

*Iaclals*

IACLALS 2023



**INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE  
& LANGUAGE STUDIES  
(IACLALS)**

*in collaboration with*

**JANKI DEVI MEMORIAL COLLEGE,  
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023 (ONLINE)**

**On**

**Metropolis and Margins:**

**Shifting Configurations in Literature and Language Studies**

**April 26-29, 2023**



**Facebook Live at *IACLALS* Official Page**



**Book of Abstracts Credits: Shaifta Ayoub and Gulbahar Shah**

# **IACLALS Annual International Conference (Online)**

## **METROPOLIS AND MARGINS: SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES IN LITERARY AND LANGUAGE STUDIES**

**April 27-29, 2023**

### **Day 1: Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**This session is Cancelled**

**6:00 pm to 8:00 pm IST: Inaugural Session and Keynote Address**

**Chair: Prof. Suman Gupta**

6:00 pm: Welcome and Login Details by Kalyanee Rajan

6:10 pm: Opening Remarks on the Theme of the Conference by M. Asaduddin

6:20 pm: Introduction to IACLALS by Kalyanee Rajan

6:30 pm: **Keynote Address by Harish Trivedi**

7:30 pm: Chair's Remarks

7:40 pm: Question & Answer Session

7:55 pm: Vote of Thanks by Albeena Shakil

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltTlNhOT09>

### **Day 2: Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**9:10 am: Welcome and Instructions**

**9:15 am - 11:00 am IST: Parallel Session 1: ◆**

**Chair: Prof Banibrata Mahanta**

M. Anjum Khan: "Coexisting Beyond Binaries: An Analysis of Nostalgia and Haraway's Ideas"

Yashvi Srivastava: “Debunking the Binary of Urban/Rural: Challenges, Intimacy and Alienation in R Raj Rao’s Novels *The Boyfriend* and *Hostel Room 131*”

Alston M: “Rural Aesthetic in the Modernist Novel: A Study of an Interaction in Tamil”

Phaguni Bist: “A Road Less Travelled by the Metropolis: Vindicating the Dichotomy of Center and Margin in Anita Desai’s *In Custody*”

### Q & A followed by 10 minutes break

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

9:15 am - 11:00 am IST: Parallel Session 2: ◆

### Chair: Prof Anita Singh

Antara Adhikary: “Displaced Migrants across the ‘Chini-dad’: Representation of Peripheral Space and Indenture Identity in Peggy Mohan’s *Jahajin*”

Suchitra Singh: “Problematizing Identity and Assertion around Tea Estate through Rejina Marandi’s *Becoming Me*”

Khyati Sorathiya: “Names as the Metaphors of Periphery/Center of Social Identity in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*”

Shefali Kohli: “Re-Locating the Peripheral Space, Self and Consciousness”

### Q & A followed by 10 minutes break

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCQ2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**11:00 am - 12:45 pm IST: Parallel Session 3:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Nishi Pandey**

Swatee Sinha: “‘Kinopolitics’ and Unorganized Labour in Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* and Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*”

Jayasree Mukherjee: “Spurned by the Centre: The Plight of Internal Migrant Labourers during COVID-19 in Puja Changoiwala’s ‘Homebound’”

Takbeer Salati: “From Textual Sex-Workers to Films: Revisiting Culture(s) of Sex-Worker(s) and Manto”

Ved Prakash: “‘Manual Scavenging’ and the Idea of the Metropolis through Bhasha Singh’s *Unseen: The Truth about India’s Manual Scavengers* (2012)”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHDvUUltT1NhQT09>

**11:00 am - 12:45 pm IST: Parallel Session 4:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Fatima Rizvi**

Sneha Sharma: “Decolonising the Village: Conceptualising the Anchalik in Phanishwar Nath Renu’s Fiction”

Piyush Raval: “The Complexity of Village Life in Petlikar’s *Janamtip* and *Bhavsagar*”

Jharna Malaviya: “Where are the Villages in Indian Dystopian Fiction?”

Priya Bhattacharyya: “‘Spaces’ and ‘Identities’ in Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay’s *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Road)”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**12:45 pm - 2:05 pm IST: Parallel Session 5:** ◆

**Chair: Dr Asmat Jahan**

Vanya Jaiswal: “Limning Dalit Absence in the Literary Representations of Varanasi as a Sacredpolis”

Prathama Sarkar: “A Sense of Departure in Dalit Literature: A Study of the Centrifugal Force in Bama’s Writings”

Saundarya: “Dissolving the Margins: A Study of Omprakash Valmiki’s *Amma and Other Stories*”

Talat Mallick: “The Assertive Margins of India”

**Q & A followed by 25 minutes Lunch**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFbVDk3WmZ2KzRWZhdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**12:45 pm - 2:05 pm IST: Parallel Session 6:** ◆

**Chair: Dr Dhurjjati Sarma**

Kalpana Bora: “Geographies of Nostalgia: A Reading of Jahnvi Barua’s *Undertow* and Daribha Lyndem’s *Name Place Animal Thing*”

Natasa Thoudam: “Mufidun Nisa’s “Wait Flower, Don’t Bloom”: The Problematic of the Literary Circles in Manipur”

Shikha Maharshi & Urmishree Bedamatta: “Devotion, Discourse and the Odia Literary Imagination: Narrativizing the Mukti Mandap in Puri”

Pratiksha Pradhan & Vijayalekshmi R.: “Ecocultural Keystones and PlaceCentrism in Selected Lepcha Folk Tales”

## Q & A followed by 25 minutes Lunch

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

Lunch Break: 2:05 pm to 2:30 pm

### 2:30 pm - 4:20 pm IST: Parallel Session 7: ◆

**Chair: Prof Saroj Kumar Mahananda**

Rishav Dutta: “Reading Tribal Self-fashioning in India through Translation”

Paromita Bose: “Speaking from the Margins, of The Marginalized: HansdaSowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*”

Kavitha N: “Texts from the Precarious Margins: Mapping Agrarian Crisis in Contemporary Indian Literature”

Raj Gaurav Verma: “Margins and Metropolis: Kunwar Narain’s Poetry inEnglish Translation”

15 minutes Q & A followed by 15 minutes Tea break

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

### 2:30 pm - 4:20 pm IST: Parallel Session 8: ◆

**Chair: Professor Ranu Uniyal**

Vandita Gautam: “Mufassil through the Diaspora Bioscope”

Alka Vishwakarma: “The Territorialization of Mofussil and the Metropolis inSri Lankan and Indian Tamil Short Stories”

Shuby Abidi: “Between the ‘Margins’ and ‘Metropolis’: A Study of Dina Nayeri’s *The Ungrateful Refugee*”

Chaandreyi Mukherjee: “The Othering of Smell in Perumal Murugan’s ‘Shit’”

**15 minutes Q & A followed by 15 minutes Tea break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHQT09>

**4:20 pm - 6:00 pm IST: Parallel Session 9: ◆**

**Chair: Prof Nishat Zaidi**

Navjot Sandhu: “Between Longing and Belonging at the Margins: Reading Anuradha Roy’s *The Folded Earth* and Shubhangi Swarup’s *Latitudes of Longing*”

Tara Saldanha: “A Room Not Quite Her Own: Writing and Domestic Work in Baby Halder’s *A Life Less Ordinary*”

Saptarshi Mallick: “Liberating Victims: A Bengali Gynocritic in Dialogue with Her Daughters”

Aleem Qureshi: “Gendered Trajectories, Dissident Voice: Re-reading *Lihaafand Kaghazi Hai Pairahan* in Postcolonial Context”

**15 minutes Q & A, Closing for the day.**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFbVDk3WmZ2KzRWZhdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**4:20 pm - 6:00 pm IST: Parallel Session 10:** ◆

**Chair: Simi Malhotra**

Ayesha Irfan: “Fort William College and Its Contribution to Modern Indian Languages”

Shishu Bala: “Reddening Tree: A Glimpse of Mountain Culture of Western Himalayas”

Taniya Roy: “Love and Disparity: Representation of Eroticism in the Compilation of Hala’s Gāthā Saptaśatī”

**15 minutes Q & A, Closing for the day.**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCQ2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**Day 3: Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**9:15 am - 11:15 am IST: Parallel Session 11:** ◆

**Chair: Dr Ayesha Irfan**

Shalim Hussain: “The Post-Colony and Its Intermediaries: Reading History While Translating Kamal Kumar Tanti’s *Post-Colonial Poems*”

Jyotishman Kalita & Suman Sigroha: “Evolving Nature of ‘Centre-Margin’ Relationship in New English Short Fiction from Assam”

Shivam Kundu: “A Disquiet Home: Reading Temsula Ao’s *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone*”

Medha Devi: “Negotiating the Nation, Embracing Ethno-nationalism: A Study of Temsula Ao’s Select Short Stories”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFbVDk3WmZ2KzRWZhdvUUltT1NhOT09>



**9:15am - 11:15am IST: Parallel Session 12:** ◆

**Chair: Prof Asim Siddiqui**

P. Muralidhar Sharma: “Daughters of Sin: The Courtesan Novel as Micro-History”

Hishma Binti Nazir: “The Discursive Construction of National Identities via Linguistic Discourses: The Case of Urdu and Its Neglect”

Mohd. Siddique Khan: “The Curious Case of Urdu in Indian English Poetry: From Nativist Assertion to Transatlantic Assimilation: A Study of the Poetry of Agha Shahid Ali”

Md Faizan Mouqim & Mohd Aqib: “Dalit Muslims in Urdu Fiction: New Directions in the Representation of Dalit Question”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**11:15am - 12:45 pm IST: Parallel Session 13:** ◆

**Chair: Prof Nandini Saha**

Shruti Sareen: “Representation of Majuli Island in Assam in Select Literature and Film”

Simran Bedi: “‘Aamchi Mumbai?’ To Whom Does the Metropolis Belong: A Spatial Analysis of Bombay/Mumbai in Zoya Akhtar’s *Gully Boy*”

Pallabee Dasgupta: “Chronicle of a Death in Silence: Reading the Enchantment of the Secluded Countryside in Konkona Sen Sharma’s *A Death in the Gunj* (2016)”

Amrita Mitra: “Masculinity and Marginalisation: Reading the Experiences of Migrant North Easterners in the Film *Axone*”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFbVDk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**11:15am - 12:45 pm IST: Parallel Session 14:** ◆

**Chair: Kalyanee Rajan**

A.K. Muneer: “World Literature before World Literature? The Sociality of Literary Circulation and the Example of Mappila Literary Culture from the Malabar Coast”

Abhishek Pundir: “Emergence of ‘World’ in the Planetary: Reading/Placing Muktibodh in South Asian Studies”

N. Usha: “Bangalore as a Cosmopolitan Urban Space: Comparative Study of Select Migrant Discourses”

Neenu Kumar: “Portrayal of Shades of Marginality, the Urbane and Rural through Human Emotions in *Paatal Lok*”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**12:45 pm - 1:30 pm IST: Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial (MMM) Prize Session 2023**

**Chair: Prof M Asaduddin & Prof Swati Pal**

**Preliminary Remarks**

**Award Citations**

**Conversation between Prof Swati Pal & Meghal Karki**

## Q & A followed by Lunch

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZhdvUUltT1NhQT09>

**Lunch Break: 1:30 pm to 2:10 pm**

**2:10 pm - 4:15 pm IST: Parallel Session 15: ◆**

**Chair: Prof Anjali Daimari**

Shailendra Kumar Singh: “Illustrative Paradigms or Representational Dichotomies? The Village and the City in Premchand’s Fiction”

Neepa Sarkar: “Detecting the City and Mediating Conflict: The Flaneur-Bhadralok in Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s *Byomkesh Bakshi*”

Jindagi Kumari: “From ‘Imaginary Homelands’ to ‘Shadow Lines’: A Comparative Analysis of the City Motifs in the Selected Novels of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Amit Chaudhuri”

Ashish James: “Cities as Spaces of Interstices: Centres and Peripheries in Lavanya Sankaran’s *The Hope Factory*”

Akash Salim S F: “The Spatial Politics of Knowledge”

**Q & A followed by 15 minutes Tea break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZhdvUUltT1NhQT09>

**2:10 pm - 4:15 pm IST: Parallel Session 16:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Nishat Haider**

Sumadhura Roy: “Decentering the Discourses of the Metropole: A Study of the Rajbangsi Community of North Bengal and their Folk Songs”

Jharana Rani Dhnagadamajhi & Sonali Supriya Bagh: “From Folk to Pop: Understanding the Poetics and Politics of the ‘Remix-Revival’ Culture of Select Sambalpuri Folk Songs”

Hriya Banerjee: “*Amar Shohor* (My City): Exploring the Metropolis and Counterculture in Bangla Band Songs”

Harsimran Kaur: “Now, Bulleh Shah Dances from the ‘Peripheries’ to ‘Centre’”

Tenzin Nyima Bhutia: “Understanding Integrity Norms and Oral Narratives of Sacred Texts: A Comparative Analysis of Transcripts of Buddhist Religious Texts and Translations of the Bible-Quran”

**Q & A followed by 15 minutes Tea break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**4:15 pm - 6:00 pm IST: Parallel Session 17:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Vibha Sharma**

Urmi Sengupta: “‘Mapping the Mystifying Margins’: Collective Memory and Ecofeminist Interconnections across Indigenous Literatures of North-East India”

Nilakshi Moran: “Understanding ‘Violence’ and ‘Nationalism’ through Select Assamese Fiction”

Neeharika Haloi: “Lost Narratives: Voices from the Forgotten Chinese-Assamese Community in India”

Sanjukta Naskar: “Voices from the Margins: Migration, Memory and the City”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdUkZ3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**4:15 pm - 6:00 pm IST: Parallel Session 18:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Shobha**

H S Komalesha: “Light of the Margin in the Wick of Metropolis: Revisiting the Poetry of Kedarnath Singh”

Beauty Yadav: “Exploring Provinciality and Culture in *Patna Roughcut* and *Patna Blues*”

Maziah Shaaz: “Challenging the Norm: Evaluating Kamla and Mrigayaa against the Centre-Margin Conflict”

Apoorva Dimri: “The Margins Within the Metropolis: A Reading of Manto’s Representation of Bombay”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**6:00 pm-7:30 pm IST: Special Session: BOOK RELEASE Chair:**

**Swati Pal**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdUkZ3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

## Day 4: Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023

9:15 am - 11:15 am IST: Parallel Session 19: ◆

**Chair: Albeena Shakil**

Esther Daimari: “Climate Writing from the Northeast: Reading Easterine Kire’s *The Son of the Thundercloud* as an Ecogothic Cli-fi”

Sadhna Kashyap: “Voices From the Margins: A Postcolonial Reading of Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* and Janice Pariat’s *Boats on Land*”

Vandana Gupta: “Oral, Local, Bioregional: A Study of Pluri-versal Aesthetics of Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam*”

Papia Sengupta: “Breaking the Binary between Mainstream and the Margin: Oral Narratives as History”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVkdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhQT09>

9:15 am - 11:15 am IST: Parallel Session 20: ◆

**Chair: Professor H S Komalesha**

Shantanu Majee: “Claiming the Margin: An Attempt at Decolonising the Indian Classroom”

Abhinaba Chatterjee: “Interplay of the Margin and the Centre: Indian English Literature in the Global Context”

Shatarupa Sinha: “Mapping the ‘Indian’ Journey: Beyond Indian English Literature”

Manish Solanki: “Jacinta Kerketta’s ई र और बाज़ार (God and Market): Margins Writing Back”

**Q & A followed by 10 minutes break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**11:15 am-1:30 pm IST: CD Narasimhaiah Prize 2023 Session (Shortlisted Papers)**

**Chairs: Prof M Asaduddin & Professor Fatima**

**Rizvi**

Anirban Bhattacharjee, “Dalit Autobiographies and the Politics of Self-worlding”

Arti Mathur, “Deterritorializing Marginalization: Negotiation Difference and Belonging through Literary 'Minorityscapes'”

Diksha Beniwal, “Migration and Modern Utopia of a Colonial City: A Study of Narendra Jadhav's Untouchables.”

Ishita Sareen, “The Claustropolitan Unmaking of a Nehruvian Metropolis: The Discontents of Chandigarh in Madhur Kapila’s Saamne ka Aasman.”

Pritha Chakraborty, “Sacrality in Profanity: Defining the Sacred Space of Ganga and Varanasi through Narratives from the Margin.”

**(20 mins per presentation)**

**20 mins Q&A followed by 30 minutes Lunch**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**Lunch Break: 1:30 pm to 2:00 pm**

**2:00 pm - 2:20 pm IST: CDN Prize WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT AND Award**

**Announcement of CDN Prize winner by \_\_\_\_\_ (with introduction of judges)**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**2:20 pm - 3:55 pm IST: Session 21:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Vibha Chauhan**

Mitali Bhattacharya: “Returning to ‘Roots’: Assessing Politics of Postcoloniality in Indian Theatre and Performance”

Gulbahar Shah: “From Ritual Performances to Satire: The Role of Folk Art in Kashmir”

Shibani Phukan: “The Othering of the ‘Other’ in the Shillong Novel” Gutimali Goswami:

“‘How Strange is this Metropolis’: A Study Analyzing the Binary of Metropolis/Margin in Moushumi Kandali's *The Black Magic Women*”

**Q & A followed by 15 minutes Tea break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZHdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**2:20 pm - 3:55 pm IST: Session 22:** ◆

**Chair: Professor Margaret L. Pachuau**

Mustabshira Siddiqui: “Muslim Women as the ‘Periphery’ of the Mainstream Society in Afghanistan: A Thoughtful Glimpse on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini”

Wafa Hamid: “Literary Urbanisms: Women, Violence and the Metropolis in Manjula Padmanabhan's ‘Lights Out’”

Poonam Charan: “The Anxiety of Being Driven to the Periphery in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*”



Shilpy Jain: “Writing from the Periphery: A Study of *Zorami: A Redemption Song*”

**Q & A followed by 15 minutes Tea break**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83482774472?pwd=WDYwUWdvSVNCO2JYMzhDWEFJbXNHOT09>

**6:30 pm - 8 pm IST: Valedictory Session**

**Chair: Professor Malashri Lal**

**Opening remarks: Prof M Asaduddin**

**Valedictory Address: Professor Vinay Dharwadker, “Mechanisms of Marginalization: Indian Literatures in Local and Global Frames Today”**

**Vote of Thanks: Albeena Shakil**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83492775721?pwd=RUFBVdk3WmZ2KzRWZhdvUUltT1NhOT09>

**Day 2: Thursday, April 27 2023**  
**Parallel Session 1: 9.15 a.m.-11:00 a.m. IST**  
**Chair: Banibrata Mahanta**

**Chair's bio:**

**Dr. Banibrata Mahanta** is Professor of English at Banaras Hindu University, India. His areas of interest include Indian writing in English, the changing contours of Indian nationalist thought, contemporary literary theory, especially disability theory, and translation. His recent works include the edited volume *English Studies in India: Contemporary and Evolving Paradigms* (Springer 2019) and an English translation of the Hindi novel *Lavanya Devi* (Orient Blackswan, forthcoming) for which he was awarded the prestigious PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant (PEN America) in 2021.

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**M. Anjum Khan, "Coexisting Beyond Binaries: An Analysis of *Nostalgia* and Haraway's Ideas"**

**Abstract:**

The binary division of the world creates a dichotomous understanding of the world that is reductionist and does not fully capture the diverse experiences and perspectives of individuals and communities. The construction of binaries reinforces power dynamics and perpetuates oppression, as it prioritizes one group over another and naturalizes these hierarchies. The example in Vassanji's *Nostalgia* highlights the dangers of such divisions, as it reinforces the notion of a superior human group and an inferior inhuman group. In addition to examining the negative effects of these binaries, the paper will also draw upon Haraway's ideas of coexisting living to explore alternatives to this problematic pattern of division. Haraway suggests that we must acknowledge and embrace the interconnectedness and interdependence of different groups and communities, breaking down the rigid boundaries that separate us. By embracing this mode of coexisting living, we can strive towards a more just and equitable world. Furthermore, the paper will examine the ways in which the constructed binaries in "Nostalgia" serve to reinforce existing power dynamics and perpetuate oppression. Overall, the paper aims to provide a critical examination of the constructed binaries present in *Nostalgia*, and explore how these binaries contribute to the perpetuation of oppression and inequality.

**Bio-Note:** M. Anjum Khan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore.

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**Yashvi Srivastava, “Debunking the Binary of Urban/Rural: Challenges, Intimacy and Alienation in R Raj Rao’s Novels *The Boyfriend* and *Hostel Room 131*”**

**Abstract:**

In India and elsewhere, the dominant narrative of queer life-trajectories has been focused on leaving small villages in search of bigger, presumably more anonymous cities where a sense of emancipation from heteronormative societal mores and familial duties may be imagined and experienced. LGBTQ people's lived experiences are undoubtedly shaped by their geographic identities, which can result in persecution, displacement, and relocation. There has been a little urban bias in studies on gay identities and queer settings. The metropolitan environment is portrayed as a paragon of openness in contrast to the rural gay living. Questioning the strict notion of queer visibility/invisibility is one of the recurrent themes in queer studies. The idea of an urban paradise for queer identities creates a binary separation where LGBT exposure is viewed as impractical outside of major cities.

