration of the Hindoo College as Hindu but secular problematizes the widely held understanding of secular as a religion-irrelevant position. Contesting the oft-repeated notion that religion and modernity are mutually exclusive, impenetrable categories, I posit secularism as religion-implicated – a normative framework that defines, regulates and constrains religion. Perennially perched on the axes of power, the secular principle cannot be seen as an unaffiliated contra-religious position, but rather as constituting a reconfiguration of dharmic identities, thereby ushering in a renewed focus on “religion’s engagement with modernity and its ‘production’ of the same” (Bhattacharya, “No Longer at Ease” 77). Modernity, therefore, cannot be conceived as a desacralized worldview based on a simple split between the sacred and the secular; modernity, in fact, enunciates their overlapping proximity. Such a reading brings to the fore a penchant for self-fashioning based on the new technology of print that engendered a textualized culture characterized ironically by a remarkable scepticism about the values and consequences of our experience of colonial modernity, in which the Hindoo College was one of our attempts to participate. Such peculiarities of our modernity in repudiating to replicate the nomic structures of colonial modernity acknowledge difference, thereby validating particular forms of non-Western modernities, emancipating them from being “perpetual consumers of [western] modernity” (Chatterjee, “Whose Imagined Community?” 26). Informed thus, the paper reads Rajnarayan Basu’s auto/biographical narratives to contend that Hindoo College is a discursive location where religion, in producing our modernity, deconstructs the normative logic of Western modernity.

Keywords: *Secularism, Religion, Self-Fashioning, Deconstruction, Modernity*

Bio-note: Dipanjan Muhuri is a Ph.D. research scholar in the Department of English & Culture Studies, The University of Burdwan. He is working on the interface between religion and modernity in the early 19th-century colonial Bengal, particularly with reference to the Hindoo College. He has completed his M.Phil. on the 19th-century representations of the colonial tea enterprise in Assam from the same department. His essays have been published in international journals like LangLit, Muse India, Ajker Jodhan, among others. His areas of interest include Nineteenth-century colonial Bengal, Postcolonial Literatures, Translation Studies, Literary Theory and Dalit Literature.

DAY 2 (PANEL V)

Indigenous Modernities, Inter-Species Kinship, and Postcolonial Temporality

Chair: *MS Ishita Roy, Assistant Professor of English, University of Kalyani*

Resisting De-Aurated Subjecthood—Unfollowing Tradition in Selected Tribal Narratives

Madhumita Pal, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Sister Nivedita University

Abstract

Aura is a distinct quality that seems to surround or come from somebody or something, an invisible emanation such as a scent or odour, or the energy that someone emits. Ideology turns individuals into subjects. This paper focuses on Mahasweta Devi's *THE HUNT* and Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *THE ADIVASI WILL NOT DANCE* and investigates how marginalized people resist aura-deprived subjecthood. According to Althusser's theory of interpellation, individuals transform into subjects in order to perform certain roles. In Walter Benjamin's concept of Aura, a work of art has its unique presence in time and space. But, mechanical reproduction shifts its cult value to mere exhibition value. In Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's story, the adivasi dance is nothing but a tool for exhibiting the state's cultural heritage. In *THE HUNT*, the bold tribal girl is condemned for keeping her aura intact and refusing to succumb to a wealthy man's lustful advances despite being a poor tribal girl. In both, the protagonists are treated as aura-less subaltern subjects, objects of development rather than equal participants. But in the end, they resist and assert their uniqueness. Modernity shifts away from traditional agricultural societies towards urbanization. On the other hand, tradition is a specific practice passed down through generations. This paper concludes that, through their resistance, the tribal people are unfollowing the long established practice of turning individuals into aura-less subjects and affirming indigenous modernity.

Keywords: *Aura, Subjects, Art, Modernity*

Bio-note: Madhumita Pal has completed her BA (Bachelor of Arts) Hons. and MA (Master of Arts) in English from the University of Calcutta. Currently a PhD Scholar at Sister Nivedita University, Kolkata, Madhumita Pal has also recently completed her B.Ed. programme under B.S.A.E.U. Her areas of interest include ecocriticism, feminism and ecofeminism, postcolonialism, and disability studies.