In view of the above inference, this paper looks into two novels by R. Raj Rao - *Hostel Room 131* and *The Boyfriend*. This paper attempts to look into the fragmented and differential realities of queer lives which have to be navigated through urban consumption, gender binaries, heteronormativity, class expectations and caste limitations and henceforth debunk the myth of urban/rural dichotomy which equates urbanity with modernity and acceptance and rurality with tradition and orthodoxy.

**Bio-Note:** Yashvi Srivastava is a senior research fellow at the Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow.

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**Alston M, “Rural Aesthetic in the Modern Novel: A Study of An Interaction”**

**Abstract:**

In the first half of the twentieth century in Tamil Nadu, the novel established itself as the prominent art form of the emerging middle-class, mostly belonging to urban settings. However, during the second half of the century, there was a shift in the aesthetics of the genre which led to a reconfiguration of the canons. This shift occurred when the rural spaces of Tamil Nadu began to utilize the genre of the novel for expressing their own lives. This paper aims to show light on this aesthetic reconfiguration through an analysis of two Tamil novels, *Oru Puliya Maratin Kathai* (The Tamarind History) by Sundara Ramasamy and *Gopalla Gramam* (Gopallapuram) by Ki. Rajanarayanan. *Oru Puliya Maratin Kathai* is an urban novel which engages with the rural aesthetic in a particular way, while *Gopalla Gramam* emerges, as a tale, directly from the village soil and interacts with the urban form of the novel. This encounter of the urban and the rural

within the aesthetic field of the genre causes interesting interactions between realism and folk-mysticism, between logical writing and oral utterance, and between individualism and collective existence. The paper will explicate the nature of this interaction and understand its impact on the form of the novel.

**Bio-Note:** Alston M is a Doctoral Research Scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

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**Phaguni Bist, “A Road Less Travelled by the Metropolis: Vindicating the Dichotomy of Center and Margin in Anita Desai’s *In Custody*”**

**Abstract:**

The reality of India’s provincial past and cultural heritage is sustained through its peculiar rural and small-town expanse. This Indian reality, translated into a binary of power-relationship between the metropolis as a site of prominence and small towns as peripheral and disenfranchised, is adroitly explored by Anita Desai in her novel *In Custody*.

The text builds upon the marginalization of small-townships represented by Mirpore and its resident, Deven—standing for stiltedness associated with small-townships in the belly of India—in parallel with the estranged status of Urdu—representing a communalized bracketing of cultural language in post-partition Hindostan. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks provided by Aijaz Ahmad and Tabish Khair in their critical writings on Indian literature, the paper traces the incidents of dialogue and alliance of these marginalized subjectivities through Deven, who mediates between the small-township and metropolis and also becomes a custodian of Urdu poet Nur and the Urdu language by rescuing its decaying heritage from the ravines of Delhi. Through these interactions, the peripheral status of locale and language is given an opportunity to establish its presence and acquire agency, thus, puncturing the prominence monopolized by the metropolis and in this process of subversion, changing the paradigm of urban centrality.

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**Parallel Session 2: 9:15 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**

**Chair: Prof Anita Singh**

**Chair’s bio**

**Dr. Anita Singh** is Professor in the Department of English & Co- coordinator, Centre for Women’s Studies and Development at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. She received Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Scholar Fellowship for the year 2013-2014 at the University of

Virginia, USA. She was a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study at Shimla, India (2018–2020). Her book *Staging Feminisms: Gender, Violence and Performance* was published by Routledge in 2021. Her other recent publications include the two edited volumes *Gender, Space, and Resistance: Women and Theatre in India*, (2013) and *Hero and Hero Worship: Fandom in Modern India* (2020).

She has completed a Major Research Project sanctioned by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, on “Staging Gender: Performing Women in Ramlila of Ramnagar”.

Dr Singh has published interviews with Indian women performers in the *Asian Theatre Journal*, contributed in four chapters in the *Routledge Handbook of Asian Theatre*, ed. Siyuan Liu (2016), and was the Guest Editor for the special issue of the *Journal Gender Issues*.

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### **Antara Adhikary, “Displaced Migrants across the ‘Chini-dad’: Representation of Peripheral Space and Indenture Identity in Peggy Mohan’s *Jahajin*”**

#### **Abstract:**

Displacement and migration affect centre/periphery spatial dichotomy. Indian societal definition of centre/periphery was completely shattered with the advent of European colonial expansion. The colonisers retained the centre, and the subjugated colonised were placed in the periphery. The peripheral experience of colonial atrocity and exploitation led many Indian commoners to undertake voyages across the ‘kala pani’ (‘black waters’). As parts of the indentured system many Indians were transported to the distant plantation sites across the globe. The transported coolies were even denied of their erstwhile identities as they crossed the ‘kala pani’, and lost their caste and home. The coolies were fraught with their being ‘other’ in the displaced land where they were supposed to discover a ‘new’ home.

This paper takes hold of Peggy Mohan’s *Jahajin* (2007) as case-study. The narrative depicts indenture migration to Trinidad, or ‘Chini-dad’ as the coolies used to mispronounce the name. The paper would explore peripheral experience of the Indian coolies in abroad. Examining the role of memory, shared-experience of the ‘jahaji bhai-bahen’ (‘brethren of ships’), and lingual transformation, this paper would venture in exploring home-space and in-between identity of the indenture labourers. Finally, this paper would draw its conclusion by arguing what kind of hope the coolies have nurtured from the tussles between peripheral space and denied roots.

**Bio-Note:** Antara Adhikary is State Aided College Teacher (SACT) at the Department of English (UG & PG) in Mahishadal Raj College (NAAC Accredited ‘A’ Grade College), Mahishadal, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India. She is also pursuing her PhD at the Department of English, Prabhat Kumar College, Contai (affiliated under Vidyasagar University), West Bengal, India.

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**Suchitra Singh, “Problematizing Identity and assertion around tea estates through Rejina Marandi's *Becoming Me* “**

**Abstract:**

Indigenous or Adivasis in India is a contested schism in democratic, modernizing, developmental narrative of India. Assam is a complex mix of various communities of people namely the tribes of hills, the tribes of plains, non-tribal groups of Hindus, Muslims and Christians and tea-tribes. Tea tribes in Assam do not avail the constitutional rights of ST availed by other tribal communities in the country. This differential state of treatment and condition of tea tribes create a discursive state of negotiations centring around the mainstream and marginalized identity crises within the indigenous population as well as the dominant non-tribal communities.

In Indian English literature, due to obvious distance from the language, centers of knowledge production and dissemination, tribes have been represented through a handful of literary fiction and productions primarily in English language by writers such as Hansda sowvendra Shekhar, Mamang Dai, Temsula Ao etc. and translations of much celebrated works of Mahashweta Devi, Narayan, Gopinath Mohinaty etc. This paper aims to study the conflicts and struggles of tea tribes in present day Assam through a detailed study of the novel *Becoming Me* written by Rejina Marandi. This study will problematise the intricate meanderings of identity and processes of validations, insecurities of contemporary lives in the newly English educated tribals struggling to bring their lives and existence from the margins of dominant state, social and cultural position to the center of critical discussions.

**Bio-Note:** Suchitra Singh is an independent research scholar. She has completed her M.Phil from department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi. She is interested in Indian English Literature, adivasi literature, Displacement and migration studies, memory and trauma studies, partition literature etc.

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**Khyati Sorathiya, “Names as Metaphors of Periphery/Center of Social Identity in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*”**

**Abstract:**

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is replete with political issues such as Kashmir Insurgency, 2002 Godhra riots, anti-corruption movement, feminism and questions of transgender identity, while probing in and out of the lives of more than twenty characters. It can be said that all of them have fallen prey to the socio-political oppression due to their being on the periphery of the society; either in terms of gender or caste. In this light, this paper proposes to

analyse how the names of some characters have played a role in their being oppressed; and how their names can be read as one of the metaphors of their social status as well as identity. Such characters are Anjum, a transgender who calls herself Anjuman meaning a *mehfil* (of two genders/sexes). By this it seems that instead of dividing herself into usual identity/ies, she means to celebrate the gathering of two genders/sexes in herself. Further, there is Saddam Hussain who actually belongs to the Dalit caste but changes his name from Dayanand to Saddam Hussain to avenge the death of his father by the brutal beating at the hands of a police officer. This is how their names can be read as the metaphorical representatives of their place in the society and how they try to move from the peripheries to the center.

**Bio-Note:** Khyati Sorathiya works at S. G. M. English Medium College of Commerce and Management, Charutar Vidya Mandal University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat.

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### **Shefali Kohli, “Re-Locating the Unitary Space, Self and Consciousness”**

#### **Abstract:**

Whenever life seeks to shelter, protect, cover or hide itself, Space as an ambiguous concept defines itself variously for distinct Beings. This concept of ‘home’ as a conglomeration of memory, nostalgia, and belongingness resulting in the creation of an oneiric self, can be juxtaposed with another classification of space, a ‘community’. Just as a home is a protected-space where one’s ‘I-ness’ resides as an individual self, dominated by personal memory and nostalgia, a community is a collective protected-space where the ‘we-ness’ is dominated by the aspects of interdependence and belongingness. However, questioning the interdependencies between selves and with the space they belong is what problematizes and perhaps threatens the harmonious coexistence of community and self. In such scheme of things, this paper analyses the ambiguity and magic (or mystery) of the number ‘two’. It focuses firstly on the ‘two-ness of spaces’, namely ‘home’ and ‘community’ as well as ‘rural’ and ‘urban’. Secondly, it marks the categorisation of the ‘two-ness of selves’, namely ‘communal’ and ‘individual’. Thirdly, the paper focuses on the third classification, the ‘two-ness of consciousness’- ‘National’ and ‘fractured’ consciousness. The emphasis would be on these categorisations of the two-ness of spaces, selves, and consciousness, taking references from Srilal Shukla’s Sahitya Academy-winning political satire, Raag Darbari (1968).

**Bio-Note:** Shefali Kohli is pursuing her Masters in English at Miranda House, University of Delhi.

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**Parallel Session 3: 11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

**Chair: Professor Nishi Pandey**

**Chair's bio:**

**Professor Nishi Pandey** presently serves as Professor of Eminence in the Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow where she has served for 40 years as an outstanding academic and administrator. She was awarded two UP State awards - Saraswati Samman for outstanding academic and administrative achievements and Rani Laxmibai Bravery Award for empowering women by setting an example and being a role model for young women. Recipient of over 35 other National and International awards and scholarships, including the Fulbright Scholarship twice and the Charles Wallace Scholarship among others.

Widely travelled she has studied at the University of Oxford, University of London, University of Louisville and worked collaboratively on research projects with Professors from Ivy league Universities in USA and UK. She has served on innumerable National level Committees of the UGC NAAC, ICCR and has led Indian delegations of Higher Education Academic Administrators / Academicians to International Forums and Conferences.

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**Swatee Sinha, “Kinopolitics’ and Unorganized Labour in Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* and Arvind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*”**

**Abstract:**

The article purports to offer new perspectives on the galvanization of a subaltern labour politics in terms of social motion as evinced in Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935) and Arvind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008). The article engages with the concept of ‘kinopolitics’ or the analysis of social flows from the perspective of labour dislocations that entails radical interventions/ interceptions of dominant regimes of social flows in the process problematizing socio-historically determined parameters of mobility. Shuttling between the metropolitan centre or the colonial cantonment town and the rural hinterlands with its feudal practices of indentured/bonded labour, Bakha and Balram, the respective protagonists of Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935) and Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008) have to negotiate with a complex dynamics of segregated regimes of mobility predetermined by the junctions of caste and class. Against an exclusionary politics of mobility, forged at the intersections of class and caste the article proposes to investigate the “pedetic” motion of the disenfranchised migrant worker as “the force of the foot—to walk, to run, to leap, to dance” which becomes the driving force behind a radical philosophy of self-locomotion, reinstituting the migrant worker as the primary architect of a political philosophy of motion outside institutional paradigms.

**Bio-Note:** Swatee Sinha is a PhD Research Scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences IIT, Kharagpur. Her research interests span culture and critical theory with particular



focus on Deleuze and Guattari's mobilization of desire as a concept and its critical agency in the reconstitution of the unconscious.

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**Jayasree Mukherjee, "Spurned By The Centre: The Plight Of Internal Migrant Labourers In An Indian Metropolis During The Pandemic In Puja Changoiwala's *Homebound*"**

**Abstract:**

Through a close reading of Puja Changoiwala's novel, *Homebound* (2021), the paper aims to explore some of the grimmest and most disturbing aspects of socio-political and economic marginalization experienced by the internal migrant labourers in India as betrayed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Changoiwala's is one of the first major fictionalized chronicle of the historic mass exodus of a few hundred million migrant labourers, who at the sudden onset of the unprecedented national lockdown on March 25, 2020 were forced to walk the few hundred/thousand miles that separated their hometown from their city of work. Taking the family of the fifteen-year-old Meher, a resident of Dharavi—one of world's largest slums—in Mumbai to be a microcosmic representation of the plight of some 450 million migrant workers stuck in a metropolis that suddenly shut down within a notice period of less than twenty-four hours, Changoiwala faithfully delineates the gaping putrid face of social discrimination, injustice, violence and insecurity that marks the daily life of this section of the Indian population.

The paper employs theoretical tools from Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Studies to attempt a close reading of Changoiwala's novel in order to show how a digitally-equipped smart Indian city offers little economic and social security to its working class.

**Bio-Note:** Jayasree Mukherjee is an Assistant Professor at the Amity Institute of English Studies and Research, Jharkhand, Ranchi.

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**Takbeer Salati, "From Textual Sex-Workers to Films: Revisiting Culture(s) of Sex-Worker(s) and Manto"**

**Abstract:**

This article traces the unique stance and nature of the life of sex-workers in South Asia. Drawing from a change in shift, it will argue that the exploration of the life of sex-workers are largely diachronic and doesn't restrict itself to a particular historical time. Setting out from such a culture, Saadat Hassan Manto (1912-1955), a prominent Pakistani short story writer focused on the marginalization of the sex-workers who formed his female characters. It also discusses the key role of the evolution of such portrayal and its consciousness through the recent movies like

Gangubai Kathwadi (2022) directed by Sanjay Leela Bansali depicting the life of Gangubai: a sex-worker. These evolutions will be drawn against the marginalization of sex-workers to highlight the context in which the specificities of the evolution in their context can be drawn out. The second section, which forms the major part of the paper, analyzes Gangubai Kathwadi with Manto's sex workers through local postcolonial interventions. In doing so, the article aims to present the conjoining of sex-workers and a larger politics of marginalization in their lives, which is an important aspect of understanding the relevancy of Manto's choice of sex-workers in conflict with the present life standards of their life.

**Bio-Note:** Takbeer Salati is a PhD Research Scholar at the Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad.

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### **Ved Prakash, “‘Manual Scavenging’ and the idea of the Metropolis”**

#### **Abstract:**

At present when the discourse of 'caste' has become a global phenomenon, it becomes imperative to talk about the stratifications that one can locate between the Dalit and Non-Dalit bodies in urban India. While there are ample cases of violence against the Dalit body that takes place daily, one also needs to ponder upon the social and political exclusion and everyday humiliation of Manual Scavengers. Mostly Manual Scavengers belong to the sub-caste of Bhangi, placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Bhangis are given the lowest place amongst the non-Dalits as well as the Dalits which highlights that caste is a complex phenomenon as there is untouchability within untouchability. The parliament of India introduced The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 which abolished the practice of manual scavenging; however, nothing has changed in reality.

Keeping Bourdieu's idea of habitus in mind, the paper will examine Bhasha Singh's non-fiction work titled *Unseen: The Truth about India's Manual Scavengers* (2012). The paper will primarily look into the chapter titled 'Delhi: The more we try to get rid of our caste identity, the more evident it becomes' while peeping into the bipolarity of metropolis and margins. The paper will be an attempt to look at Delhi through the often-suppressed voices/narratives of manual scavengers.

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**Parallel Session 4: 11:00 a.m.- 12:45 p.m.**

**Chair: Professor Fatima Rizvi**

### Chair's bio:

**Fatima Rizvi** is Professor in the Department of English and Modern European languages, University of Lucknow. Her areas of academic interest include Colonial and Postcolonial studies, Translation Studies, and Urdu Studies. She translates Urdu and Hindi. Her research papers have been published in journals of national and international repute and anthologies of critical essays. She has published *Beyond the stars and Other Stories* (2021, Women Unlimited), a translation of Qurratulain Hyder's *Sitaron se Aage* (1947); is co-editing *Understanding Disability: Interdisciplinary Critical Approaches* for Springer and translating stories and essays for *Summer Medley: A Qurratulain Hyder Miscellany* for Women Unlimited. She was awarded the Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize for excellence in academic research (2018), and the Jawad Memorial Prize (2019), for Urdu – English translation.

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### **Sneha Sharma**, “Decolonising the village: A Study on the making of the *Anchal*”

#### **Abstract:**

The ‘provincial’ in colonialist as well as nationalist knowledge-making has been an area for impassioned research. I use the word “impassioned” deliberately, because a moralizing attitude in relation to the rural has been a constant through all periods. The older forms of pastoral literature, popular since Hesiod and Virgil, had given way to a reading of social conditions which was at variance from the former modes of framing the countryside which emphasized aspects of husbandry and redemptive innocence. Figures of the tourist, the scientist and the intrepid ethnographer offered readings of the village site which allowed for new modes of hegemony and a discursive embedding of the rural in larger narratives of national identity and territorial consolidation. Reading the *anchal* or the provincial/regional in Hindi literature, this paper will examine the modern ways of visualizing and theorizing the rural. The moralised geography of the village republic as popularised by Gandhi will also be examined in the reading. Fictional representations offer conditions for polyscopic and heterogeneous narratives to emerge against discursive containments foisted on the ‘region’ through various disciplinary formations such as anthropology, history, and literary criticism. Through the use of modes like metaphorical figuration, sensory evocation and ecological discourse, I examine Phanishwar Nath Renu’s attempts to break through the pietistic imagination which had ossified the village in the Hindi literary corpus.

**Bio-Note:** Sneha Sharma is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Ramjas College, University of Delhi. She has been teaching undergraduate studies for over a decade. She is also pursuing her PhD at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Her work examines the novels of famous Hindi writer, Phanishwar Nath Renu.

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### **Piyush Raval, “The Complexity of Village Life in Petlikar’s *Janamtip* and *Bhavsagar*”**

#### **Abstract:**

Ishwar Petalika (1916-1983) was a Gujarati writer who was widely known for his depiction of various aspects of village life and the social issues therein in central region of Gujarat in his novels and short stories. In this paper, I would like to examine the depiction of village life in his two major novels *Janamtip* (1944) and *Bhavsagar* (1951). *Janamtip*, adapted into a movie in Gujarati, deals with the social customs and the community life of Patanwadiya lower caste in a village and revolves around the courageous life of Chanda, Bhima’s wife, and Bhima’s life sentence due to revenge on Punja for teasing Chanda. *Bhavsagar* describes the complexity, orthodoxy and insensitivity of village life wherein a daughter has to commit suicide by dousing kerosene upon herself when all her marriage prospects fail and her mother Suraj loses all courage after facing innumerable hardships since her husband left her for Africa, throwing responsibility of two children. In his novelistic art, Petlikar appropriately uses the dialect, the proverbs and the idioms of villages in central Gujarat with remarkable simplicity of style. The paper will shed light on such features in *Janamtip* and *Bhavsagar* as *anchalik* novels and bring out the novelist’s understanding of the village life in Gujarat.

**Bio-Note:** Piyush Raval teaches as Assistant Professor in Department of English, Sardar Patel University, India. He has written and edited two books - *Translation Studies: Contemporary Perspectives on Postcolonial and Subaltern Translations* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2012) and *Negotiating Identities: Globalisation, Culture and History* (Vidyanagar: Sardar Patel University Press, 2012). He was awarded Junior Research Fellowship in 2005 and Translation Fellowship in 2008 by Centre for Contemporary Theory, Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda.

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### **Jharna Malaviya, “Post-Pandemic Metropolis in Indian Dystopian fiction”**

#### **Abstract:**

The present study aims to find out how postcolonial dystopian fiction in India imagines the future of the ever-increasing tension between the privileged metropolis and the underprivileged periphery, especially with reference to the decisive changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Prayag Akbar’s *Leila*, Nayantara Sahgal’s *When the Moon Shines by Day*, and Samit Basu’s *Chosen Spirits*, among others, are a few recent dystopian novels set in twenty-first-century Indian metropolises which have become centres of authoritarianism. Recently, a few scholars (including Tereza Østbø Kuldova) have tried to explore the representation of postcolonial cityscapes in Indian dystopian fiction, its caste and class biases, but this paper tries to draw attention to the periphery or the margin which remains conspicuous by its absence in

recent Indian dystopian fiction – the villages. Thus, the paper questions the invariably urban, elite, metropolitan setting of Indian dystopian fiction. Moreover, it is necessary to ask what the other/outsider, who is doomed to remain marginalised, would find dystopian as opposed to those who are privileged metropolitans; how would they spell out or define their “dystopia/s”? The paper also traces the ways in which western dystopian fiction influences how the metropolis is defined and imagined in Indian dystopian fiction.

**Bio-Note:** Jharna Malaviya is an Assistant Professor at SPM College, University of Allahabad.

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### **Priya Bhattacharyya, ‘Spaces’ and ‘Identities’ in Bibhutibhushan’s *Pather Panchali Song of the Road***

#### **Abstract:**

This paper looks into spaces where the ‘Centre’ and the ‘Periphery’ often overlap in Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay’s novel *Pather Panchali Song of the Road* which reflects the power dynamics that characterise the social order of the community life in the village of Nishchindipur, a part of rural Bengal.

Characters like Horihor Ray and his ancestors, Indir Thakrun, a Hindu Brahmin widow, who people the village, not only conform to the social hierarchy dominated by the Brahmins—the ‘centre’ which defines the ‘periphery’ constituted by the lower castes—but also themselves become a part of the periphery through their actions and by the turn of events in their lives. The novel was translated into English by T.W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji in 1968 as part of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works which was a UNESCO translation project that endeavoured to translate masterpieces of world literature from lesser known languages into a more international language like English, French. Hence the original novel in Bengali, its selection as a masterpiece of world literature together with its English translation may be thought of as an embodiment of the efforts of the ‘Periphery writing back to the Centre.’

**Bio-Note:** Priya Bhattacharyya is a passionate researcher in the domain of Post Colonial Literature, Partition Literature, and Literature and Films. She is an enthusiastic teacher who has been working as a Lecturer in English at Pailan Technical Campus, Pailan Group of Institutions, Kolkata for the last ten years. She did MPhil in English at Jadavpur University.

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**Parallel Session 5: 12:45 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.**

**Chair: Dr Asmat Jahan**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Dr Asmat Jahan** is an Associate Professor in Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. She has been engaged in both creative and critical writing and translations and has published research papers and translations and poetry in various Journals and edited books. Her research area is Postcolonial literature and South Asian Literature.

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**Vanya Jaiswal, “Limning Dalit Absence in the Literary Representations of Varanasi as a Sacredpolis”**

The metropolis became a key leitmotif in modernist literature, transcending its erstwhile position of the city-as-backdrop. The spatial turn in critical theory around 1980s gave further impetus to critical perspectives on the city. However, these debates about the metropolis have failed to adequately address the experience of holy cities like Varanasi, which does not fit into the universal binary of metropolis/margins. In this paper, I will argue that the holy city of Varanasi, famously referred to as the ‘Oxford and Mecca of Hinduism’ presents a special case of what I would term as the ‘Sacredpolis.’ The Sacredpolis is produced through a complex system of spatial practices, ritualized performance, and architectural interventions, among a host of other actors. In the paper, I will investigate the resounding silence around Dalit presence in the literary constructions of this city of Brahmanical decadence. I will consider Shiv Prasad Singh’s *Gali Aage Mudti Hai* and Shiv Prasad Mishra’s *Tales of Banaras: The Flowing Ganges* to demonstrate how these texts are marked by Dalit absence, despite their stature as canonical works on the city. I will argue that this failure of Varanasi’s illustrious Hindi literati to portray the Dalit experience reinforces and (re)produces Varanasi’s image of the homogenous Hindu Sacredpolis, thus making the city even more alienating and unlivable for those on its periphery.

Bio-Note: Vanya Jaiswal is a PhD Scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

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**Prathama Sarkar, “A Sense Of Departure In Dalit Literature: A Study Of The Centrifugal Force In Bama’s Writings”**

**Abstract:**

Literature from every nation contains specific socio-codes, which play a taxonomical factor in marking specific texts under certain categories such as canons, residual, and emergent. The canonization process of texts constructs an apparatus of power position within a given literary system and culture. From there, specific centripetal and centrifugal forces start functioning within that literary system. The centripetal force attempts to maintain the norms of dominant cultural parameters, whereas the centrifugal force tries to constitute its own markers. In the

Indian context, Dalit literature is an example of a centrifugal force that essentially counters the dominant society and its knowledge system. This paper would like to highlight these concerns of Dalit literature through Bama's *Karukku* and *Sangati*. These two texts depict one's self-recognition as an untouchable in the mainstream socio-political-economical context. This paper will also focus on the English translations of these texts by Lakshmi Holmstrom. Are these texts able to break the barrier between the metropolis and the margin by constituting this kind of readership? Do these texts genealogically written in testimonio and novel genres successfully bring out the dichotomy between the centre and its peripheries? This paper will engage with these texts through its historiographical, thematic and genealogical analysis to enquire these questions and to highlight its point of departure from the contemporary mainstream knowledge and literary system.

**Bio-Note:** Prathama Sarkar is currently pursuing MPhil from Jadavpur University, department of Comparative Literature. She has done B.A. and M.A. from the same department. Her areas of interest are Modern Indian Literature and criticism, South Asian politics and diaspora, partition history.

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### **Saundarya, "Dissolving the Margins: A Study of Omprakash Valmiki's *Amma and Other Stories*"**

#### **Abstract:**

Dalits in India, have been, for a long time, fighting for inhabiting a space in the mainstream society. Even in literature, the presence of Dalits had been obliterated which was challenged by the emergence of Dalit literature. This literature has been characterised as a literature of protest and historical revisionism, with an emphasis on the documentation of violence, oppression, and structural inequality. Dalit literature in North India has taken shape in the historical moments, namely post-Ambedkarite and post-Mandal Commission

It is in the context of realism and an upturning of the mainstream-margin dichotomy, that this paper will attempt to critically examine Omprakash Valmiki's anthology *Amma and Other Stories*, published in 2008. Revolving around the issues of realism, as Toral Jatin Gajarawala examines, the intersection of the exposition of social ills with the centrality of human dignity might be the logical point of intervention for Dalit realism.<sup>[2]</sup> This is precisely what Valmiki has done in his stories by endowing dalit characters with legitimate narrative arcs where the upper castes are the ones who enter the narrative space as intruders. This paper will further analyse the role of fiction and the way it upturns, or rather, entirely disrupts the dichotomy by bringing the Dalit life to the centre.

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## Talat Mallick, “The Assertive Margins of India”

### Abstract:

The term "marginality" connotes within itself the marginalised sections of society, be they socially, culturally, politically, or economically. According to Michel Foucault (1984), those who have knowledge wield power by pushing ideas or people to the margins. Dalits, owing to their marginalised identity, which is born out of their untouchable state, are among the most marginalised sections of Indian society. Their social struggle has given birth to a new form of literature, Dalit literature, which finds resonance in all marginalised literatures of the world. Writing allows the historically silenced and marginalised Dalits to express their pain, anger, and group defiance towards the prejudiced and powerful socioeconomic and political forces they face. The present article tries to implore the silenced voice of Dalit women within their community as well as in society. The feminisation of poverty and the exclusion of Dalits from mainstream society have left Dalit women vulnerable in the face of hegemonic forces. The continuing caste-class-gender nexus hinders their progress and, in turn, solidifies social exclusion. The article examines *Urmila Pawar's The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Women's Memoir* and attempts to demonstrate that, despite belonging to a marginalised section of society (both socially and geographically), Dalit women are asserting themselves and claiming their rightful place in society.

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### Parallel Session 6: 12:45 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.

**Chair: Dr Dhurjjati Sarma**

#### Chair's bio:

**Dhurjjati Sarma** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, Gauhati University, Assam. He was earlier a Production Editor at SAGE Publications, New Delhi, and, before that, a Research Fellow in North East India Studies at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi. He is presently engaged in studying the early and modern literatures of Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu from a comparative-cultural perspective. As a student and teacher of comparative literature, he is also trying to develop new insights and perspectives on the composite area of comparative literary history. His writings have been published under Sahitya Akademi, Routledge, and Palgrave Macmillan, and in journals like *English Forum*, *Rupkatha Journal*, *Dibrugarh University Journal of English Studies* (DUJES), *Space and Culture India*, and *Margins: A Journal of Literature and Culture*. He is presently working on a critical history of Assamese literature.

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**Kalpana Bora, “Geographies of Nostalgia: A Reading of Jahnvi Barua’s *Undertow* and Daribha Lyndem’s *Name Place Animal Thing*”**

**Abstract:**

In the last few decades the North East of India has witnessed rapid urbanization that has significantly transformed the landscape and opened up unprecedented possibilities for the people of the region. Simultaneously the region has also witnessed large scale migration people from these frontier lands moves to the metropolises in mainland India for better opportunities. The cities in the region, though developed, continue to remain pale in comparison to their more advanced contemporaries not merely in terms of the developmental processes in the contemporary context but primarily in the way in these cities continue to retain an old world charm (among others) evoking nostalgia and yearning. It makes an interesting case study that these frontier cities rarely become subject matter of literary urban imaginaries and when they do they abound with predictable narratives of militancy, conflict and fear. The present paper attempts to read Jahnvi Barua’s *Undertow* (2020) and Daribha Lyndem’s *Name Place Animal Thing* (2020) as narratives that locate the urban as central to the comprehension of one’s identity and history. While the former is set in Guwahati and the latter in Shillong, the cities, as spatial locations of nostalgia and remembering in both novels, define the lives of the characters and allows for reconnecting with one’s essential self as the narrators traverse the cities from a more adult point of view.

**Natasa Thoudam, “Mufidun Nisa’s *Wait Flower, Don’t Bloom* : The Problematic of the Literary Circles in Manipur”**

**Abstract**

Mufidun Nisa belongs to the Pangal (Muslim) community of Manipur. She has produced several books of poetry in Meiteilon in the Bengali script namely *Aroiba Khonjel* (The Last Voice; 2001), *Mingselda Leichil* (Mist on the Mirror, 2006), and *Thihousi Chengjel* (Let’s Search the Journey of Life). The poem discussed in this paper is titled “Wait, Flower, Don’t Bloom” (“*Shakhinu Leirang*,” translated by Chungkham Sheelaramani, 2009). The poem, first written in Meiteilon then translated into English, was especially written for an anthology published in 2009 titled *Dazzling Dewdrop: An Anthology of Verse Written by Women Poets in Translation*—an initiative by LEIKOL. This politics of inclusion of a text by a Pangal in an anthology dominated by Meitei writers and translators can be understood in two ways. On one side, there is Chungkham who observes in “A Note from the Editor” section of the anthology that Nisa belongs to “the younger generation of women poets [from Manipur]” who forms “a voice of protest rather than mourning at their subordinated forced destiny” (xiv). Chungkham then seems to see Manipur as a geographical category and tries not to contain its problems of nationalism within Meitei nationalism.

On the other side is Kongsam Kulladhwa's problematic inclusionary politics that tries to solve Manipur's problem within Meitei nationalism. In a review of Nisa's collection of poetry titled *Aroiba Khonjel* (The Last Voice, 2001), Kongsam refers to her as "the first Manipuri Muslim woman [to bring] out [a] Manipuri book" and distinguishes her from "other Manipuri Muslim poets" who "use Arabic or Urdu words" with the exception of her collection titled, *Thihousi Chengjel* (Let's Search the Journey of Life). The term "Manipuri Muslim" is now problematic in the light of Syed's arguments. Further, in his review, Kongsam tries to subsume the Pangals into the Meitei community by highlighting her contribution to Meiteilon literature and the political struggles of the Meiteis. According to him, she is "the poetess" who writes "elegy lamenting for late Arambam and the passing away of the poet Dr Kamal." Both of them were prominent Meitei men writers.

This paper through this text and its literary context attempts to re-visit and re-interrogate the dynamic configuration and negotiation of the unstable binaries of margins/metropolis, centre/peripheries, subaltern/standard, mainstream/regional, vernacular/dominant language or culture, outsider/insider, and indigenous/settler.

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### **Shikha Maharshi and Urmishree Bedamatta, "Devotion, Discourse and the Odia Literary Imagination: Narrativizing the Mukti Mandap in Puri"**

#### **Abstract**

The paper tries to narrativize Mukti Mandap; located in the precincts of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha, a coastal province located in the Eastern India as a socio-cultural space. The Mandap or the supposed "seat of learned brahmanas in the temple" has occupied a vibrant space in the precolonial Odia literary imagination. While the present institutional role of the Mandap is generally taken to be that of temple administration and management (Misra, Antiquities, 1929), its origin and historical significance in the literary and scholarly life in the sixteenth century spiritual and philosophical landscape in Puri continues to be a relatively unexplored territory. The space comprised a vibrant audience as takers of philosophical literature: scholarly Pundits, the then Gajapati king of Puri (Prataprudradev) and also the laity. The Mandap, interestingly, it is said, was restored by a Rajput princess called Rani Gaura Devi in 1568. Post the British take-over of the Province in 1803, the Mandap declined in fame and functions alike and was reduced to play a peripheral role limited to the temple affairs. The paper, thus, would attempt to look at this shift and consult the old Odia literature as well as historical records to reconstruct the central role Mukti Mandap played in shaping the Odia discourse in Puri's devotional space in the precolonial period.

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**Pratiksha Pradhan and Vijayalekshmi Ramachandran, “Ecocultural Keystones and Place Centricism in Selected Lepcha Folk Tales”**

**Abstract:**

Living in a world characterized by a worsening ecological crisis, it has become imperative to seek out various mediums and modes, both past and present, that can assist in re-envisioning human relationship with the habitat. Sikkim, India's first organic state, is thought to have been founded by Lepchas, the “original” or indigenous inhabitants of the place. The Lepchas have defined themselves in terms of their language (which has a script) and their connection to the places that their ancestors have been inhabiting for long. The Lepcha folk tales would also easily lend themselves for a structuralist analysis *a la* the one carried out by Vladimir Propp. However, this paper takes its point of departure from similar studies by looking at Lepcha folk tales from a contemporary ecological perspective as it would serve as a tool for raising ecological consciousness among the general public. The stories can be moved from the margins to the mainstream in that respect.

The paper examines the Lepcha folk tales collected and published by Yishey Doma under the title, *Legends of the Lepchas: Folk Tales from Sikkim* (2010). Through a textual analysis of the tales narrated, the paper demonstrates the significance of the Lepcha narratives that persistently debunk the human/nature divide and frequently project the mutual dependency between humans and animals by subverting the superiority myth of the former.

**Bio-note:** Pratiksha Pradhan, the first author of the paper, is a doctoral research scholar in the Department of Languages and Literature at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur. She is working on space, place and species in selected narratives from the hills of North East India. Vijayalekshmi Ramachandran is an Assistant Professor of English at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur.

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**Parallel Session 7: 2:30 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Saroj Kumar Mahananda**

**Chair's bio:**

**Prof Saroj Kumar Mahananda** teaches at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He is a multi-lingual writer, translator and critic with 23 years of university teaching and research. His research interests include Dalit Studies, Indian Writing in English, Odia Dalit Literature, Translation and Aesthetics, 19<sup>th</sup> Century English Literature, Post Colonial Literature, Patrick White's Fiction and Aboriginal Literature. Under the aegis of the UGC SAP DRS project

at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, he has translated the stories and non-fiction prose of Premchand into English. Besides many scholarly articles on the broad area of Dalit studies, he has to his credit three books, *Life in the Fringes: The Aborigines in Patrick White's Voss, Riders in the Chariot and A Fringe of Leaves* (2004), *Caste, Reality and Mediation: Articulation of Dalit Experience in Basudev Sunani's Select Writings* (2017) and *Towards Dalit Historiography* (2017). He is also known for two edited books, *Dalit Literature: Reading Resistance* (2013) and *Dalit Literature and Historiography* (2014). He may be reached on [mahanandasaroj@gmail.com](mailto:mahanandasaroj@gmail.com) and [smahananda@jmi.ac.in](mailto:smahananda@jmi.ac.in)

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### **Rishav Dutta, "Reading Tribal Self-fashioning in India through Translation"**

#### **Abstract:**

"Why shouldn't she write a book... There's been nothing written about people like us... there's nothing about Aboriginal people and what they've been through." (Morgan 161)

This emphatic claim made by Gladys Corunna in conversation with Daisy Corunna in Sally Morgan's *My Place* succinctly addresses the perennial absence of indigenous voices in the domains of disciplinary knowledges. Keeping this understanding broadly in the background and contemporary tribal literature(s) from India at the focal point, this paper wishes to argue that critical readings of such texts problematize predominant discourses of 'indigeneity.' Contemporary tribal writings, in their nuanced reflection of the communities, not only offer a critical departure from rigid one-dimensional reading of the tribal character/person but also extends an alternative imagining of 'belongingness.' This paper further proposes to situate this argument within the tradition of Indian literature(s) in translation. The tribal voice of self-assertion in written form seemingly gains a two-dimensional form by getting translated into Indian *bhashas* and English. On one level, it becomes a vehicle to narrate their own stories in their own terms and thereby entering into negotiations within the existing ethnocultural historiography; and on another, it acquires the ability to respond to contexts of suffering and persecution far removed from the spatiotemporal boundaries of the local context in which it originates.

**Bio Note:** Rishav Dutta is a research scholar at the Department of English, Central University of Rajasthan. Areas of Dutta's academic interest include Postcolonial literature and theory, Translation, Adivasi folklore and literature, Cultural studies, Graphic narrative and Performance studies. Dutta is currently working on the area of Translation and writings on Adivasis of India.

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**Paromita Bose, “Speaking from the Margins, of The Marginalized- Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*”**

**Abstract:**

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's first book *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, was banned by the Government of Jharkhand in August 2017. He was suspended from his job as a government doctor for the same. The offence being, the way he portrayed Adivasi women was in a bad light. This saw a protest from the English-speaking intelligentsia. The ban was revoked and he was reinstated in 2018. Hansda was later awarded the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar. This paper aims to locate the stories of *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, in the midst of a struggle between the tribals and the state, the powerful and the powerless and the rich and the poor. Written by an insider, the stories become powerful manifestations of the marginalised in terms of caste, gender and space. These are stories of exploitation and subjugation, but also of subversion, of the state and of ideas of ‘development’. The usage of the English language, interspersed with words from the Santhal vocabulary, attempts to capture the experience as authentically and tries to sensitize the readers about the real people and the real issues. This paper will attempt to look that these interventions and read the book as a site of both, representation and resistance.

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**Kavitha N, Texts from the Precarious Margins: Mapping Agrarian Crisis in Contemporary Indian Literature**

**Abstract**

This paper discusses the discourses on the plight of farmers in India as represented in *Moong over Microchips* by Venkat Iyer and *Widows of Vidarbha* by Kota Neelima. The former charts the transformation of an urban techie into a rural farmer, were as the latter tells the story of 16 farm widows who have been invisible to the state, the community, and even their families, and talks of their lost dreams, and their helpless surrender to the conveniences of patriarchy. From August 2020 to December 2021, Indian streets have exploded in demonstrations, agitations, protests and conflict against the three farm acts that were passed in September 2020, as a continuation of the Kisan Long March a large scale protest organised by farmers of Maharashtra in 2018. In the backdrop of these farmer protests, agrarian crisis was being focussed/re read by writers and critics. The urban and rural discourses happened along regarding the precarity of farmers had been widely discussed. Non-fiction writers have expounded at length on a variety of issues, the combination of which, according to them, has led to the crisis that rural India. The paper attempted to make a discourse analysis of both and tries to analyse the urban/rural divide in understanding the marginal class.

**Bio-note:** Kavitha N is an Assistant professor in an affiliated college in the University of Kerala. She has presented more than twenty papers in National and International Conferences, published about twelve articles in National and International referred journals and a constant presence in academic discourses.

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### **Raj Gaurav Verma, “Margins and Metropolis: Kunwar Narain’s Poetry in English Translation”**

#### **Abstract**

This paper argues that creative writing and/or translation creates a dialogue between the otherwise disparate cultures of metropolis and margins. Irrespective of the fact that whether the poet is coming from the metropolis or margins there is a certain encounter of the metropolis and margins, an exchange of viewpoints, and an enhanced and mutual understanding of the two. Though seemingly different and sometimes even oppositional, they can be seen as interdependent, correlative and complementary to one another. Kunwar Narain is a Hindi poet who wrote for nearly five decades. More recently, the English translations of his poems by his son Apurva Narain have further enhanced the reach and scope of his poetry. Narain’s poetry transcends not only the regional but also national boundaries. Considered as one of an important proponent of “New Poetry” or “Nayi Kavita” in Hindi, he is sometimes called as “the Buddha of contemporary poetry”, “a citizen poet”, or “a luminous poet”. His poetry touched the contemporary issues and rebelled against the extremities of human societies. His subject varied from personal emotions to philosophic rumination, from everyday happenings to an extraordinary experience, from the urban life to anonymous countryside existence. This paper will try to look at some of his poems and how through his poetic imagination Narain is able to bring together the discordant cultures of metropolis and margins.

**Bio-Note:** Raj Gaurav Verma is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow.

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**Parallel Session 8: 2:30 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Ranu Uniyal**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Ranu Uniyal** is a Professor of English at Lucknow University. She was awarded Commonwealth fellowship for Ph.D. in English from Hull University, U.K. Her main research interests are in Indian literature, women’s Writing and Postcolonial Literature. Her research papers and book

reviews have been published extensively in India and abroad. Her English poems have been translated into Uzbek, Hindi, Urdu and Malayalam. She is the author of *Women and Landscape: From Difference to Diversity* She is one of the founding members of PYSSUM, a charitable organization for children with special needs in Lucknow.