Healing through the Wild: Interspecies Kinship as a Trauma Response in Hannah Gold's *The Last Bear* and *The Lost Whale*

Dattatreya Datta, Research Scholar, Amity University Kolkata

Abstract

This paper examines the intersection of childhood trauma and environmental connection in Hannah Gold's *The Last Bear* and *The Lost Whale*. It focuses on how protagonists April and Rio develop interspecies kinship with apex predators as a trauma response to parental neglect and abandonment. Where human society often fails to provide emotional security to children, children's literature has explored the non-human as a primary site of psychological restoration. The study analyzes the fractured domestic spaces of April and Rio. April is neglected by her father, lost in his own scientific experiments on the Bear Island, and Rio is forced to move to California by his mother, struggling with mental health crises. This paternal and maternal deprivation creates an emotional void in their lives that the modern human world cannot fill. Consequently, the protagonists seek interspecies kinship with a solitary polar bear and a lost whale whom society deems as dangerous and 'other'. The main concern of this paper is mutual healing. The children symbolically navigate and repair their own internal anxieties and loneliness by addressing starvation and displacement, the physical and emotional vulnerabilities of the animals. This bond transcends traditional anthropomorphic friendship. It is a radical entanglement where the animal provides the consistent non-verbal attention that human parents have withheld. Ultimately, the paper concludes that Hannah Gold's narratives challenge anthropocentric modes of care and proposes that the planetary wild nature offers a more resilient architecture for healing than the fractured modern home.

Keywords: *Ecopsychology, Hannah Gold, Trauma, Interspecies Kinship, Fractured Domesticity, Mutual Healing*

Bio-note: Dattatreya Datta is a full-time PhD research scholar at the Amity Institute of English Studies and Research Kolkata, Amity University Kolkata. Currently, he is in his second year. His doctoral research focuses on the nuances of American Young Adult Fiction. His broader academic interests include ecocriticism, children's fiction, trauma, and the representation of non-human in literature. At this conference, he will be presenting his paper, *Healing through the Wild: Interspecies Kinship as a Trauma Response in Hannah Gold's 'The Last Bear' and 'The Lost Whale'*. It explores how interspecies kinship offers psychological restoration for children facing parental neglect.

The Absent Earth: Speaking for Soil and Silence in Badal Sircar's Bhoma

Souparno Bhattacharya, Independent Researcher, Durgapur, West Bengal

Abstract

While Badal Sircar's *Bhoma* is frequently interpreted as a political critique of economic disparity, such readings obscure a more fundamental driver of rural displacement in the Global South: environmental collapse. Locating the play within the framework of the Planetary Modern, this study examines ecological degradation as an active historical agent, rather than a passive backdrop. Viewed through Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence" and

the Marxist “metabolic rift,” urban modernity emerges as an extractive force feeding upon its rural peripheries, leaving behind ecological ruin. The titular character Bhoma, unseen and mediated entirely through the dialogue of others, structurally embodies this logic. He is rendered absent by the same historical forces that have laid waste to his environment. Crucially, this erasure branches beyond the ecological to the linguistic. Sircar’s Third Theatre demonstrates how standardized urban speech systematically silences regional dialects. This linguistic homogenization functions as a parallel violence. Flattening linguistic diversity into a uniform register performs on the human voice exactly what monoculture performs on the soil. To counter this dual erasure, the study turns to the Prithvi Sukta. Read as an early ecological ontology, the sukta precludes the Cartesian divide between human and environment and operates as an example of “Indigenous Modernity.” This paradigm offers a rigorous theoretical challenge to the assumptions underwriting planetary devastation. Ultimately, to speak for the subaltern today is to speak for the soil, and for the tongue that names it.

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Badal Sircar, Indigenous Modernity, Acoustic Ecology, Prithvi Sukta*

Bio-note: Souparno Bhattacharya is an independent researcher, theatre director, and writer. He holds a Master of Arts in English Language and Literature from Madras Christian College, University of Madras, Chennai. His research operates at the intersection of the Environmental Humanities, indigenous philosophical frameworks, and regional performance traditions, with a specific focus on the ecological dimensions of Bengali theatre. As a practitioner, he directs experimental theatre, engaging deeply with Badal Sircar’s Third Theatre methodology. His recent research has been presented at various national and international platforms, including the University of Oxford, Banaras Hindu University, IIT Madras and EFLU, Hyderabad.