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### **Vandita Gautam, “Mufassil through the Diaspora Bioscope”**

#### **Abstract:**

A mufassil is as alive as any township or city or pastoral dwelling is, with its complex milieu, lifestyles, preoccupations, concerns and stories of survival and success. Here the dynamic urban economic infrastructure, with its myriad problems of housing, employment, lonely nuclear families and pockets of acute impoverishment, is largely missing. Interestingly, Indian diaspora writers like Anita Desai and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni manipulate small towns to canvas simplistic and regressive societies defined by stasis and colossal failure. Mufassils, especially in close proximity to metropolises, stymie into psychotic cesspools – disgruntled, scarred and emotionally dysmorphic.

This paper will explore and analyse the deliberated negative normativism cultivated by Desai in *In Custody* and Divakaruni in *Before We Visit the Goddess* where small towns microcosm India as a trap to insinuate a pan-Indian quiescence and indifference to change or growth. Despite their intelligent take on issues related to women, academics and social stereotyping/ marginalization, these novels etch small towns as ecological nightmares, characterised by dust, sparse vegetation and systematic failure, intellectually sluggish and beaten down. The township of Mirpur In *Custody* is unrelenting in its bleakness, overwhelming filth, plastic waste, and citizens who are entirely demoralised. The novels are a bioscope where every montage ravel bigotry and parochialism. In Desai’s and Banerjee’s pages, India remains an inspirational idea and an ideal virtually dead.

**Bio-Note:** Vandita Gautam is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, MLNC (University of Delhi).

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### **Alka Vishwakarma, “The Territorialization of Mofussil and the Metropolis in Sri Lankan and Indian Tamil Short Stories”**

#### **Abstract:**

Based on their shared common cultural heritage embodied in the classical Tamil corpus, the Tamil literatures of Sri Lanka and India construct their major corpus and reinvent the classics in their literary reflections. However, the differences among them are well observed; the



represented region of Jaffna in Sri Lankan literary reflections entails no river in comparison to Chennai of Tamil Nadu (Kannan, 2014). The rural and urban areas of these two countries are often delineated with negotiations of their respective writers' pursuits to represent them with due respect of the retention of their cultural recognition and the construction of literary identity. Jaffna, the cultural capital of Tamils in Sri Lanka (Kannan, 2014), sustains and constructs the Tamil culture and Tamil identity against the domineering Sinhalese culture and politics through regionalism in Sri Lanka. Whereas the metropolis, Chennai in Tamil Nadu presents Tamil opinions in multitudinous ways offering promising literary world to the writers through press and literary organizations (Lakshmi, 2004). The article focuses on how Jaffna and Chennai create the dichotomy of *mofussil* and *metropolis* presenting the solemnized Tamil identity and the city's degenerated world against the rural vistas respectively. For the discussion, the article analysis of two short stories viz. Dominic Jeeva's 'Enlightenment' from Sri Lanka and Ashokamitran's 'Mother's Day'[1] from India.

**Bio-Note:** Alka defended her doctoral thesis in 2021 at the Dept. of English in BHU. Her research works have been published in *Journal of International Studies* (2022 - Scopus), *Sanglap: Journal of Literary and Cultural Inquiry* (2022 - UGC-Care), and *Translation Today* (2019 - CIIL). Her article, "Translating *Ramayanas*", is under review in the journal *Exchanges: The Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*.

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### **Shuby Abidi, "Between the 'Margins' and 'Metropolis': A Study of Dina Nayeri's *The Ungrateful Refugee*"**

Michel Agier's book on the recent Refugee experience entitled *On the Margins of the World* considers Refugees to be the bruised population who are surviving and squatting at the edge of our lives and our gaze. Created in the contemporary war-torn conflict zones, refugees are 'emblematic of a human condition that is shaped and fixed on the margins of the world.' Inhabiting the margins of societies and camps, refugee life is an incessant struggle to seek asylum in a prosperous metropolis where they can breathe and learn to live. Dina Nayeri is an Iranian Refugee writer living in America. Her sordid personal experiences of fleeing from Iran, fearing religious persecution, whetted in her the desire to speak against the dehumanization of the refugees. From her first novel, *A Teaspoon of Earth and Sea*, published in 2014, to her second novel *Refuge*(2017), and her last work, *The Waiting Place*, and to her non-fiction memoir, *The Ungrateful Refugee*(2019), she has raised ethical issues and questions related to human dignity and current refugee crisis.

In her candid and poignant memoir *The Ungrateful Refugee*, Nayeri charts the traumatic journey, broadly divided into five parts –Escape, Camp, Asylum, Assimilation, and Cultural Repatriation. Refugees' marginal existence in the despicable world of camps becomes prolonged and interminable because the 'metropolis' turns its back on the refugees. While living in camps, Refugees hanker for the metropolis and leave no stone unturned to reach there. However, when



they reach the metropolis, it does not accept them wholeheartedly, but quarantines them and makes them a part of a separate, underground society. My paper aims to analyze Dina Nayeri's *The Ungrateful Refugee* as a refugee memoir which documents the rigmarole of a refugee caught between the 'margins' and the 'metropolis' and how the fascination of the 'metropolis' becomes the driving force of a refugee's existence.

### **Chaandreyi Mukherjee, "The Othering of Smell in Perumal Murugan's "Shit"**

#### **Abstract:**

Smell is laden with nearly mythical dimensions and becomes an inescapable link to interrogate race, class, caste, gender identities of independent India; a testament of the socio-political histories and realities of the individual. It is provided the unwritten power to etch out favourable, wholesome, safe spaces and distinguish those from filth, degradation, unfamiliarity. This paper will try to look into the politics of smell in a short story by Perumal Murugan called "Shit", originally written in Tamil and translated into English by N. Kalyan Raman. "Shit" deals with a group of young bachelors occupying a huge house in a remote suburban area and their absolute helplessness in the face of a broken septic pipe. Through the binary between a manual scavenger and the upper-middle class educated youth, the paper will analyse how smell categorizes a privileged morality, constructs an entitled collective identity through the enforcement of social hierarchy. Finally, the paper will discuss how smell is produced and clarified through being situated in deeply political and disputed contexts and due to its furtiveness and proximity to material and emotional selves how it is indispensable to comprehend how power is structured in society.

**Bio-Note:** Chaandreyi Mukherjee is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi.

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#### **Parallel Session 9: 4:20 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Nishat Zaidi**

#### **Chair's bio:**

**Nishat Zaidi** is Professor and former Head at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She has been the recipient of several prestigious grants and conducted several collaborative projects. She has authored/ translated / edited 16 books. Some of her recent publications include *Cosmopolitan Cultures and Oceanic Thought* (Routledge, March 2023) *Karbala: A Historical Play* (translation of Premchand's play *Karbala* with a critical introduction and notes) (OUP, 2022), *Ocean as Method: Thinking with the Maritime* (with Dilip Menon et al. Routledge, 2022), *Literary Cultures and Digital Humanities in India* (with A. Sean Pue Routledge, 2022), *Makers of Indian Literature: Agha Shahid Ali* (Sahitya Akedemi, 2016), *Day*

*and Dastan* (with Alok Bhalla, Neogi, 2018) *Between Worlds: The Travels of Yusuf Khan Kambalposh* (with Mushirul Hasan, OUP, 2014) and *Voyage to Modernism: Syed Ahmed Khan* (with Mushirul Hasan, Primus, 2011). She has also guest edited a special issues of *Manoa* (with Asif Farrukhi and Alok Bhalla) and two special issues of *The Books Review*.

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### **Navjot Sandhu, “Longing and the metropolis: Reading Anuradha Roy’s *The Folded Earth*: and Shubhangi Swarup’s *Latitudes of Longing*”**

#### **Abstract:**

In this paper, I will attempt to look at an emerging sensibility in contemporary Indian Writing in English that seeks the peripheries/margins for possibility of representation. Unassumingly, “longing” becomes the keyword to encapsulate these narratives that have clearly turned away from the humdrum of the metropolis and the life that it offers. To further explore this, I will provide a reading of Anuradha Roy’s *The Folded Earth*: and Shubhangi Swarup’s *Latitudes of Longing*. Both the texts center around the lives of character-observers placed in remote geographies as they try to coexist with the strange lands they occupy. I will look closely at these spatial movements and what possible implications they mean for the “locals” stationed in these narratives. Bearing these points in mind, I will argue that this turn towards the margins is a longing to understand the modern world and its complex politics better. These distant spaces that slow down time allow for this exploration, along with an inevitable experience of the sublime. The poetics of these margins and the politics of the mainland combine to produce these texts that leave no stone unturned to forge a literary road into these unmapped lands that barely found representation in the great Indian scheme of things. For this, we shall pay attention to the minor presences of such characters in these texts to draw our conclusions.

**BioNote:** Navjot Sandhu is a Research Scholar at the University of Delhi. She earned her Master’s degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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### **Tara Saldanha, “A Room Not Quite Her Own: Writing and Domestic Work in Baby Halder’s *A Life Less Ordinary*”**

#### **Abstract:**

Since Virginia Woolf’s well-known dictum in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) enlivened the discussion on the daily conditions and spatial circumstances of women’s intellectual lives, scholarship in this area has grappled with the myriad contingencies of the domestic space on women’s writing. In this paper I explore the significance of the quotidian space of domestic work

for the work of writing, via a reading of Baby Halder's *A Life Less Ordinary* (2006). This autobiography is a landmark text for the representation of domestic workers' lives in India. I examine how it reframes the 'work' of writing, authorship, and autobiography as a genre, given that it narrates the life of a domestic worker. I contend that Halder's narration of her act of writing interrogates expectations of how writing work is done. Further, I examine how Halder's autobiography interjects into the paratext of her book, which attempts to frame her coming to authorship as a triumph of spirit. Paying attention to the negotiations between space, domestic work, and writing might reveal the particular significance of writing work for Halder's self-narration, in turn advancing our understanding of narratives by women domestic workers, and their relative position to authorship and the Indian literary world.

**Bio-Note:** Tara Saldanha is currently a fourth-year doctoral researcher with the English group, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay. Her doctoral work explores life narratives by women domestic workers in India, paying attention to questions of mediation and self-representation, authorship and writing, and forms and mediums of life narration. As a senior research fellow she also serves as a teaching assistant at IIT Bombay.

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### **Saptarshi Mallick, "The Woman Writer Retrieving the Killed Angel: A Gynocritic and her Daughters"**

#### **Abstract:**

The language employed by women authors bear a 'difference' guaranteed by the author's femaleness. The metaphorical concept of 'female identity' is an inherent process dependent upon a mother-daughter bond, which the female creators/authors develop with their female characters (Gardiner, 1982, 179); and besides being the hero of the author's creation, she also becomes the author's daughter as this connection contributes towards women's psychological identities (Gardiner, 1978, 244).

Therefore through this distinct female identity Indian women authors writing in English have been able to portray women as 'seats of consciousness' (Donovan, 1997, 212), their selves, their female voices, the social setting and audiences, and their responses towards it which differs to the male tradition, only to metamorphose the 'othered voice' as a woman-centered criticism (Showalter, 1981, 186) – portraying aspects of 'women's experience which generate the style and content of their writing; and to examine the means by which women offer resistance to patriarchy through their writing' (Spaull, 1989, 86) and 'deactivates its components' (Kolodny, 1991, 113). *This essay will discuss* Sanjukta Dasgupta's attempts to explore women's experiences

of trauma, frustration and fears imposed upon them through several constraints of the society through the oeuvre of her short stories. Her short stories emphasize upon the regular grapples undertaken by women [Dasgupta's fictional daughters] with whom we can relate and feel the author's anger which proliferate every corner of the narratives, thereby contributing towards the development of a separate sensibility and writing style for women and furthering the cause of women's literature and female creativity by transcending the various historical boundaries.

**Bio-Note:** Dr Saptarshi Mallick is an Assistant Professor of English, Sukanta Mahavidyalaya, Dhupguri, Jalpaiguri (University of North Bengal) and an Associate Editor of *Gitanjali and Beyond*, an international open access e-journal of the Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies (ScoTs), Edinburgh.

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**Mohd. Aleem Qureshi, “Gendered Trajectories, Dissident Voice: Re-reading *Lihaaf* and *Kaghazi Hai Pairahan* in Postcolonial Context”**

**Abstract:**

This paper attempts to look into the life and feminist resistance of a bold and unconventional Muslim female voice of Indian subcontinent- Ismat Chughtai- as recorded in her autobiography, *A Life in Words: Memoirs*, a translated work to English, originally written in Urdu under the title *Kaghazi Hai Pairahan*. Her contribution to Urdu literature is often labelled as an enfant terrible. Her inconsiderateness on paper, based on her observations and perceptions, cost her a huge price so much so that, her most controversial and yet iconoclastic short story *Lihaaf* was charged with 'obscenity' that summoned her to court, yet Chughtai's uncompromising attitude and startling frankness did not cease her from unravelling the socio-religious hypocrisy of an ostensible genteel and elite society

The one-dimensional treatment of the Western Feminism; one that homogenizes itself to be a panacea for all the feminist challenges faced by the women in the Third World, doubly at periphery, ought to be questioned. While *Kaghazi Hai Pairahan* challenges the concept of "Emphasized Femininity"; *Lihaaf* is divergent of what has been labelled as "Hegemonic Masculinity." Along with drawing parallels on Spivak's and Connell's ideas of "Subaltern" and "Hegemonic Masculinity" respectively, this research attempts to analyze and contextualize the issues in the third world *vis-à-vis* Indian Sub-continent.

**Bio-Note:** Mohd. Aleem Qureshi is a PhD Scholar at Sikkim University, Gangtok, India.

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**Parallel Session 10: 4:20 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Simi Malhotra**

### **Chair's bio:**

**Simi Malhotra** is Professor and Head, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. Her areas of interest include Literary Theory and Popular Culture Studies. Her latest publications are the co-authored books *Terrains of Consciousness: Multilocal Perspectives on Globalization* (Würzburg University Press, 2021) and *Ocean as Method: Thinking with the Maritime* (Routledge, 2022), and the co-edited books *Food Culture Studies in India: Consumption, Representation and Mediation*, and *Inhabiting Cyberspace in India: Theory, Perspectives and Challenges* (both from Springer, 2021).

### **Ayesha Irfan, “Fort William College and its contribution to Modern Indian Languages”**

#### **Abstract:**

The Fort William college was founded in Calcutta in 1800 by Lord Wellesley (Governor-General of India from 1798-1805), and at same time the missionaries at Serampore acquired a printing press to publish the Bible in the vernacular languages. This college was established to train the administrators of the East India company as the company felt that they should have an understanding of all the major Indian languages. Therefore, the college offered a provision for teaching major Indian languages like Hindustani, Sanskrit, Bangla, Arabic, Persian, Marathi, Tamil and Kannada. This college that was initially set up only to train the British imperial officers proved to be a blessing in disguise for Indians. The shift in emphasis to major Indian languages led to the most pioneering achievement in the study, compilation and codification of Indian languages during the half century that this college functioned.

When Lord William Bentinck took over as the Governor General (he served as the Governor-General of Fort William from 1828 to 1834 and the first Governor General of India from 1834-1835), he disposed the path of orientalism in instruction and administration of India. He refused to finance the projects supported by this college for writing and publishing books in vernacular languages. The Dalhousie (Lord Dalhousie was governor general of India from 1848-1856) administration formally disbanded the college of Fort William in 1854.

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### **Shishu Bala, “Reddening Tree : A Glimpse of Mountain Culture of Western Himalayas”**

Western Himalayan region starts from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, state of Himachal Pradesh and goes up to the state of Uttarakhand. Life in the mountains has its own trials and tribulations for the people living in the close vicinity of nature. The beauty of the region instills simplicity and purity of heart in its people. Geographical conditions and climatic conditions make the people of this region hard working and respectful towards nature as off and on they have to face its fury also. Reddening Tree translated by Meenakshi F. Paul and originally written in Hindi as Laal Hota Darakht by S.R. Harnot is a short story from Shimla Hills in the

state of Himachal Pradesh. As the state has various local dialects and the script followed by the people is Devnagari, this short story was originally written in Hindi. Reddening Tree highlights the customs and rituals followed by the local people with relation to nature and also focusses on the compulsion of following social customs at the cost of losing a valuable piece of land along with evils of child marriage. The present paper intends to critically analyse this short story by taking up the social customs and their impacts on the people of the area.

**Taniya Roy, “Love and disparity: Representation of Eroticism in the Compilation of Hala’s Gāthā Saptasāti”**

**Abstract:**

Eroticism has been an integral part of Indian literature. The urge of the state to control the sexuality of human being was prosaic. However Sattasāi compiled by Hala is a compilation of several poems whose main theme is love. Love, the purest of emotions has been of different meaning for men and women. This paper attempts to unravel the Sattasāi and look into the reality of the patrilocal society that perceives women on a different pedestal than her male counterpart. Interestingly, female authorship has been attributed to the poems which apparently bestows her with some agency. Deep within, the text had engaging dialogues that speak volumes about the complexities of the gendered society. This enable us to imagine multiple configurations of power relationships of enablement and disablement The construction of social disparity begins at private space that actually spills to the larger social sphere through different discourses.

**Bio-Note:**Dr. Taniya Roy is a faculty in the History dept of Asutosh College of the University of Calcutta. She has been a senior fellow of ICHR and was awarded doctorate degree from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research interest is primarily focused on gender studies and the social history of early India. She has been awarded with the best paper award in the gender history section from the Indian History Congress.

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**Day 3: Friday, April 28, 2023**

**Parallel Session 11: 9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

**Chair: Dr Ayesha Irfan**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Dr Ayesha Irfan** is Associate Professor at the Department of English, Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi. She is currently translating a book of Urdu criticism titled Urdu Drama and Stage, by Syed Masud Hasan Rizvi Adeeb, a Sahitya Akademi Award winner. Her area of specialization is African-American Literature and she has published and presented a number of papers in this area.

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**Md. Shalim Muktadir Hussain, “The Post-Colony and its Intermediaries: Reading History While Translating Kamal Kumar Tanti’s *Post-Colonial Poems*”**

**Abstract:**

The act of translation can be seen as an act of critical reading, analysis and editing. It offers a different level of intimate engagement that opens the source text to its very nuts and bolts, particularly because the translator’s job is to convey the source to a new audience with as few alterations as possible. The proposed paper studies Kamal Kumar Tanti’s 2017 poetry anthology *Uttar Oupanibeshik Kabita* and my 2019 translation of the same titled *Post-Colonial Poems* on two levels; first as a personal and communal account of colonial experience and second as a retelling of the same stories through the alchemy and mediation of translation. Tanti’s poems, particularly in this collection, speak of the displacement of adivasis from Central India and their resettlement in the tea estates of Assam in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the various forces inside and outside the community which shaped and reshaped their identity. The paper will study the binary of the city or metropolis as the site of post-colonial negotiations/cosmopolitanism and the village/margin as insulated from the processes of history and the reversal of the same in the poems of Tanti and how the city/margin boundaries are blurred, often with graphic and violent imagery. The second aspect of the proposed paper is to study the subjectivity and objectivity of the translator and how they were affected during the translation of the book.

**Bio Note:** Dr. Md. Shalim Muktadir Hussain has a PhD from the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia. He teaches English at Government Model College, Borkhola.

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**Jyotishman Kalita and Suman Sigroha, “Evolving Nature of ‘Centre- Margin’ Relationship in New English Short Fiction from Assam”**

**Abstract:**

Published since 1939 with an estimated current daily circulation of about seven lakh copies, *The Assam Tribune*, now published from Guwahati and Dibrugarh in Assam, is the most circulated daily newspaper in north east India. One of the prominent features of the newspaper is the weekly Sunday supplement *Sunday Reading* which publishes miscellaneous readings of general interest, with regular features on literary criticism and contemporary book reviews. By retrieving the archives of this newspaper and the supplement published only in the year 2022, this paper



offers a meta-analysis of short fiction published over the year and presents three arguments. First, the paper argues that this may be literature published from the periphery or the margins, but currently, it largely manages to circumvent conventional definitions of the center- margin paradigm. Second, this paper argues that the center- margin paradigm that is really advocated by these stories is the rural- urban divide, where the rural stands for the pangs and predicaments of the heartland of Assam, and the urban, following the first argument, stands for the rest of fast paced world, and not just the cities of Assam. This paper concludes by acknowledging the importance of the concomitant function of a newspaper, apart from established publishing methods, for its unique ability to accurately represent the literary pulse of the so-called margins.

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**Shivam Kundu, “A Disquiet Home: Reading Temsula Ao’s *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone*”**

**Abstract:**

Literature is a potent apparatus for providing a glimpse to the lived experiences of peoples beyond geographical, social, and cultural boundaries. With the advent of reformatory theory and praxis in the sphere of literary studies, this aspect of literary writing has come to the fore. The decolonising endeavour has led to the redefinition of canons all across the globe.

Temsula Ao’s fiction is one such attempt to bring the narratives of the margin to the centre - a powerful and dynamic effort to efface the dichotomy of the centre and the margin. Her short-stories paint a picture of disquiet on a seemingly tranquil canvass of the Naga hills.

She writes about an existence amid physical and psychological violence as a result of armed uprising and various modes of resistance. They highlight the role of myths and oral traditions in preservation of a one’s culture in the face of coercive repression.

This paper analyses select stories from Ao’s collection of short stories *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* as expressions of aforementioned characteristics of her writing. It further elaborates how the stories give space to the individual lives while discussing the larger issues at hand.

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**Medha Devi, “Negotiating the Nation, Embracing Sub-Nationalism: A Study of Temsula Ao’s Select Short Stories”**

**Abstract:**



The north-eastern region of India has gone through a gory experience in connection to the process of building the nation of India. The Naga rebellion of the 1940s and 50s was a movement for secession from the nation. The region termed as Northeast is inhabited by different groups of people speaking various languages. The Naga belonging to the Indo-Mongoloid race have a distinct culture and tradition with little similarity to the 'mainland' Indian culture. Thus, their patriotic feelings lie with their tribe and the land they occupy. The paper seeks to engage with the two concepts of nationalism in the context of Nagaland: sub/ethnonationalism and greater Indian nationalism. Sub-nationalism implies the aspirations and wishes of people belonging to a particular region. In the case of the Naga, this becomes an opposing force to the principles propagated by the nation-state.

The paper will explore the different means adopted by the people at the 'margin' as part of negotiation with and resistance against the autocracy of the government. It will delve into the experiences of the people through Temsula Ao's select stories from her collection titled *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* (2006). The stories are set during the period of the Naga insurgency, and they depict the shifts and changes in the lives due to the political turmoil and unrest

**Bio-Note:** Medha Devi is a research scholar at the Department of English, Central University of Rajasthan.

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**Parallel Session 12: 9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

**Chair: Prof Asim Siddiqui**

**Chair's bio:**

**Mohammad Asim Siddiqui** is Professor and Chairperson, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. He worked on American novelist Mark Twain for his doctoral thesis. He is very passionate about his teaching and loves to interact with his students in and outside the classroom. He also lectures regularly in Refresher and Orientation Courses for University and College teachers. His areas of interests and publications include Literary Theory, 19th and 20th Century English and American Fiction, South Asian Literature, Film Studies and Research Methods in the Humanities. His most recent book is a monograph on Shahryar (2021), published by Sahitya Akademi in the Makers of Indian Literature Series. He was a Fulbright Fellow at New York University in 2007. Mohammad Asim Siddiqui regularly contributes research articles and book reviews to journals and books. He has been writing prolifically on arts and culture for different newspapers, magazines and news portals. They include The Guardian, The Hindu, The Hindustan Times, The Statesman, Rediff.com, Scroll.in, NDTV, Frontline, India Today, The Book Review, Biblio and many others.

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## **P. Muralidhar Sharma, “Daughters of Sin: The Courtesan Novel as Micro-History”**

### **Abstract:**

Through a critical engagement with the continuities/discontinuities of the gender ideologies generated by nationalist discourses, the paper attempts a reading of K. Shivarama Karanth’s *A Woman of Basrur (Mai Managala Suhiyalli, Kannada, 1970)* as a creative micro-history of a community of courtesans and their cultural practices. Adopting Giovanni Levi’s path-breaking theorization of micro-history and the novel, the paper seeks to establish how the courtesan novel of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through its depiction of a vanished way of life, becomes a means of archiving and restoring the cultural practices of an entire community.

*The Woman of Basrur* marks a paradigm shift in the courtesan novels of the past, where the story of the courtesan was subsumed in the larger thematic categories of sin, communal self-assertion, and victimized womanhood. Instead, it engages in an unabashed and unapologetic celebration of the vibrant sensuality of the courtesan and treats her erotic adventures as rooted in her own desire, rather than accidental, peripheral, or externally imposed. The device of the discovery of the courtesan’s autobiography in the novel makes possible alternative ways of conceptualizing the gendered imaginings of the nation in postcolonial times.

**Bio-Note:** P. Muralidhar Sharma is an Assistant Professor at the School of English, Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur, Odisha.

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## **Hishma Binti Nazir, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities via Linguistic Discourses; Case of Urdu and Its Neglect”**

### **Abstract:**

This paper aims at engaging with the role of linguistic discourse in the construction of nation and national identities. With the specific case of Urdu, its diminishing readership and near abandonment as a language of academic and political discourse, the paper will examine how national and political strategies attempt to de-historicize and discount the role of Urdu and the Urdu-speaking within these constructions. Shutting of Urdu departments in some universities in India or the removal of Urdu as the exclusive official language of Jammu and Kashmir, coupled with the imposition of Hindi in others institutions of power, is an attempt at homogenizing the vision of a larger identity, and by the same token, emphasizing division. This paper aims to investigate the conflict between this simultaneous assimilation and dissimilation which has called renewed attention to the issue of religious and linguistic identities and the perceived link between the two, in the construction of nation and national identities.

Where national unity and integration are identified in terms of homogeneity and singularity, Urdu is also looked at as a threat considering that it draws heavily from the dominant Islamic cultures of its times, or is in other words, “foreign”. It is some of these conflicts that this paper aims to engage with.

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**M Siddique Khan, “The Curious Case of Urdu in Indian English Poetry: From Nativist Assertion to Transatlantic Assimilation: A Study of the Poetry of Agha Shahid Ali”**

**Abstract:**

Indian writing in English in postcolonial temperament tried to adopt the native element. As Salman Rushdie insisted, instead of imitating British and European, postcolonial Indian writers attempted ‘Indian idiom’ in their English writing. However, this adoption of native elements in Indian English poetry remained aloof from Urdu. The case of Urdu was different from other Indian languages. As consistently claimed and pushed by the British too in Colonial India, it suddenly became the language of one community in post-independent India.

Minor attempts by other poets may be found but it was indeed Agha Shahid Ali’s poetry that assimilated Urdu into English poetry. He not only translated Urdu *Ghazal* into English, but he also merged elements of Urdu in his English poetry in terms of syntax, structure, thought, etc. The elements of Urdu that Ali brought into English represent the native resistance of national and regional languages against overwhelming global modernity. Instead of succumbing to the influences of cosmopolitan English Ali fills his poetry with National and regional myths, history, and genres where Urdu held an important place. Moreover, Ali’s poetry and standardization of English *Ghazal* have been accepted globally, therefore, his poetry became transatlantic and transnational. My paper will study Ali’s contributions to both: Urdu’s native assertion and its elevation as an important South Asian language in World Literature.

**Bio-Note:** M Siddique Khan is a Research Scholar at the Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow, UP, India.

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**Md Faizan Mouqim and Mohd Aqib, “Dalit Muslims in Urdu Fiction: New Directions in the Representation of Dalit Question”**

**Abstract:**

There is a prevailing perception that there is not as much Dalit literature in Urdu as in other Indian languages such as Hindi, Marathi or Malayalam. This perception is striking in view of the fact that a majority of Indian Muslims belong in the categories of *Ajlaf* and *Arzal*. An inquiry into this lacuna in Urdu literature forms the point of departure of this paper. In this regard, the paper asks two interrelated questions: 1. Why is there such disengagement with the Dalit question in Urdu literature? 2. In the literary works that do attempt to engage with it, how have Dalits, in particular Dalit Muslims, been represented in fiction? While exploring the first question, it contends that the marginalization of the Dalit discourse in Urdu results partly from the tenet of ‘Muslim Brotherhood’ which declares all Muslims as equal, and partly from the lack of concerted socio-political mobilization of Muslims in independent India. In looking at the representation of Muslim Dalits, it argues that in the wake of the Pasmanda-Dalit movements of the 1990s, there occurs a two-fold shift: the representation of Dalit Muslims in fiction challenges the normative social stratification, as also there is a growing impetus to bring the Dalit question at the center of Urdu literary discourse.

**Bio-notes:**

**Md Faizan Mouqim** is a PhD scholar at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

**Mohd Aqib** is a PhD scholar at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He is working in the area of Translation Studies.

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**Parallel Session 13: 11:15 a.m. – 12:45 a.m.**

**Chair: Prof Nandini Saha**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Nandini Saha** is Professor at the Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. She teaches British fiction, Indian English Writing, and Translation Studies. She is also a translator and is working on translating Bengali Dalit Writing from Bangla to English.

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**Shruti Sareen, “Representation of Majuli Island in Assam in Select Literature and Film”**

**Abstract:**

The paper intends to explore the depiction of Majuli island in a collection of short stories, *My Island, My Majuli* by Monika Rauth, the film *Bornodi Bhotiai* directed by Anupam Kaushik Borah, and a short documentary *The Untold Majuli* directed by Vishal P. Chaliha. The Majuli island in Assam is the largest river island in the world. Even though it is a one-and-a-half-hours

ferry ride away from the mainland, there has been no bridge connecting Majuli to the rest of Assam all these years. This has resulted in an insular and yet pristine atmosphere in Majuli. There is a development discourse which wants to build a bridge to Majuli which would be beneficial in a variety of ways, but there is also a concomitant fear of the culture, purity and uniqueness of the island being eroded away. Although islands are secluded and isolated places, it is quite remarkable that till date no bridge has connected the mainland to Majuli, despite it being a river island. How is everyday life lived in Majuli in its specificity, what are the rhythms of lives, what are the spatial practices through which people navigate space, how do people create their own 'stories'? These are some of the questions my paper proposes to address through an exploration of the aforementioned literary and audio-visual texts.

**Bio-Note:** Shruti Sareen has completed her PhD from the Department of English, University of Delhi.

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**Simran Bedi, "Aamchi Mumbai?: To whom does the Metropolis belongs to: A spatial analysis of Bombay/Mumbai in Zoya Akhtar's Gully Boy"**

**Abstract:**

The common phrase of Aamchi Mumbai, meaning "Our Bombay/Mumbai" is a ubiquitous expression in this bhelpuri of a city. The phrase is a Marathi expression, and its linguistic orientation and the politics that surround it usually tend to get be mixed with the sentiment it evokes. For many, especially the Marathi mannos (man) resonates with it. The phrase gives a sense of possession and claim to the city and its spaces. On the other hand; the rest of communities and groups share a mixed emotion with this phrase and city. Bombay's always a struggle, but (one is) hooked on the thrill of daily combat" (xi). It is then this romanticization of daily combat that takes an ugly turn for many of the "unbelongers" (Phadke et al.) in the city. What they feel is neither desolation nor a claim to the city. Rather, there is a liminal feeling that pervades in their lived experiences. The paper attempts to unravel the space of Gully as a site of subversion in relation to the subculture of Rap in India. By tracing back to the roots of Hip-Hop in Afro-American ghettos of New York, this chapter will try to understand how the culture of Hip-Hop alters when it reaches the gullies of Mumbai.

**Bio-Note:** Simran Bedi holds a Master's degree in English from Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. She is also a UGC NET holder (2022). In addition to this, she also worked as a lecturer at Arya P.G College in Panipat. Currently, she is an independent research scholar and her area of interest lies in Spatial literary Studies, Geocriticism, urban geographies vis-a-viz literary studies.

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**Pallabee Dasgupta, “Chronicle of a Death in Silence: Reading the Enchantment of the Secluded Countryside in Konkona Sen Sharma’s A Death in the Gunj (2016)”**

**Abstract:**

The countryside including hill stations and forest getaways has often been depicted in fiction and cinematic depictions as a simple, idyllic space, offering a refuge from the corrupt influence of the city. However, the countryside in the guise of being safe, can also be downright terrifying and mysterious as it often aggravates the dangerous instincts of the people coming from the urban spaces. The mystery of nature and natural spaces away from the humdrum, regimented lives in the urban cities have also been explored in Indian cinema, most notably in recent times in Konkona Sen Sharma’s directorial venture *A Death in Gunj* (2016). The film begins with a road trip from Kolkata to the sleepy town of McCluskiegunj in Jharkhand as a Bengali family accompanied by their friends and lovers, return to their ancestral home, a sprawling colonial era bungalow in the midst of the intense and mysterious tribal jungles of the area. The film locates Shutu, the reclusive nephew of the family, needlessly taunted and ridiculed by his family for his sensitive and depressive nature, to the extent of ending his own life. The brooding, unsettling mood of the movie is thereby augmented by the gloomy disquieting countryside. The paper therefore, attempts to read this change in locale as the characters move away from the repressive environs of Calcutta to the secluded countryside which encourages their instinctual cruelty and locate the disturbed psyche of the central character Shutu as he feels disconnected from both his family and their massive colonial house.

**Bio-Note:** Pallabi Dasgupta is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Smt. B.D. Jain Girls (P.G.) Degree College, Agra.

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**Amrita Mitra, “Masculinity and Marginalisation: Reading the Experiences of migrant North Easterners in the film *Axone*”**

**Abstract:**

Masculinity as a social construction remains a fluid entity as its expectation and performance vary with time, age and geographical locale. R W Connell theorises about hegemonic masculinity, where a single gender ideology gains prominence over the others, thus becoming dominant. In the postcolonial Indian socio-cultural structure, linguistic, regional and cultural diversity has engendered the co-existence of multiple ideologies of gender practices, which also applies to masculinity. The North-Eastern part of the Indian nation has remained, unfortunately, an alienated enigma to most mainlanders, to whom their customs, values and practices are

primarily unknown. The film *Axone* (2019), directed by Nicholas Kharkongor, revolves around the issue of cooking *Axone* or *Akhuni*, a traditional North-Eastern dish with a strong unpleasant smell. A group of friends, Upasana, Chanbi and a few others, desperately try to cook it on the special occasion of Minam's marriage. The narrative meanders through their struggles to the ultimate victory, raising important questions about racism in metropolitan cities like New Delhi, which boasts of a globalised cultural ecosystem. The present paper attempts to analyse the marginalised masculinities of North Eastern men who have migrated to distant metropolitan cities for various reasons. It also looks critically at the interactions of the local inhabitants with the migrants, both male and female, to comprehend the underlying gender and racial politics.

**Bionote:** Amrita Mitra is an Assistant Professor of English at Banwarilal Bhalotia College, Asansol. She is also pursuing her PhD at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Durgapur. She graduated from Presidency College and did her MA from JNU, New Delhi. She has written her M.Phil dissertation under Dr. Subir Dhar from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

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**Parallel Session 14: 11:15 a.m. – 12:45 a.m.**

**Chair: Prof Kalyanee Rajan**

**Chair's bio:**

**Kalyanee Rajan** teaches English language and Literature at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College, University of Delhi. She is a bilingual poet, translator and researcher with over 14 years of teaching experience. Kalyanee is currently serving as the Treasurer of IACLALS, Executive Board Member of The Shakespeare Society of India (SSI), Executive Board Member of Forum for Teachers of English Language and Literature (FORTELL), and Member of International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) Birmingham, UK.

Her areas of interest range from Indian Writing in English and in translation, Translation Studies, Climate and Migration Studies, Women's Writing, English Language Teaching and Shakespeare Studies.

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**Muneer Aram Kuzhiyan, "World Literature before World Literature? The Sociality of Literary Circulation and the Example of Mappila Literary Culture from the Malabar Coast"**

**Abstract:**

Invocations of World Literature often ride on the rhetoric of inclusiveness and greater sensitivity to works of literature from regions beyond the West. Key to this imagination is the idea of literary circulation that betrays a Euro-American bias, however. The regnant narratives of literary



circulation underlying World Literature and Comparative Literature beg questions of what circulates and where, *inter alia*, and consequently mute circulation and traffic across a wide range of literary cultures in non-Western communities. What if we de-parochialize the model of literary circulation and think about “the literatures in the world” on their own terms? Does only circulation matter, and if yes, are all kinds of circulation equally legible and valued? This paper will engage such questions with the help of two texts, *Muhyiddin Mala* (1607) and *Husnul Jamal-Badrul Muneer* (1872), from the under-studied multilingual Mappila literary culture on the Malabar Coast in Southwest India. These texts draw on sources from the Arab-Islamic and Persianate worlds. Historical and sociological in approach, this paper will use archival/textual resources to reconstruct the history of Arabi Malayalam with a focus on the social production of this culture which was facilitated by literary circulation fostered by a combination of networks, including trade, scholarly, Sufi, and literary, that flourished on the Malabar Coast since at least the thirteenth century.

**Bio-Note:**Dr. Muneer Aram Kuzhiyan is an Assistant Professor of English at Aligarh Muslim University, India. His key publications include “Poetics of Piety: Genre, Self-Fashioning, and the Mappila Lifescape” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (2016), “Devotional Contextures: The Mala Songs and Muslim Ethical Formation in Contemporary Kerala” *Contemporary South Asia* (2022), and ‘Toward a Vernacular Globalectics: “Minor” Illustrations from South India’ *South Asian Review* (2022).

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**Abhishek Pundir, “Emergence of ‘World’ in the Planetary: Reading/Placing Muktibodh in South Asian Studies”**

**Abstract:**

In the strict life of a translation, we see emergence of a new subjectivity—neither local, nor transnational, or maybe both—but in, totality, crossing over several areas of belonging into the realm of 'impossible otherness'. In the context of a translated text carrying the burden of area studies and aesthetic questions, the meaning-making or worlding of the subject holds the key importance and gravitates readings in the direction of the planetary. However, the presumed reading of ‘planetary’ vis-à-vis comparative literary projects and area studies does not preclude ‘paternalistic-colonialist disposition’ symptomatic of globalisation. The ‘difference’ in the planetary approach provides limited scope for dabbling with alterity maintaining strong affiliations to the existing strategies of worlding. This reification of planetary, in terms of ‘relationality’ and ‘*Longue Duree*’ (Fredman) or circulation of cultural practices in a non-homogenising ethics, posits a new problematic for the discipline of Comparative Literature: it tends to obfuscate the asymmetrical power relations and present an untranslatable, not unmoored



from the dominant relations. The paper does not presume that the ‘other’ is approachable on its own terms, rather points the structures that continue to inform/form the celebrated ethics of difference.

To that end, the paper presents G M Muktibodh’s *In the Dark* from a non-canonical position of a translated text in world literature context and asks the question what affects and effects the category of ‘world literature’? Despite the text occupying a canonical status in Hindi literature and its Marxist-Lenin underpinnings, it remains obscure and inadmissible to the Anglophilic world literature and South Asia Studies. The ‘otherness’ of Muktibodhian Self embedded in the text generates force to destabilise and lay bare the ‘global’ in the planetary.

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### **N.Usha, “Bangalore as a Cosmopolitan Urban Space: Comparative Study of Select Migrant Discourses”**

#### **Abstract:**

Global urbanization has reshaped mega cities in the Indian landscape resulting in vibrant urban discourses in contemporary Indian literature. While four metros, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata, found an obsequious reference in contemporary narratives by William Dalrymple, Dominic Lapierre, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Chandra, and Suketu Mehta, Bangalore or Bengaluru has emerged as the IT capital of India and a global economic centre in the recent decades. It has evoked the literary imagination in Eshwar Sundaresan, Bharati Mukherjee, Anjum Hasan, and Lavanya Sankaran. This research paper examines how internal migration impacts the social, economic, and cultural relations in two migrant discourses across India's geographic and political boundaries. This research paper presents a comparative study of Bharti Mukherjee’s *Miss New India* and Anjum Hasan’s *Neti Neti* as moving tales of two cities: Gauripur, a small mufassil town in Bihar and Bangalore, and the rural-urban divide between these two cities as experienced by Anjali Bose, in her journey from Bihar to Bangalore. Hasan’s novel explores the internal and external complications arising from Sophie Das's movement from the northeastern state of Shillong to Bangalore. These twenty-first-century urban narratives showcase the phenomenal changes in Bangalore as a cosmopolitan urban space compared to the peripherality of Gauripur and Imphal. Bangalore's dynamic and expanding city becomes the literary focus in these narratives, fed by the uprooted rural population in an industrialized and cosmopolitan space.

**Bio-Note:** N. Usha is Professor at Krishna University, Machilipatnam- AP.

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**Neenu Kumar, “Portrayal of Shades of Marginality, the Urbane and Rural through Human Emotions in *Paatal Lok*”**

**Abstract**

There has always been a narrative of two ‘Indias’ — one belonging to the urban cities and the other to the rural areas. The urbane are seen as suave, accomplished, practical and people of the world whereas the rural are viewed as being the opposite. Lack of education, health facilities and economic growth has resulted in widening this gap further. There is discrimination, which works at multiple levels; religious extremism, the virulent conflicts between upper and lower castes, child abuse, prejudice against transgender and the lamentable state of women safety. These condemnable areas are amply showcased by *Paatal Lok*, a ‘neo-noir’ crime thriller, released on Amazon Prime Video in 2020. The web series probes deeply into the heart of ‘dark’ India and presents the upper, middle and lower classes of the society. They represent the *Swarg Lok* (victims); *Dharti* (the investigating officer); and *Paatal Lok* (the rich, the corrupt and the suspects).

The present paper is an attempt to identify the disparities in urban and rural areas; urban and rural changes; attitudes and emotional responses based on these inequities; socio-cultural divide and wild lawlessness; discrimination against the north-eastern and lack of agency; the ‘under-belly’ with its secrets; and the invisible sections of the society primarily focussing on *Paatal Lok*.