Samsara and Historical Time in Shehan Karunatilaka’s *The Birth Lottery and Other Surprises*

Ms. Bibhudatta Rath, Doctoral Scholar, English Department of Humanities, School of Liberal Studies, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)

Abstract

The present study reads three stories from Shehan Karunatilaka’s *The Birth Lottery and Other Surprises* (2022) — “The Birth Lottery”, “The Colonials”, and “The Ceylon Islands” — as an experiment in arranging historical time through the structure of samsaric rebirth. The three stories are linked with a single formal manoeuvre as each of them collapses what should be temporally distinct historical moments into a shared narrative present. The titular story does that through reincarnation across two millennia of Sri Lankan history, “The Colonials” through a closing reveal that displaces an apparent colonial scene into the contemporary, and “The Ceylon Islands” through speculative state-building that returns colonial governance forms in diasporic guise. This study argues that rebirth in these stories is an organising

principle for how historical times are arranged within a single narrative space, and that this arrangement opens onto current debates about the planetary in literary theory.

Drawing on Dipesh Chakrabarty's distinction between the global and the planetary, developed in conversation with Bruno Latour's anthropology of the modern, the study asks what this distinction looks like when a writer builds it into literary form. Chakrabarty's planetary thesis has so far been pursued largely as a question of historiography, and Karunatilaka's three stories offer a literary instance of what its formal version might look like. The study situates this formal reading within Aamir Mufti's account of how Anglophone world literature absorbs vernacular cosmologies on its own protocols, which describes the conditions under which a cosmological structure inherited from a non-Western tradition can be read as a working component of fictional form. On this reading, Karunatilaka's short stories emerge as a sustained literary experiment in non-developmental time in which samsara operates as the structural logic by which the fiction thinks.

Keywords: *Samsara; Planetary Thought; Postcolonial Temporality; Sri Lankan Anglophone Fiction*

Bio-note: Bibhudatta Rath (she/her) is a Ph.D. scholar in English at the Department of Humanities, School of Liberal Studies, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, India. She holds a Master's degree in English and Comparative Literature from Pondicherry Central University and has qualified for the UGC-NET for Assistant Professor in English. Her research interests span gender studies, women's writing, trauma and affect studies, memory, corporeality, and life writing. She has presented her work at several national and international conferences and has participated in various international workshops. In addition to her doctoral research, she serves as a Guest Faculty at CIPET: IPT, Bhubaneswar, where she teaches English Communication and Technical Writing to STEM learners.

DAY 2 (PANEL VI)

Space, Precarity, and Multi-Modernity

Chair: *Dr. Suranjana Chowdhury, Associate Professor of English, North-Eastern Hill University*

Fragmented Panels, Fragmented Lives: Indian Graphic Narratives and the Crisis of Urban Modernity

Dr. Pallabee Dasgupta
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Smt. B.D. Jain Girls PG College, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Agra

Abstract

The present paper examines how Indian graphic narratives emerge as an alternate mode of comprehending modernity as a condition of crisis, where precarity, urgency and fragmentation form the crux of urban existence and identity in the Global South. Following the theme, the paper argues that the Indian city here inhabits a unique and distinct space which is characterised by fragmentation, affective dislocation and informal existence as a predominant condition.

Focusing mainly on Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel *Corridor* (2004), the paper posits how visual storytelling frames the local urban lived experience through the planetary network of capital, culture and crises. Drawing on Butler's theorization of precarity (2004) and Roy's (2005) idea of informality, among others, the paper depicts the Indian metropolis, overridden with unstable housing and survival economies. Further, Berlant's affect theory (2011) and postcolonial urban theories demonstrate how such an existence produces alienation and anxiety that tie its citizens to the same structures that marginalize them. The paper uses a close visual analysis of the disjunctive panels, visual density and non-linear narration of the novel to show how such fragmentation also highlights the "slow violence" (Nixon 2011) of neoliberal urban life. By situating this experience within a broader transnational framework, the paper argues for the existence of a planetary precarity that challenges singular conceptions of modernity while foregrounding its multiple, unstable, and contested forms.

Keywords: *Urban alienation, Graphic narratives, Precarity, Postcolonial urbanism, Visual culture*

Bio-note: Pallabee Dasgupta, is currently working as an Assistant Professor in India while also pursuing her research as a Senior Research Fellow (SRF-Ph.D) at B.H.U, India. Her research interests include Environmental Studies, Speculative Fiction, Urban Anthropology and Dystopian Studies. Besides this, she also has relevant experience in Gender and Women's Studies, English Language Teaching and Translation studies. She has participated in several pertinent conferences and workshops and published extensively in her research areas, and hopes to engage in the same with much alacrity in the future.