**Bio-Note:** Dr. Neenu Kumar is Professor in English at Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi. She is recipient of: Best Teacher Award (2014-2015) conferred by N. C. T. of Delhi; Certificate of Honour by Aditi Mahavidyalaya for College-Lecturer Award-2015 for outstanding academic achievements in 2017; Ecologist and Environmental Health Educationist Award; Social Worker and Nutrition Educationist Award and Environment Awareness and Promoting Girl Education Award in 2017, 2018 and 2020 respectively

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**Special Session : Meenakshi Mukherjee Memorial Prize**

**Chairs: Prof M Asaduddin & Professor Swati Pal**

**12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**Parallel Session 15: 2:10 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Anjali Daimari**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Dr Anjali Daimari** is a Professor in the Department of English, Gauhati University. She did her Post Graduation and M.Phil. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and her PhD from NEHU, Shillong. Her interest areas are Fiction, African Writing in English, Contemporary South Asian Literature, Life-writing and Writings from India's Northeast. Her recent publications include: "From Legend to Fiction, The Politics of Representation: A Study of Indira Goswami's *Thengphakhri Tahsilarar Taamar Toruwal* (2009) and Bidyasagar Narzary's *Birgwsrini Thungri* (2004) in *Literatures from Northeast India: Beyond the Centre-Periphery Debate* Routledge, 2022; "Weaving Magic with Words: Storytelling in Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* and *Son of the Thundercloud*" in *Reading India's North East: Folktales, Literature, Society and Community* Vol. 2, (2022) and "Internal Instabilities: Nationalism in the Context of Nagaland with Reference to Select Novels" in *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities: Special Issue on Northeast Literature and Culture, Volume 14, Issue 2, 2022*. She has so far guided nine scholars towards PhD degree and over ten scholars towards M Phil degree. She is the editor of *English Forum: Journal of the Department of English, Gauhati University* a UGCCARE listed journal.

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**Shailendra Kumar Singh, "Illustrative Paradigms or Representational Dichotomies? The Village and the City in Premchand's Fiction"**

**Abstract**

Often read as a simplistic binary that figuratively demarcates the division between questions of good and evil, morality and wickedness, and traditional values as opposed to modern sensibilities, the rural spaces and urban geographies in Premchand's writings nevertheless present a more nuanced and complex picture. Viewed from the prism of gender, class, religion, and nationalism, these iterations provide a fertile ground for a discursive hermeneutics which allows for the possibility of radical disruptions within the domestic sphere, excoriating portrayals of holy figures, and startling instances of abject humiliation for devious moneylenders. This paper examines the alternative preoccupations of Premchand as a writer who constantly had to contend with the fundamental asymmetry between his illustrative paradigms and his representational dichotomies that perpetually places a limit on questions of consistency and verisimilitude. The paper argues that the staggering range and sheer variety of themes that the most iconic Hindi writer presents to his perceived readership not only exposes his own artistic blind spots and fault lines but also inadvertently rescues his works from the traps and pitfalls of overt mawkishness and contrived formulations.

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**Neepa Sarkar, "Detecting the City and Mediating Conflict: The Flaneur-Bhadralok in Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's *Byomkesh Bakshi*"**

### **Abstract:**

Set amidst a saga of urban deterioration, collective moral-ethical degeneration and the vast incomprehensible city amid Partition and mob violence, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's *Byomkesh Bakshi* remains reminiscent of the old-world order of virtue and faith. Byomkesh Bakshi is no Byronic hero but an intelligent and quintessential Bengali 'bhadralok', adept in maintaining his autonomy in the face of shadowy coercive forces of organised and ruthless crimes. As a literary cartographer, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay expressed an authentic but rapidly changing urban space, and his characters practised the economy and social interactions of the city, particularly Calcutta.

The security of familiar and conventional settings becomes replaced by the urban mean streets, decayed and alone with its transient populations in which the criminal could not only go undetected but dwell in the inherent duality present and inevitable in the existence and essence of the city. This paper seeks to explore the social and narrative turning point ushered in by analysing select stories from Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's *Byomkesh Bakshi* series and look at the changes prevalent in the city and ways of living. The paper would particularly explore the delineation of the city as part of collective memory and identity in detective fiction and as Byomkesh Bakshi's constant adversary; a city of despair, violence and garish neon lights where love and humanity have not yet entirely disappeared.

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### **Jindagi Kumari, "From "Imaginary Homelands" to "Shadow Lines": A Comparative Analysis of the City Motifs in the Selected Novels of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Amit Chaudhuri"**

#### **Abstract:**

In Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, Dhaka, Calcutta and London appear as "shadow lines", both connecting and detaching the past and the present, colonial and postcolonial, national and international, memory and history—their role as metropolises and margins relative and shifting. Salman Rushdie claims Bombay to be an "imaginary homeland" but in *Midnight's Children*, and other works, the city recurs as both home and exile; myth and reality, text and self. Bombay in Amit Chaudhuri's notable book, *Friend of My Youth*, appears, on the one hand, as a hated relic of the narrator's growing up year, on the other hand, there seems no difference between his close friend and the city.

Cities have been indispensable to Indian English Fiction both as background and foreground. They are used so variously; as real, symbol, text, inspiration, motif, prop and protagonist, that an analysis of the use of cities by Indian English writers, particularly novelists, could potentially yield deep insights into evolution of intellectual, cultural and historical milieu not only of the genre but also of the country. With this view, in the paper, I attempt to explore, describe,

illustrate, and compare, the multiple meanings and use of city in the selected novels of the three noted Indian English novelists, namely; Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Amit Chaudhuri.

**Bio-Note:** Jindagi Kumari is an Assistant Professor at Maharaja Surajmal Institute of Technology, New Delhi.

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**Ashish James, “Cities as Spaces of Interstices: Centres and Peripheries in Lavanya Sankaran’s ‘The Hope Factory’”**

**Abstract:**

Indian Novels published post-2000s like Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*, Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games* and Uday Prakash’s *The Walls of Delhi* are texts that depict Indian cities as conflicting spaces which are the centres of the globalised market and are spaces of inequality. Lavanya Sankaran’s *The Hope Factory* is a portrayal of the changes that happened in the Indian Metropolis during the recent globalising spree. This paper aims to analyse the novel using the concepts of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery.’ The book describes the life of those living on the periphery of Bangalore, a city largely transformed by India’s rapid urbanization—the people living in the margin at the same time in a centre of development. The paper investigates how the characters, who are on the edge of society, deal with the difficulties of urban life and how their marginalised backgrounds shape the way they interact with the city and one another. The study examines different themes discussed in the novel- including the metropolis and the margin, complexities of urbanization, development, and inequality in contemporary India. The paper aims to analyse the novel by looking at the portrayal of economic processes through the lens of Arjun Appadurai’s idea of ‘financescapes’ as the flow of finances that transcend national borders and create new centres of power, but cause uneven development as well.

**Bio-Note:** Ashish James is a Junior Research Fellow at IIT Jodhpur.

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**Parallel Session 16: 2:10 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Nishat Haider**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Dr Nishat Haider** is Professor of English at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is the author of *Tyranny of Silences: Contemporary Indian Women’s Poetry* (2010). She has served as the Director, Institute of Women’s Studies, University of Lucknow. She is the recipient of many academic awards including the Meenakshi Mukherjee Prize (2016), C. D. Narasimhaiah Award (2010), and Isaac Sequeira Memorial Award (2011). She has presented papers at numerous

academic conferences and her essays have been included in a variety of scholarly journals and books. She has conducted numerous conferences, seminars, workshops on gender budgeting and gender sensitization. She has worked on various projects funded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, UNICEF, UGC and other agencies. She has lectured extensively on subjects at the intersection of cinema, culture and gender studies. Her current research interests include Postcolonial Studies, Translation, Popular Culture and Gender Studies.

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**Sumadhura Roy, “Decentering the Discourses of the Metropole: A Study of the Rajbangsi Community of North Bengal and their Folk Songs”**

**Abstract:**

On delving into the public sphere in postcolonial Bengal, we witness the dichotomy between the metropole and the margin demarcated strikingly through the hierarchical division between the refined language, literature and culture of the bhadralok class on one hand, and the lowly, rustic, bawdy language and culture of the women, lower castes and Muslims on the other hand. In my paper, I would study the folksongs of the marginalized Rajbangsi community of North Bengal. Their culture and history survive mostly in oral forms through these songs, which have been transmitted across generations. Besides, their homeland, the erstwhile Koch kingdom, was disintegrated post partition, and coalesced with different states in India and Bangladesh, where their language and culture came under the threat of assimilation from dominant socio-linguistic groups. In the spaces of these metropolises, they have been classified as “inferior” on the basis of their tribal, racial, indigenous, class and caste identity.

My study will trace the various strategies developed by the community to redefine and recast their identity in multiple ways to fight these forces of otherization. Further, I would shed light on how the singing of Rajbangsi folksongs may be read as a resistant act through which they create a cultural space of belonging for themselves, an abstract sense of home which does not coincide with the geo-political boundaries of the states into which they were assimilated.

**Bio note:** Sumadhura Roy is a PhD research scholar at the Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She graduated in English in the year 2014, and went on to pursue MA in English from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University. Her areas of interest include folkloristics, area studies, feminist literature, subaltern studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and literature from indigenous communities and marginalized groups.

**Jharana Rani Dhangadamajhi & Sonali Supriya Bagh, “From Folk to Pop: Understanding the Poetics and Politics of the ‘Remix-Revival’ Culture of Select Sambalpuri Folk Songs”**

Abstract

'Folk' has been defined as "people who are simple, uncorrupted" and "who do not need any a scripture for their knowledge" but "keep alive the untainted tradition" (Dwivedi 65), or "a group of people, stay alive in a world untouched by modern culture or classical scriptural knowledge" (Satyendra 3). Folk songs are but the many ways in which these group of people expresses their folk imagination; they represent the belief and experience of the folk. Thus like other folksongs, Sambalpurifolk songs have emerged spontaneously based on the experience, expertise, memory and events of the folk life of the Koshal-Sambalpur region, or the margin of Odisha. Similarly Pop culture is celebrated in the metropolis by a particular urban community. In recent years Coke-Studio has made a remarkable contribution in connecting the margin with the metropolis through its 'remix-revival' culture. However I hypothesise and argue that in her attempt to revive the folk songs, especially Sambalpuri folk songs, by the Coke Studio artist and Bollywood singer Sona Mohapatra, she has done tremendous 'cultural appropriation' of the 'Koshali culture' of the marginalised region of Odisha by presenting the songs as pop songs in the era of 'commodity fetishism' and again working on the condition of 'Distraction thesis' from the larger politics of regional divide in Odisha.

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### **Hriya Banerjee, "Amar Shohor (My City): Exploring the Metropolis and Counterculture in Bangla Band Songs"**

#### **Abstract:**

The songs of Moheener GhoRaguli, the first Bangla band – their 'unfamiliar' language, urban subjects, heavy music arrangements and loud on-stage presentations in the mid 70s had completely shaken the Bengali audience who were still used to the mellifluous you-and-I romantic compositions of the Golden Era of Bengali music. Modelled on the rock-band structure of the West, their songs were a reflection of hard-core urban emotions and carried references of the metro-life both in terms of imageries and vocabularies. The new Bangla-band generation was born – rockstar images of the band members of bands like Cactus, Crosswindz, Lokkichhara or Fossils were lashing the interiors of the urban middle class in Bengal. The issues in the songs



were sometimes the points of concern for spaces beyond the immediate city, as well. But the manifestations and presentations of these problems – the typical city-centric socio-politico-cultural references in the Bangla band songs – silently omitted the language of relevance for the non-urban areas. There was hence no representation of the rural in the songs, and the acceptance was limited to a section of the neo-modern urban audience.

My paper aims to investigate the dominance of the city and the consequent exclusion of the rural / non-urban in the Bangla band songs of the 90s, and identify the reception or rejection of the same amongst its audience.

**Bio-Note:** Hriya Banargee is an Assistant Professor of English at Netaji Subhash Engineering College, Kolkata.

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### **Harsimran Kaur, “Now, *Bulleh Shah* Dances from the “Peripheries” to “the Centre”**

#### **Abstract:**

The transposition of *Bulleh Shah’s Sufi* verses into *Kathak* performances are instances of cross-cultural, intermedial translations, entangled with various discourses and spheres of aesthetics, offering alliances and resistances. *Kathak* has its origins in the high- culture of the temple and court art, asserting its continuity from the *Gharanedars* and the *Natyashastra*. However, the inter-culture translations of *kathak* are numerous, eliding with multiple geographical areas and cultures. Practiced and performed by *Kathakars*, the traveling bards, the dance form relies on the trans-mediation of oral stories and mythologies into visual and embodied acts. In this paper, I propose to trace the journey of *Bulleh Shah’s Sufi* poetry into *kathak*, with case study of performances by Manjari Chaturvedi, an exponent of this intermedial art. The main line of inquiry seeks to find answers to the vital questions of how *Sufi Kathak* is revived from the lost tradition to the “centre”, as a dance form, within the popular culture. Does the translation of *Sufi* lyrics/word/verse/ remains at the boundary/periphery of the discourse of *kathak*, or do these reoccur and mutate in styles, movement, and iteration? Another relevant line of inquiry will also include the intermedial pirouette which occurs when the word becomes performative.

**Bio-Note:** Harsimran Kaur, is an M.Phil Research Scholar from the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh. Her Research area is Dance studies, Indian Aesthetics, Cultural Studies and Phenomenology. She is Currently working as Visiting Faculty in ICFAI University, Baddi, Himachal Pradesh.

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**Tenzin Nyima Bhutia, “Understanding Integrity Norms and Oral Narratives of Sacred Texts: A Comparative Analysis of Transcripts of Buddhist Religious Texts and Translations of the Bible-Quran”**

**Abstract:**

The translation process is highly strategic and manipulative. Not only should the source and target languages be considered, but also the literary and social network of the target language to be translated into, as well as the literary and social culture that gave rise to the language in the source text. The debate over whether or not the divine word, such as the Bible or the Quran, could be translated gave rise to author centrism in society, with the Ulama-led Shariatic culture in Islam and the Brahmanical Purohit-centric Sanskritic knowledge, both of which were hegemonic, domineering, exclusive, and aggressive. The stratification of literature in Buddhism based on a manuscript tradition is quite simple. With its transition from orality to documentation, which destroys orality, the paper highlights how the earliest Buddhist tradition may have produced a type of literature significantly different from one founded on one that never had an "original" text. This paper examines the authenticity of translation studies through a critical reading of estrangement theories concerning translations of the Bible and Quran while highlighting the role of transcription of Buddhist divine scriptures in order to assess the status of translated writings in the religious community.

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**Parallel Session 17: 4:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Vibha Sharma**

**Chair’s bio:**

**Prof Vibha Sharma** is a Professor in the Department of English at Aligarh Muslim University. Her areas of interest and research are Translation Studies, Theatre and Performance Studies and Environmental Humanities and English Language Teaching. She is Deputy Coordinator of DRS UGC SAP Phase II Programme on Translation Studies in the Department of English, AMU. She has contributed to *Negotiating the Neoliberal Performance Scenario* (Palgrave MacMillan) and *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre* (Greenwood Press, London) besides several other publications.

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**Urmi Sengupta, “Mapping the Mystifying Margins’: Collective Memory and Ecofeminist Interconnections across Indigenous Literatures of North-East India”**

**Abstract:**

The Ecofeminist worldview of the indigenous communities of North-East India has had its foundations in the empathetic connections existing between the women and the natural world,

since the pre-colonial times. Disempowering and subjugating the women by assuming control over their bodies and the mind through the patriarchal machinery of moral policing, objectification and abuse had therefore emerged to be central to the colonial agenda of usurping indigenous lands and destroying the ecological balance of the same, in the name of urbanization and industrialization, since the early nineteenth century decades.

Indigenous women writers have, therefore, responded to the ecological crisis faced by their communities by looking for lessons of social regeneration within their collective memory – one that acknowledges the traditional bonds of empathy between the women and the nature world as the mainstay of indigenous self-governance. By looking into *Songs that Tell* (1998) and *Ao Naga Oral Traditions* (1999) by writer-ethnographer Temsula Ao (Ao Naga) and *Where the River Sleeps* (2014) and *Son of the Thunderbird* (2016) by singer-storyteller Easterine Kire (Anagami Naga), this paper aims to explore this subversive potential of collective cultural memory in resisting the destruction of the indigenous ecosystems by re-empowering the women of the community, thereby tracing Ecofeminist trajectories of interconnectedness across indigenous communities of North-East India.

**Bio-note:**Urmi Sengupta is Faculty of Communicative English at The British Institutes, Kolkata, India. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Her research interests include Canadian Studies, Ecocriticism, Indigenous Studies, Gender and Translation Studies. Her essays have been published in journals like *Sahitya: The Journal of the Comparative Literature Association of India*, *Littcrit: An Indian Response to Literature* and *The Calcutta Journal of Global Affairs*.

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### **Nilakshi Moran, “Understanding ‘Violence’ and ‘Nationalism’ through Select Contemporary Assamese Fiction”**

#### **Abstract:**

Violence in the context of Indian Diaspora has its roots in colonial cruelty and oppression, but it is continually evolving and changing forms. This work shall interrogate the infliction of violence as a tool and an imagery to establish an idea of nationalism. The narratives of violence and the idea of ‘home’ as presented through the works of Jahnabi Barua’s *Undertow*, Arupa Patangia Kalita’s *Written in Tears*. The nationalism and the idea of belonging coming from the narratives of Assam has particular differences as it is defined and contrasted not merely by the local versus outsider narrative but also of languages that one speaks. The Assamese versus Bengali speaking battle seems to foreground the regional significance and that shall be discussed through this work. The work shall further try to cohere the changes in the political scenario of Assam and analyze the cultural changes represented through the narratives. The purpose of this study is to examine a few fictional Assamese stories while keeping in mind current discourses on migration,

particularly the problem of undocumented Bangladeshi migrants. The history of hate and aggression that has engulfed due to the question of 'home' shall be discussed to interpret and observe closely the long standing question of home and the migrant culture bringing in a significant social and political change.

**Bio-Note:**My name is Nilakshi Moran. I have completed my M.A in English from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in the year 2017. I have completed my M Phil in English from Dibrugarh University, Assam in 2019. I have worked as an Ad Hoc in DDR College, Assam for two years (2018-2020). Currently I am enrolled as a PhD candidate in the Department of English, University of Delhi (since 2021).

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### **Neeharika Haloi, "Lost Narratives: Voices from the Forgotten Chinese Assamese Community in India"**

#### **Abstract:**

The late nineteenth-century saw the emergence of a Chinese community in the North-East of India. After years of settlement and fraternising with the locals, intermarriages locals grew - to a point where it became hard to psychically differentiate the Chinese immigrants from the natives. But when India went into war with China regarding border disputes, the locals grew suspicious of the Chinese and soon started terrorising them. As a result, about 3000 Chinese-Indians from all over the country were sent to a disused World War II POW camp in Deoli, Rajasthan, marking the beginning of an internment without any resolution. This paper aims to understand the predicament of the narrative voices from the survivors' viewpoint of the Deoli internment. Rita Chowdhury's translated text *Chinatown Days* (2018) weaves a tale of immigration and identity, exploring the inevitability of loss, and a mother-daughter duo struggling to find a way out of silence, anguish and nostalgia for the past. This paper aims to understand the largely forgotten chapter of the country's history that tells a harrowing tale of racial prejudice on the part of the Indians. The paper also seeks to map the parallels between the Japanese-American during the World War II and Chinese-Indian detention in the 1960s.

**Bio-Note:** Neeharika Haloi is a Doctoral candidate at the Department of English, Tezpur University, Assam.

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### **Sanjukta Naskar, "Voices from the Margins: Migration, Memory and the City"**

#### **Abstract:**

Memory works in multiple ways, being the cradle of thoughts, ideas and a repository of a life that remains outside the bounds of a plausible return. Memory in the context of migration becomes an unresolved space generating a zone of personal crisis and conflict, manifested through a multi-layered mutation of quotidian life manifested often through cultural practices. One of the commonest forms of internal migration that can be witnessed in history is the migration of the labour force to the cities. As early as the nineteenth century histories of labour migration to the cities for a better livelihood is well established. This population of migrated labourers usually of the lower caste and class of people became a visible milieu that comprised the city crowd.

In my paper I wish to look at some performative texts that were popular among the fringe entertainments like *jatra*, *shong*, *tarja*, etc. which were performed in public places. Though the form had always existed among the lower classes, the subject matter showed an alteration, with appropriation and assimilation revealing the dynamic nature of oral literature. A number of folkloric rituals were introduced and performed within the city scape recalling the belief system of the rural masses otherwise not popular among the urban population. My paper aims to look at these cultural practices as contested spaces and carriers of a living memory of ritual practices.

**Bio-Note:** Sanjukta Naskar works at the Department of English, Janki Devi Memorial College, New Delhi.

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**Parallel Session 18: 4:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Shobha M**

**Chair's bio:**

**Dr. Shobha M** teaches at the Department of English, Bangalore University as Professor. She has more than twenty years of teaching experience. She was the recipient of Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship from Nov 2000 to April 2002, and carried out her research work at McGill University, Montreal as Visiting Research Fellow. Her areas of research interest are: Canadian Literature, Gender Studies, Critical Theory, Cultural Studies and Indian Literatures. She has presented and published several research papers in National and International conferences and journals respectively. She has worked as the member of Board of Studies of several colleges and universities. She is the Regional Representative (South India) of Indian

Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (IACLALS) from August 2020. She has Guest edited the IACLALS Newsletter, Issue No.10, 2021.