Rethinking Motherhood: Experiences of Employed Mothers Raising Autistic Children in Urban India

Debarati Maity

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Netaji Nagar College for Women, Kolkata-32

Abstract

While Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is gaining increasing theological enquiry and exploration due to its growing incidence among children in present times, maternal

experience of caring for children with ASD in ‘resource-poor’ countries has not yet received much scholastic attention. Recent statistics depict the prevalence of ASD among children in India under the age of 10 to be roughly around 1 in 65, affecting approximately 1.8 to 2 million children and their families. Parenting children with ASD is a highly stressful and challenging job, a burden largely borne by mothers alone. The mothers of these children are often subjected to increased stigmatization, spousal abandonment, and are left to carry the emotional and social burden life-long. In many cases, working mothers face significant challenges in balancing employment and intensive care-giving roles. Although mothering is a gendered concept crucial for perpetuating gender roles, it is also shaped by the contextual positioning of women, availability of resources, and spatial and temporal constraints. The mothers of ASD children recognize new mothering practices and reframes the meaning of mothering through their role as care-givers.

This paper reflects on mothering of autistic children as a unique site of gender conformity, struggle and resistance. The paper adopts a qualitative methodological study to investigate the experiences of mothers in caring for children with ASD in India. The study tries to decode the coping strategies adopted by urban mothers to battle anticipatory anxiety and strengthen their resilience against stress. This paper looks beyond Eurocentrism and explores other modes of self-fashioning of empowerment, agency, and modernity in the context of mothering ASD children in India.

Keywords: *Mothering, Autism, Employment, Coping Strategies, Modernity, Agency*

Bio-note: Dr. Debarati Maity is an Assistant Professor of English at Netaji Nagar College for Women, Kolkata, specializing in the idea of Motherhood and the woman question in Nineteenth Century Bengal. She holds a PhD in English from the University of Calcutta. She has completed her M.A. and M.Phil from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Her M.Phil dissertation was on the interface of gender and migration in Diasporic novels. Her areas of interest include feminism, postcolonialism, partition literature, and Bengal Renaissance.

Degrees, Domesticity, and Delivery: Intersection of Income, Education, Family Life and Job Satisfaction among the Delivery Riders in Dhaka City

Sashwati Sanyal, Post-Graduate Student, Dept. of Sociology, Dhaka University

Abstract

The increasing platform-based economy has radically transformed traditional urban realities, and this study highlights how income, education, family dimensions, and job satisfaction intersect with each other to shape the lives of deliverymen under the new urban setting. Digitalization and globalization have reshaped the pattern of urban labour, which played significant roles in bringing precarity attached to flexibility. Drawing from human capital

theory by Becker (1964), this study examines whether education impacts income in this sector of digital labour platforms, as it is traditionally prescribed that education increases the scope of gaining productivity and income, and with the help of work-family conflict theory, this study will find out the pattern of intersection within working hours, family dimensions, and job satisfaction. 63 randomly selected delivery riders from different platforms, such as Foodpanda, Pathao, etc., were collected and were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including a chi-square test. Core findings indicated there is a negative relationship present between education and job satisfaction. Statistical tests revealed that education is not related to income, suggesting that other mediating factors like digital literacy, ranking, rating, algorithmic control, and so on play greater roles in determining the income of deliverymen in Dhaka City. Along with empirically proving that balancing work and family life is hard for them, descriptive statistical analysis shows that long working hours contribute to the feeling of being distant from family and emotionally stressed, thus intensifying the relevance of work-family conflict theory by showing how family life is impacted. This study contributes to the critical understanding of urban digital labour in the gig economy by highlighting how traditional notions regarding education, income, and job satisfaction have been redefined. It filled a complex empirical gap by merging family dimensions to broader debates regarding precarity, autonomy, and the human capital quandary in contemporary urban Bangladesh.

Keywords: *Digital Labour, Gig-Economy, Work-Family Conflict, Human Capital, Urban Precarity*

Bio-note: Sashwati Sanyal Sreya is a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is a research enthusiast whose academic and research interests include migration, the gig economy & globalization, and family dimensions in contemporary society. She is currently engaged in academic research and aspires to contribute to critical sociological scholarship through interdisciplinary inquiry and field-based studies.