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### **H S Komalesha, “Light of the Margin in the Wick of Metropolis: Revisiting the Poetry of Kedarnath Singh”**

#### **Abstract:**

In this proposed paper, I intend to examine Kedarnath Singh’s poetry and how it is endowed with an enduring legacy of folkloric hopes on bucolic tropes. A gifted poet such as Kedarnath Singh, who lived and taught in the thriving metropolis of New Delhi, always carried in his heart a part of his village and his peasant background. Out of dusty roads and slow-paced lanes, through its graceful elegance and understatement, his poetry evokes the spirit of backyards and bastis, and emerges as a way of giving voice to the silenced sections of society: thus, ‘the huts drowned in water’, ‘cows disowned by farmers’, ‘villages left with only the invalids’, ‘languages and dialectics that lost their inhabitants’ emit light with resplendent glory through his poems. That is precisely why, the ‘local’ he portrays no longer confines to a region; and the spirit of the ‘global’ no longer isolates the individual, so is the nature of his modern poetry. In this paper, the focus, therefore is tuned on to disinter the nature and consequence of the contradictions of modern-day India and the inner tensions between the rural and urban identities in the poetry of Kedarnath Singh, and posit how they constitute an aesthetic perception of the poet, and on a deeper level become an integral part of his moral consciousness.

**Bio-Note:** H S Komalesha is Professor of English in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Kharagpur. He has 7 books and about 50 research articles and translations to his credit. Routledge (London & New York: 2021) has published *Veneration to the Elders* – English translation of the earliest extant Kannada prose work written circa 940 CE that he translated along with a team of experts (Manohar Publishers for the South-Asian Edition). Peter Lang, Oxford has published his critical book, *Issues of Identity in Indian English Fiction: A Close Reading of Canonical Indian English Novels*. and (New Delhi: Manohar Books, 2020).

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**Beauty Yadav, “Exploring provinciality and culture in *Patna Roughcut* and *Patna Blues*”**

**Abstract:**

Indian Writing in English is in the midst of postcolonial predicaments arising out of inter/intra nation displacements. The inevitability of the difference between the centre/metropolitan and the periphery/provincial writers/writings in English restricts the literary identity of India as a nation. However, the readers find it difficult to abide by any such trajectories of restrictions conspiring against the peripheral in the realm of English writings in India.

It is undoubtedly the time to ponder over certain questions that continue to remain irksome even in an age of extravagant globalisation. The study aims to debate in context of the two provincial writers Siddharth Choudhury and Abdullah Khan who belong to Bihar and write to own their status as voices from Bihar.

The parameters to re-assess the conceptualisations of identity and culture in the context of postcolonial understanding authenticates their literary outputs as the provincial writing with the distinctness for the difference. There is an intertextual affiliation with the provinciality percolating the lives of the two writers. The representations too resonate an interplay between literary voyages and those embarked on in real life, between the flow of the literary words and the movement of people and things they perceive and also between the reader's act of finding the literary centre and the writer's unfolding the distinctness of the periphery.

**Bio-Note:** Beauty Yadav, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

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**Maziah Shaaz, "Challenging the Norm: Evaluating *Kamla* and *Mrigayaa* against the Centre-margin Conflict"****Abstract:**

The clash between the centre and the margin operates at social, cultural, political, and economic levels and emerges due to conflicts and tensions between those who hold power or occupy central spaces and those who are at the periphery. It often manifests in the form of discrimination, exclusion, identification by association and ideological monopoly. The concept of the metropolis and margins needn't always be physical. Psychological and emotional barriers play a vital role in highlighting the cracks in the equation of power, operational at the very fundamental level in society. Sometimes the conflict is seen in the form of the dominance of one form of power over another. Likewise, patriarchal hegemony objectifies and marginalises women to the periphery of the mainstream narrative. This creates a rift that exposes power imbalance and inequality within societies and organizations.

In the light of these observations, this paper evaluates two films, *Kamla* (1985) and *Mrigayaa* (1976) and attempts to highlight the distortions in the societal system where on one hand, yellow journalism gnaws away at the life of a tribal sex worker sold from a small village and on the other hand, the pre-independent caste-ridden royalty dehumanises the people of an indigenous tribe. It also addresses the clash by recognising the needs and concerns of marginalized tribes in India and questions the sense of social justice.

**Bio-Note:** Maziah Shaaz is a research scholar at the Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow.

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### **Apoorva Dimri, “The Margins Within the Metropolis: A Reading of Manto’s Representation of Bombay”**

#### **Abstract:**

Most well-known for his Partition related stories like “Toba Tek Singh”, “Thanda Gosht” (‘Cold Meat’), “Khol Do” (‘Open It’), and so on, Manto’s short stories set in the city of Bombay also constitute a significant share of his literary corpus wherein the writer explores and represents the murky underside of the city that often remains concealed beneath the façade of success and progress usually associated with the urban. The aim of this paper is to explore the representation of Bombay in the stories of Manto as a city divided along the lines of class with Manto’s characters interacting with the spaces occupied by them in specific ways. The proposed paper seeks to focus on the representation of the city and its discontents or the various contradictory and conflicting aspects of city life and the way the same shape the lives of its inhabitants, particularly those at the socio-economic and cultural margins of the metropolis. Moreover, a significant question of study pertains to how the city of Bombay, as available in his short stories, had shaped Manto’s sense of self as an individual and as a writer. This can be seen in relation to a reading of Manto’s life in Bombay and the writer’s distinctive experience of and relationship with this city where he had spent an important part of his life in its chawls and streets amidst the characters and spaces portrayed in his stories.

**Bio-Note:** Apoorva Dimri has done her graduation and masters in English from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, respectively. Her MPhil, from the Department of English, Delhi University, focuses on the representation of the city/urban space in the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto. Her areas of interest include women’s writing, Dalit literature, urban space, particularly in the South Asian context.

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Special Session: Book Release: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Chair: Swati Pal

Day 4: Saturday, April 29, 2023

Parallel Session 19: 9:15 p.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Chair: Prof Albeena Shakil

Chair's bio:

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**Esther Daimari, “Climate Writing from the Northeast: Reading Easterine Kire’s *The Son of the Thundercloud* as an Ecogothic Cli-fi”**

**Abstract:**

The paper explores Easterine Kire’s novel, *The Son of the Thundercloud*, as an ecogothic cli-fi, thereby situating Kire in the tradition of climate change writing from North East India. Kire’s novel is an allegorical tale immersed in Naga myths and folktales. It tells the story of a lone traveler named Pele, who, in the course of his journey, witnesses terrible famine, droughts, and floods and meets strange “human beings” which are hundreds of years old. In the face of terrible climate change in what looks like a post-apocalyptic landscape, the survivors live only by eating air. I argue in my chapter that the allegorical tale may be read as a contemporary cli-fi from the Northeast that exploits elements of the ecogothic to tell a prophetic story of climate change and what it entails. The Ecogothic, as defined by Andrew Smith and William Hughes in their edited book *EcoGothic*, establishes a relationship between Gothic as a literary genre and the environment. They argue that Gothic as a genre had always been “ecologically aware” (1). I argue that Kire uses the ecogothic in her novel to respond to current environmental conditions such as climate change and environmental degradation in the Northeast, especially Nagaland.

**Bio-Note:** Esther Daimari is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Tezpur University.

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**Sadhna Kashyap, “Voices From the Margins: A Postcolonial Reading of Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* and Janice Pariat’s *Boats on Land*”**

**Abstract:**

The margin and the centre are very crucial concepts when discussing postcolonial theory; this paper would try to dismantle these very concepts in terms of literature from the Northeast of India. This paper would investigate re-thinking post-colonialism in the Indian context, where Northeast is at the margins. The geographical location of the North-East is the main reason for the alienation of this region by the people of mainstream India. The colonial presence and the struggle to preserve the tribal culture is evident in the writings of Mamang Dai and Janice Pariat. Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* is an intricate web of stories that depicts the lives of the Adis before the touch of modernity which divided the villages into towns and cities. Dai connects herself to the roots which shape and define her originality as a writer from the margins. *Boats on Land* by Janice Pariat offers a historical canvas to look at the early days of British Raj and how the impact of colonialism changed people’s lives. Both writers draw interesting images of the tribal communities of Northeast and voices out the unique problems of these people. The stories of these collections are autobiographical which are woven with fact and fiction that celebrates the different tribes of North East India.

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**Vandana Gupta, “Oral, Local, Bioregional: A Study of Pluri-versal Aesthetics of Mamang Dai’s *The Legends Of Pensam*”**

**Abstract:**

The ecological framing of postcolonial writing, in current critical parleys, foregrounds the primacy of literature in reimagining the sense of place and spatial and cultural sovereignty. Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, argues that imagination is vital to recover land from the clutches of imperialism. The present paper proposes to study how the novel, *The Legends of Pensam* by Mamang Dai, represents the ethos and concerns of bioregionalism and registers a powerful resistance to the stratification and appropriation of the heterogenous alterities. Her narrative underlines the multiple configurations of power relations existing between tribal and the mainstream, margin and the metropolis, periphery and the centre.

By recuperating the local myths and collective beliefs, the legends and lores of the indigenous communities, the text evinces resistance to the stratification and appropriation of the heterogenous alterities and underlines the ontological primacy of the cultural tradition of the native groups. This study seeks to explore how the novel represents a “counter-tradition” and dislocates and redefines the boundaries of fiction-writing with its place-based aesthetics forcing, in the process, a de-colonial epistemic shift in fictional narrativity based on pluri-versal,

alternative aesthetic-structural paradigm. This paper makes an attempt to investigate the narrative strategies through which Mamang Dai asserts and inscribes the right of the Adi tribe to self-representation and self-determination.

**Bio-Note:** Dr. Vandana is an Associate Professor of English at Bhagini Nivedita College, University of Delhi. Her research papers have been published in esteemed UGC CARE 2019 listed and other peer reviewed journals. She has also presented research paper in IACLALS International Conference. Her research interests include tribal literature, culture studies and gender studies.

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**Papia Sengupta, “Breaking the binary between mainstream and the margin: Oral narratives as history”**

**Abstract:**

The paper is an attempt to focus on oral-cultural societies which are not written but are oral, embedded in narratives and traditions flowing from memory, storytelling, folklores, dance and other forms of art, embroidery, textiles, and motifs etc. I foreground my argument by reiterating the intrinsic relation between human knowledge-knowing as based on language-speech/orally transmitted and thereby challenging the premise that questions orality as history by knitting a web of multi-disciplinary approaches from anthropology, history, political theory, memory studies, cultural studies, and symbolism. The paper is in four parts: In the first part I infuse what is understood by oral traditions and narratives and how cultural communities aware of writing has their genesis in orality. The second section of the paper, taking cue from Jan Vansina's long-term ethnographic research on *Oral Tradition and historical methodology*, presents a comprehensive analysis of oral tradition/narratives as knowledge. The third section postulates that all history of all societies, even with developed writing forms, emanates from some form of orality- memory. In the last section, the paper posits that history is constructive as well as interpretative based on written as well as oral sources. Hence, neglect and negation of oral traditions as historical sources is utilized as a tool by ethno-centric scholars who hierarchize writing as greater than orality completely ignoring the fact that all histories have their genesis in speech-oral words not essentially written.

**Bio-Note:** Papia Sengupta is an Assistant Professor in the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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**Parallel Session 20: 9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

**Chair: Prof H.S. Komalesha**

### Chair's bio:

H S Komalesha is Professor of English in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Kharagpur. He has 7 books and about 50 research articles and translations to his credit. Routledge (London & New York: 2021) has published *Veneration to the Elders* – English translation of the earliest extant Kannada prose work written circa 940 CE that he translated along with a team of experts (Manohar Publishers for the South-Asian Edition). Peter Lang, Oxford has published his critical book, *Issues of Identity in Indian English Fiction: A Close Reading of Canonical Indian English Novels*. and (New Delhi: Manohar Books, 2020).

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### Shantanu Majee, “Claiming the Margin: An Attempt at Decolonising the Indian Classroom”

#### Abstract:

Centre-margin decolonization refers to the process of dismantling the cultural, economic, and political dominance of the center (usually Western or Northern countries) over the margins (usually non-Western or Southern countries) that were colonized or subject to imperialism. Decolonisation in education involves acknowledging and addressing the ways in which colonialism has shaped knowledge production and dissemination. Decolonising nineteenth century studies involves reexamining and reevaluating the ways in which the field has traditionally been approached and taught, and making efforts to challenge and correct the biases and limitations inherent in that approach. Likewise, in their revolutionary 2020 essay, “Undisciplining Victorian Studies”, Ronjaanee Chatterjee, Alicia Mireles Christoff, and Amy R. Wong set out to “think carefully and deliberately about how we can develop a truly relational thinking and set of practices that engage scholarship across fields and disciplines.” Sukanya Banerjee, Ryan D. Fong, and Helena Michie also make a similar claim in their introductory essay, “Widening the Nineteenth Century,” for a 2021 special issue of *Victorian Literature and Culture*. From these valuable manifestos, we have two unique yet intrinsically related models of decolonisation evolving in the academic domain of nineteenth century studies. ‘Undisciplining’ resists assimilationist thinking and instead insist on the difference that structures each of our social positions. On the other hand, a ‘transimperial’ framework affords the possibility of bringing together, say nineteenth century English and Urdu literature, not only in terms of parallels or similarities, but also as operating along the same interrelated plane of modernity.

My research in this field implements both of the aforementioned worldviews and has been disseminated in the shape of a tailored course entitled, “Undisciplining the Victorian Classroom in India: Case Study of JUDE,” ([https://undiscipliningvc.org/html/syllabi/uvc\\_india\\_jude.html](https://undiscipliningvc.org/html/syllabi/uvc_india_jude.html)) which attempts to fill the Global North/South divide by introducing students to the transformative knowledge of a comparative analysis of the rise of Nineteenth Century Studies as

a world discipline. Hence, examining how Indian scholars have studied nineteenth-century British literature, inflected by specific local, institutional, and national settings and contexts, will not only help to problematise the assumed universality of the Western canon of literary criticism but will also enable us to dismantle power structures inherited from the practices of colonisation.

**Bio-Note** - Shantanu Majee is an early career academician from Kolkata, currently employed as Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Techno India University, West Bengal. He received his M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Nineteenth-Century Studies at Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

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### **Abhinaba Chatterjee, "Interplay of the Margin and the Centre: Indian English Literature in the Global Context"**

#### **Abstract:**

The fact that the Indian English literature is a post-colonial phenomenon is well-known. This paper is motivated by a need to understand the impact of some recent world-wide economic and political trends on the cultural production of literature in India – both in English and the vernacular to decipher explanatory models that might be developed to account for certain literary tendencies and practices that are widely discernible. The marketability of Indian English literature depends on propagating a certain 'Oriental?' mindset that conforms to the Western notion of India. However, this paper would argue that despite adhering to these norms in order to be saleable, the Indian English writers have adopted strategies that deconstruct the Western hegemony and rewrite the dialogue between the centre, that is the West, and the margin, that is India. One such well-known strategy involves, to quote Agha Shahid Ali, the 'chutnification' and 'biryanization' of the English language. Another strategy is the creation of an 'alternative cosmopolitanism' that enables the Indian English writer to imagine a cosmopolitan world-community, rooted in mutual respect and acceptance of difference. Towards this, the paper proposes to analyse select novels of Amitav Ghosh as an example of deconstructive strategy employed by him to marginalize the centre.

**Bio-Note:** Abhinaba Chatterjee is a Research Scholar at Gurukul Kangri (Deemed to be University) Haridwar, India.

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### **Shatarupa Sinha, "Mapping the 'Indian' Journey: Beyond Indian English Literature"**

**Abstract:**

A unique characteristic of Indian English Literature is that it is still in the process of canonisation. While most of the earlier discussions have remained trapped either in the quagmire of its nomenclature, or within the interstices of the language debate, the contemporary times have witnessed experiments that have often posed pedagogical challenges. While P. Lal and K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar have tried to make way for contextualising Indian English Literature and finding a place for it in the Indian literary scenario, on the other hand, the use of English as a medium of creative expression has been questioned vehemently by Bhalchandra Nemade's theory of Nativism, which acknowledged and considered cultural self-respect and autonomy, emanating from various bhāṣā traditions. A language that did not initially belong to India, a language whose origin in India lies in its colonial history, has come a long arduous way to write an essentially 'Indian' literature. Beyond these strains, there lies a vast body of writing that has re-drawn the cultural contours to imagine an idea of India that is contemporary, with essentially 'Indian' characteristics.

This paper seeks to explore if there exists an essentially 'Indian' character within Indian English Literature that has the ability to accommodate the varied cultural delineations of this nation.

**Bio-Note:** Shatarupa Sinha is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, Gargi College, University of Delhi.

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**Manish Solanki, "Jacinta Kerketta's ईश्वर और बाज़ार (God and Market): Margins Writing Back"****Abstract:**

The paper proposes to read Jacinta Kerketta's latest collection of Hindi poems titled *ईश्वर और बाज़ार (God and Market)* as a gesture of cultural assertion from indigenous margins. The objective is to read some of the representative poems from this collection in accordance with the theme proposed for the conference. Kerketta, born in the Oraon/Kurukh Adivasi community of West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand (India) and working as a freelance journalist, has published bilingual Hindi/English poetry volumes *अंगोर (Amber)* (2016) and *जड़ों की ज़मीन (Land of the Roots)* (2018) and the latest collection of Hindi poems *ईश्वर और बाज़ार (God and Market)* (2022).

Kerketta in her poems writes about the lives of the indigenous communities in India capturing the daily struggles that mark their existence. She engages with the indigenous ways of being of the Adivasi communities and the risk of their structural obliteration under the hegemonic impact of the discourse/practice of global phenomenon of 'development'. The major themes of her poems are the deterritorialisation of indigenous communities under the ruse of development, the

appropriation of the natural resources affecting the ecology of these regions, and their struggle to resist such mighty forces undermining their value systems and modes of life. The paper will attempt to read some of the poems from *ईश्वर और बाज़ार (God and Market)* in their resistance to/critique of the metropolitan ways of life and its belief-systems, while also focusing upon their offering the alternative paradigms of ecological co-existence.

**Bio-Note:** Manish Solanki is Assistant Professor at Department of English, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar (Gujarat). He has done his doctoral research on Postcolonial Indian English Fiction of the post-1970s. His areas of interest include Contemporary Indian English Literature, Arabic and Middle Eastern Literature, Postcolonial Theory, Gender Studies and Cinematic Adaptations of Literatures.

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11:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Special Session: C.D. Narasimhaiha Prize 2023 Session

Chairs: Prof M Asaduddin & Prof Fatima Rizvi

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**Anirban Bhattacharjee, “Dalit Autobiographies and the Politics of Self-worlding”**

**Abstract:**

The paper attempts to spotlight how Dalit autobiographies/self-writings constantly grapple with the problem of re-presencing an otherwise alienated and self-encircled world which has been in a mode of exposure without disconcealment. The act of writing inaugurates, in a way, the allegory of the writer's death, shattering the mirror in order to face the other to whom one is responsible. It asks: does the politics of undoing necessitate a search for and understanding of the 'sentient soul' itself, naturally unmediated, before being linguistified? Does the speech-act and the act of signification remain incomplete as the intuition of Dalitness as lived resists any determined *vorstellung*? Through a critical and close reading of Manohar Mauli Biswas's "Surviving in My World" (2013) and Manoranjan Byapari's "Interrogating My Chandal Life" (2012 & 2015), the paper delves deep into the state of Dalitness, at once, an ontological and political paradigm, conditioned by a constant oscillation between a monstrous anthropomorphization of the animal and a corresponding animalization of man. Finally, by drawing upon a phenomenology of dirt and tactility, it attempts to argue and substantiate if/how impurity is an ontological condition, and in a world of entangled relationality and intersubjective communicability with otherness/difference, untouchability is an (im)possible concept.

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**Arti Mathur, “Deterritorializing Marginalization: Negotiating Difference and Belonging through Literary ‘Minorityscapes’”**

**Abstract:**

This paper raises the exacting questions of identity and assimilation, contextualized in asymmetrical cultural encounters in contemporary India, structured within majority-minority division of society. In this context, I refer to Minority discourses that primarily operate within the paradigms of centre-periphery, territorial-non-territorial, extraneous-native dialectics. I foreground the complexity of ‘minority’ meanings and concerns as essential the objective of exploring dynamic possibilities of sustaining difference, belonging, and conviviality. Accordingly, I offer interpretations of selective literary works representing ‘minority’ communities, combining socio-political consciousness with creative historiography and strategies of narrativization, to demonstrate alternative ways of constructing identity that transcends the debilitating categorized division and politics. I compare *The Assassin’s Song*, *Book of Rachel*, *The Walled City*, and *Family Matters* to reinterrogate ideological and other assumptions attached to urban and rural ‘minorityscapes’ in the evocation of sacrality, nostalgia, home. Further, the delineated texts are scrutinised for vital transitions from melancholia of monocultures and alienation to belonging, reiterating the latter as the ethical basis of co-existence. Theoretical insights from Gilroy’s conviviality, Calhoun’s defence of multiple belongings and the emotive value of nation and nationalism, Appadurai’s incisive critique of the changing spaces of the city under aggressive vernacularisation, allow for intersection of minority objectives with cosmopolitan ideals to provide a position of vantage to mount a critique of the dialectics of majoritarianism versus minoritisation.

**Bio-Note-** I am Associate Professor in the Dept. of English, PGDAV College, University of Delhi, currently pursuing my PhD from the Dept. of English, University of Delhi. My area of interest and research is contemporary minority literature in India, written and published in English. This abstract/paper is original work partly related to my research. It has not been presented in any format in any forum.

**Diksha Beniwal, “Migration and modern utopia of a colonial city: A study of Narendra Jadhav’s *Untouchables*”**

**Abstract:**

This paper, by examining Narendra Jadhav’s *Untouchables*, will focus on migration to a colonial city as an indispensable step for dalits, a marginalized caste community, in their attempt to emerge into the middle class in British India. The said middle class status, as we will see, comes with the promise of ‘casteless-ness’, and a liberating sense of anonymity associated with the colonial metropolis. When modern cities were largely conceived as the origin of evil and corruption under the ambit of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian Nationalism, one must ask what compelled



many socially and economically marginalized families, to move to these colonial urban spaces like Bombay and Calcutta. *Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India* has come to be known for its archetypical representation of one such dalit family searching for casteless modernity as they aspire to be a part of the colonial middle class. To understand how migration, first from one's ancestral village to the city and then ultimately to the West, expands the horizons of one's socio-cultural and economic mobility, this paper traces the lives of Narendra Jadhav's parents to Bombay in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Bio-Note:** Diksha Beniwal is a PhD Scholar in the HSS Department, IIT Kanpur.

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**Bio-Note:** Diksha Beniwal is a PhD Scholar in the HSS Department, IIT Kanpur.

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**Ishita Sareen, "The Claustropolitan Unmaking of a Nehruvian Metropolis: The Discontents of Chandigarh in Madhur Kapila's *Saamne ka Aasman*"**

**Abstract:**

Conceived in 1952, Le Corbusier's Chandigarh is critically discussed as a Modernist Nehruvian cosmopolis – advanced, inclusive, culturally diffusive. However, as a cosmopolis already compromised, it has excluded many from the inclusivity metonymized by the Open Hand, "open to give and open to receive"[3]. Its attendant peripheries impose from both without and within,



looming in the rising skyscrapers of satellite townships and their ghettoised interstices, lingering in the city centre(s), in slums of Sector 25, or the homeless sleeping on pavements in elite sectors. The affiliations between these variegated centres and peripheries are addressed by Madhur Kapila in her *upnyaas, Saamne ka Aasman* (2010), dramatizing the life and actions of Mohsin Khan, a stand-in for Zulfiqar Khan, a social missionary determined to include the slums of Sector 25 in the tides of progress, and later, incarcerated for sodomizing young boys from the same slums through his theatre-based NGO.

Reading Khan's life and actions as an intriguing entryway in discerning the making and unmaking of Chandigarh-as-metropolis, the paper will expose the emergent discontents in Chandigarh's shift from a crippled cosmopolis to a claustropolis (resounding with speed and confusion à la Paul Virilio). It will interpret the emplacement of cultural cartographies within the architectural and the rurban within the urban, juxtaposing these against the planned city.

**Bio-Note:** Ishita Sareen is working as Assistant Professor in the Department of English at DAV College, Sector 10, Chandigarh while pursuing her Ph.D. from Panjab University, Chandigarh. Her doctoral research reads Chandigarh as a modern spatial experiment through its cultural experience and literary perceptions. Between 2019-22, she has presented papers at IACLALS, MELUS-MELOW, SWAPCA, London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, IIT Bhilai, and University of Madison-Wisconsin.

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### **Pritha Chakraborty, "Sacrality in Profanity: Defining the Sacred Space of Ganga and Varanasi Through Narratives from the Margins"**

#### **Abstract:**

The paper focuses on how marginalized communities living on the banks of the Ganga in Varanasi use their narratives and traditions to challenge the sacred/profane binary prevalent in the Hindu religious literature, especially the Puranas. The Puranas extol Ganga's sacredness and establish the mythical belief that she provides liberation to the human soul after death. Consequently, many places on the banks of the Ganga are considered centres of pilgrimage; the belief is that a dip in the Ganga purifies the soul. Varanasi, the most significant of these pilgrimage centres, attracts thousands of devotees seeking salvation. Many come here to conduct the funerary rituals of their ancestors.

Nevertheless, this sacred city is also home to the marginalised sections of Hindu society, like the Nishads (boatmen) and the Doms (ritualistic corpse-burners), for whom the pilgrimage centre is also a means of subsistence. Their perspective of the Ganga thus combines the aspects of sacrality and utility. The paper analyzes their rituals and narratives to demonstrate how they

construct the sacrality of the Ganga on materialistic or profane foundations, thereby creating a self-image that counters the discriminatory aspects of the dominant narratives.

**Bio-note:** Pritha Chakraborty is a Research Scholar at the Department of HSS, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

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**Parallel Session 21: 2:20 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Vibha S Chauhan**

**Chair's bio:**

**Prof Vibha S. Chauhan** has taught English at Zakir Husain Delhi College for more than thirty years and is former Principal, Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi. A writer, editor and translator, Chauhan has to her credit more than eight books covering diverse areas like music, cultures and literary traditions. Chauhan is proficient in English, Hindi and Bhojpuri and has published widely in these languages. She has also published widely in national and international journals. Deeply interested in the evolution, impact and dissemination of popular cultures, Chauhan's major research interest has been non-urban cultures and literatures.

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**Mitali Bhattacharya, "Returning to 'Roots': Assessing Politics of Postcoloniality in Indian Theatre and Performance"**

**Abstract:**

The rubric of 'postcolonial theatres' identifies specific historical and contextual terms that shape theatre and dramatic practices in different postcolonial places. Within this rubric, this paper aims to understand the post-colonial impulse of Indian drama and theatre that lies in its inclination towards 'return to roots'. This impulse enables Indian playwrights, theatre practitioners, and academicians to confront the politics relating to identity, gender, caste, and nationhood specific to Indian society and culture. This paper intends to examine the semiotics of 'return to roots' vis-a-vis Indian theatre post-independence wherein the focus would lie on tracing an indefinable (yet visible) quality of 'Indianness' in the realm of Indian drama and its theatricality. The paper aims to provide perspectives on the relevance of Drama and Performance Studies within Indian academia in terms of its growth, contemporaneity, and scope by referring to some of the leading playwrights who have contributed to this postcolonial endeavor. They are Badal Sircar, Mahesh Dattani, Manjula Padmanabhan, and Tripurari Sharma among many more. Along with analysing their arguments, this paper is also an attempt to understand performance as a medium of debunking the center-margin binary and as a source of exercising resistance to dominant hegemonies prevalent in society.

**Bio-Note:** Mitali Bhattacharya is a Ph.D. English Research Scholar at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Dwarka Sector- 16C, New Delhi.

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**Gulbahar Shah, “From Ritual Performances to Satire: The Role of Folk Art in Kashmir”.**

**Abstract:**

Kashmiri folk art manifests a confluence of Persian, Central Asian and Kashmiri traditions, to create complex and powerful performances of folk theatre, trance rituals and musical performances. Ancient oral traditions are translated into these hybrid performances, of which *Band Pather*, a form of Kashmiri folk theatre, remains an important part. *Band Pather* moves beyond traditional theatre practices, combining dance, storytelling, pantomime and musical performances while presenting an incisive critique of the socio-political dynamics within Kashmir, through satire and black humour. This paper seeks to study how oral and storytelling aspects of folk art are transformed through visual devices, body movements and music to create hybrid theatrical formats, which meld the verbal and non-verbal aspects of performance. Trance rituals like *Dambali* are performed around Sufi shrines during certain sacred events, inspired by Central Asian Sufist traditions and locally revered saints. My research also focuses on the evolution of folk art in Kashmir and its changing role in society. The diminishing popularity of folk art in Kashmir has led to significant changes since most shows are now sponsored by the government, which has led to direct interventions in theatrical practices and other folk performances, in which most of the content is self-censored by the artists.

**Bio-Note:** Gulbahar Shah is a research scholar at the department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia.

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**Shibani Phukan, “The Othering of the ‘Outsider’ in the Shillong Novel”**

**Abstract:**

The proposal is for paper tentatively titled “The Othering of the ‘Outsider’ in the Shillong Novel.” Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, often referred to as the Scotland of the East, is known for its scenic beauty and its seeming cosmopolitanism. However, underlying the pristine surroundings, an image of calm, an assumed liberal, Western cosmopolitanism; is a reality of seething anger and hatred resulting in unrest. While some sense of peace has returned to this hill-station, instances of violence continue to erupt occasionally and the figure of the “outsider”

continues to be viewed with suspicion. Samrat observes about the figure of the outsider in the Preface to *Insider Outsider: Belonging and Unbelonging in North-East India*, “It is a story of those who suddenly, with the drawing of international borders, found themselves as nowhere people in hostile lands” (ix). The emergence of the outsider figure and its othering predates to colonial times, with the mapping and the reorganisation of the north-east done along the hills/plains binary; the shifting of the capital from Shillong to Gauhati, and a subsequent sense of growing marginalisation felt by the indigenous population of Shillong leading to fissures between the tribal and the non-tribal. This paper seeks to historicise the emergence of this outsider figure and its subsequent reimagining and articulation by exploring Tilottoma Misra’s *High Wind*, Anjum Hasan’s *Lunatic in My Head*, Nilanjan P Choudhury’s *Shillong Times* and Dariba Lyndem’s *Name Place Animal Thing*.

**Bio-note:** Shibani Phukan is an Associate Professor in the dept of English, ARSD College, University of Delhi. Her areas of interest include writing from the north-east, women’s writing, and translation studies. She has published articles and chapters in journals and books published at the national and international level. She also writes book reviews for *The Wire*. She has presented papers at national and UGC-sponsored conferences, including those organised by IACLALS previously; and delivered lectures at Refresher programmes for faculty members.

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**Gutimali Goswami, “How strange is this Metropolis”: A Study Analyzing the Binary of Metropolis/Margin in Moushumi Kandali’s *The Black Magic Women***

**Abstract:**

Binary, a post-colonial theoretical term, popularly means a pair of two opposite things or duality. These pairs were supposed to exhibit the most extreme form of difference possible. Various post-structuralist and feminist theories have successfully deconstructed the latent yet violent hierarchy that creeps silently within these binaries. The binary of Metropolis and Margin, possibly a product of imperialism and the long period of colonization, plagues the perspective of Indians to date. A western tendency of seeing the world in sets of oppositions isn’t always innocent, but rather a hibernating ground for varied underlying scandalous ideological constructs. Central India has always been associated with the concept of a Metropolis, thereby pushing the Northeast Indian states to the Margins. Moushumi Kandali’s *The Black Magic Women* is a breathing testimony of the same. Drawing references from the title story, “The Black Magic Women”, the paper will attempt to analyze how mainstream India perceives the Assamese women who according to them have powered the art of black magic. Using Derrida’s concept of Parergon as the methodological tool, this paper shall negotiate the Northeast Indian margin, the art/act of crossing the constructed borders, and the conceptual osmosis that had taken place through the permeable membrane existing between the mentioned binary.

**Bio-Note:** Gutimali Goswami is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, North Kamrup College.

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**Parallel Session 21: 2:20 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.**

**Chair: Prof Margaret L Pachuau**

**Chair's bio:**

**Dr Margaret L.Pachuau** is Professor and Head at the Department of English and Culture Studies, Mizoram University. Her areas of interest are fiction, translation and culture studies and children's literature. She has coordinated two UGC major research projects on Mizo identity and has also coordinated the UGC SAP DRS II for the department, on identity in select tribes from Northeast India. She has several published works to her credit, the most recent being "Negotiating Culture Writings from Mizoram" by Bloomsbury (2023).

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**Mustabshira Siddiqui, "Muslim Women as the 'Periphery' of the Mainstream Society in Afghanistan: A Thoughtful Glimpse on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini"**

**Abstract:**

The Noble Qur'an was revealed at the time when women were degraded as commodities and buried alive by the Arabs. It has uplifted their status, gave them respect and equal status in the society. There is an entire chapter in the Noble Qur'an dedicated to a woman 'Mariyam (Mary), mother of Isa (Jesus). But ironically patriarchy has never accepted it in a positive way. Qur'an has been used only when it benefits the patriarchs of the society and misrepresented to portray women as subjects of men. The present paper aims to do a deliberation upon the character of Muslim Women as the 'Periphery' of the mainstream society of Afghanistan. Khalid Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* unveils a world of atrocities, torture and degradation of women through the character of Mariyam, who is told by her mother 'Nana' in beginning of the novel that she is a 'Harami' (illegal child). This sets the tone of the novel foreshadowing the future of women as bleak, disrespectful and peripheral.

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**Wafa Hamid, Literary Urbanisms: Women, Violence and the Metropolis in Manjula**

Padmanabhan's "Lights Out"

**Abstract:**

“If modernity is a Faustian bargain to unleash human potential and subdue nature to culture, then modern cities are its most forceful and enduring expressions... The great dramas of recent centuries—the triumph of industrialization and capitalism, the erection of powerful state apparatuses and the outbreaks of political insurrections, the exercise of colonial control and eruptions of anticolonial movements—were enacted on the stage of the modern cities.” (Prakash, 2008)

We live in an era of cities, where urban life promises better opportunities and future for all. However, increasingly the unsustainable gap between rate of urbanization and the economic growth, cities have also become synonymous with polluted air, claustrophobic spaces, and precarity. This proliferation of the urban has also led to what Gyan Prakash calls an ‘urban turn’ (2002) in the past two decades with a new orientation among scholars of academic disciplines towards the study of the urban and its effects—both good and bad— on the everyday of our lives to the production of new subjects, meanings, and collectives. Divided between fortified ‘privatopias’ erected by the privileged to wall themselves off from the imagined resentment of the multitude that dwell in the densely packed slums, the modern city space is one marked by division and conflict. The very production of this urban space largely relies on unequal relations in the distribution of resources as well as the spaces that constitute the city. It is in this setting, located at the margins of the urban experience, that Manjula Padmanabhan’s work— whether it is her comic strips, her short stories or plays and performance pieces— is situated.

The paper through the analysis of Manjula Padmanabhan’s play “Lights Out” explores the violence inherent in the urban especially in relation to gender, class, language etc. It engages with the ways in the experience of marginalized gendered and sexed bodies of the urban—its spaces, culture, language, and imagination—involves a constant negotiation with violence. The paper analyses the realities of violence against women (sexual, structural, linguistic, spatial) in the urban through the circuits of language and spaces of social hierarchies. My paper intends to unsettle assumptions mapped onto gendered bodies that ignore the intersectionality of power while destabilizing the relationship between language and violence where language— while viewed as a medium of agency and resistance— can often also be the site of violence. I analyze these structural, collective and affective expressions of violence that are often constructed by intersecting oppressions. Padmanabhan’s writing exposes the vacuous promise of urban futurity especially in the context of India through the spaces and structures of the society that affirm, perpetuate and enhance the ‘silence’ that surrounds violence against women. The paper explores how Padmanabhan’s writing exposes this conflict and violence that shapes the urban experience especially in relation to gender, class, race, culture etc. while

unapologetically seeking to carve out and imagine a space for women in/through her writing.

**Bio-Note:** Wafa Hamid is Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. Her areas of interests include comparative literatures at the intersections of language, translation and trauma studies; cultural studies and collective memorialization; popular culture; gender and queer studies among others.

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**Poonam Charan, “The Anxiety of being Driven to the Periphery in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*”**

**Abstract:**

Literature as an art form projects and reflects varied nuanced experiences of a writer dealing with and making sense of the changing socio-cultural space around him. Such experiences carry a burden and a responsibility- the load due to the loss of home and hearth and accountability due to expressing them uncontroversially. The final decade of British colonization witnessed a decline in Hindu-Muslim relationships, with the rising demand for Pakistan growing more intense. This paper attempts to analyse marginalised groups' psyches and comprehend the ruins of civilizational values. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is set in that period of History when communal riots spread all over the country and divided it into two parts. The novel depicts how the peaceful life changed into a nightmare. It describes the plight of helpless Muslims forced to migrate to a land that was not theirs. The novelist has discussed the meaning and significance of home. What happens when you are asked to leave not only your home but also your motherland?

**Bio-Note:** Poonam Charan is anAssistant Professor (English) at the Government Dungar College, Bikaner.

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**6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. IST : Valedictory Session**

**Chair: Professor Malashri Lal**

**Valedictory Address: Professor Vinay Dharwadker, “Mechanisms of Marginalisation: Indian Literatures in Local and Global Frames Today”**

**Chair's bio:**

**Malashri Lal**, Professor in the English Department (retd), and Former Dean, University of Delhi, has authored and edited sixteen books. including the most recent, co-authored with Namita Gokhale, *Betrayed by Hope: A Play on the Life of Michael Madhusudan Dutt* (2020). Earlier her popular books have been *The Law of the Threshold: Women Writers in Indian English* (IIAS, Shimla, 1995,2000), *In Search of Sita: Revisiting Mythology* (2009,2018), *Tagore and the Feminine: A Journey in Translations* (2015) and *Finding Radha: The Quest for Love* (2019). Her specialization is in literature, women and gender studies. She received research fellowships at Harvard University, Bellagio, and Newcastle. She has been a Senior Consultant to the Ministry of Culture, and member of international book award juries including the Commonwealth Writers Prize, London. Malashri Lal is currently Member, General Council, and Convener of the English Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi (Govt of India). She serves on the advisory boards of journals including *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (UK) and *Gitanjali and Beyond* (Edinburgh). (<http://malashrilal.com/>)

#### Speaker's bio:

Vinay Dharwadker is Professor of English, World Literature, and South Asian Studies in the Department of English, University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA. His early publications include *The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* (edited with A. K. Ramanujan, 1994) as well as A. K. Ramanujan's *Collected Poems* (co-editor, 1995) and *Collected Essays* (general editor, 1999), all from Oxford University Press. Among his other books are *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture* (editor; Routledge, 2001) and *Kabir: The Weaver's Songs* (translator; Penguin Classics, 2003). He served as the South Asia editor of *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, 3rd edition, 6 volumes (2012; editorial consultant, 4th edition, 2018). His book-length translations include *Mohan Rakesh: One Day in the Season of Rain* (Hindi; co-translated with Aparna Dharwadker; Penguin, 2015), and *Kalidasa: Abhijnana-shakuntalam, The Recognition of Shakuntala* (Sanskrit; Penguin, 2016). His scholarly essays have appeared in various collections on South Asia, postcolonialism, modernism, literary theory, translation studies, world literature, and cosmopolitanism; and in journals such as *Critical Inquiry* (1992), *Comparative Literature Studies* (2002), and *PMLA* (2012, 2016). He is a founding editor of the new *Oxford History of Poetry in English*, 13 volumes (forthcoming), and editor of its two volumes on Anglophone poetry other than British and American.

#### ABSTRACT

If we take the long view—the very long view—of literary cultures in history, it seems obvious that the processes of marginalization are driven by binary oppositions between centre and periphery, (urban) city and (agrarian) countryside, imperial metropolis and provincial colony that arise outside and prior to the formations of literature. But do literary texts, genres, and ensembles merely re-enact asymmetrical distributions of power that have been established already by social,



economic, political, geographical, and demographic configurations, or do textual dynamics actually provide some of the primary means to actively constitute those symmetries? I will re-examine this familiar problem in “the archeology of knowledge” by focusing on three large-scale contradictions that confront us on three distinct levels in the interactive, multilingual webwork of Indian literatures over long periods of history. (1) In Indian-language modernisms, which, by definition, are—or ought to be—driven by a concerted “search for modernity,” why does *anti*-modernism predominate in relation to gender and sexuality, leading, for example, to the marginalization of major women modernists in canons that still remain unshakably masculinist?

Can we pinpoint specific mechanisms in textuality, hermeneutics, translation, and aesthetic representation that perpetuate this status quo in literary spheres spread across regional, national, and international frames of reference? (2) In a framework defined by a constitutional democracy in a sovereign nation-state today, what mechanisms still tether a national literary sphere to an epic but pastoral past that fundamentally contradicts the modernity of an inclusive republic under international law and universal human rights? Is there an identifiable textual dynamics that actually propels the processes of exclusion, marginalization, and permanent exile in the social, economic, and political spheres, rather than the other way around? (3) In Immanuel Kant’s ideal of “the cosmopolitan order of nations” structured by the philosophical principles of sovereignty and hospitality, why do the mechanisms of representation in world literature—whether linguistic or interpretive, in a multilingual field or in a field homogenized by translation into a single *lingua franca*—continue to contradict the cultural “equality” promised by these principles? Can we isolate a set of literary mechanisms that still reproduce the unequal relations consolidated by Orientalism, imperialism, and colonization on a global scale during middle modernity? My interdisciplinary speculations here will explore these and related questions concisely with three sets of concrete examples: (a) the prolonged marginalization of two exceptional women poets in Indian postcolonial modernisms—Indira Sant in Marathi and Amrita Pritam in Panjabi; (b) the Euro-American controversy in 2022 over a scholarly English translation of a particular Sanskrit passage in the second *sarga* at the very beginning of the Valmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*; and (c) a recent reconsideration of Indian literatures in the context of Max Weber’s early-twentieth-century theory of modernity and its offshoots in the Jamaican–Indian sociologist Krishan Kumar’s current theory of modernization, which continue to cast long shadows on developmental economics, and still divide our world into the mutually exclusive boxes of developed, developing, and underdeveloped nations today. Which specific mechanisms in the textures and intertextures of literary formations can we use to reverse these operations of marginalization that surface in local and global frames of reference, from the ancient period to the present?

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