

*Jaclals*

(Association for Commonwealth Literature and  
Language Studies in India)

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

on

**TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND HEALING:  
REPRESENTATIONS IN SOUTH ASIAN  
LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

**20-22 February 2025**

Hosted by the

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

**BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus**

**Booklet Prepared by**

Ayesha Femin N.K.

Shivangi Nautiyal

Ambika M.S.

Dhananjay Rajendran

Krishnanunni Hari

**Designed by**

Hrittika Bhowmick

**Technical Assistance**

Taanvi Dande



## Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani

Pilani | Dubai | Goa | Hyderabad | Mumbai

Prof V Ramgopal Rao, Ph.D.,  
Fellow of IEEE, TWAS, INAE, INSA, IASc, NASI  
Former Director (2016-2021), IIT Delhi  
J. C. Bose National Fellow  
Vice-Chancellor & Senior Professor

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### Message

I'm delighted that a BITS Pilani campus is once again hosting the IACLALS annual conference. After the successful 2024 edition at the Goa campus, it's now Hyderabad's turn to welcome scholars, students, and faculty from across India and beyond. As an institution with a strong multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary presence, hosting such events reinforces our commitment to academic dialogue and intellectual exchange.

In an era where AI is rapidly transforming the landscape of software and technology, it's more important than ever to recognize the vital role of the humanities—especially literature—in deepening our understanding of human thought and emotion. While technology continues to evolve, the nuanced complexities of human experience remain a realm where the humanities excel. I'm glad that the HSS Departments across BITS institutions take this responsibility seriously, ensuring that technological and scientific advancements are guided by critical, socially, and culturally responsible perspectives.

I extend my best wishes to the HSS Department of BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus for organizing this prestigious conference. May all participants and attendees have a stimulating and thought-provoking experience!

Warm Regards,



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Rajasthan, India

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# Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani

## Hyderabad Campus

**Prof. Soumyo Mukherji**

Director

*On lien from Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, IIT Bombay*



I am delighted that the Department of HSS at BITS Hyderabad Campus is hosting the IACLALS annual conference. The IACLALS conference is a marquee event in language and literature studies in India. Ours is a developing department that has diverse disciplinary expertise which is growing in popularity as it hosts important conferences on social and cultural issues. Hosting the IACLALS conference will undoubtedly boost the department's visibility and outreach.

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

*"To a Skylark" by Percy Bysshe Shelley*

For a long time, poets, songwriters and philosophers have realized that the best of literature is born out of conflict (external or internal). The experience of such trauma and the healing process brings about words which are the most evocative and soulful. The theme of this conference, “Trauma, Resilience and Healing” especially resonates with us all.

I am sure that this conference will bring about exciting presentations that give rise to stimulating conversations, towards understanding the representation of human thought and expression in South Asia. I wish all the participants the very best.

	<b>Birla Institute of Technology &amp; Science, Pilani</b> Hyderabad Campus  Jawahar Nagar, Kapra Mandal Medchal-Malkajgiri Dist., Hyderabad 500078 Telangana, India	<b>Tel:</b> +91 40 6630 3801  <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:director@hyderabad.bits-pilani.ac.in">director@hyderabad.bits-pilani.ac.in</a> <b>Web:</b> <a href="http://www.bits-pilani.ac.in/hyderabad">http://www.bits-pilani.ac.in/hyderabad</a>
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## Message From The Chair, Association For Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies In India (IACLALS)

February 16, 2025

### CHAIRPERSON

M ASADUDDIN

(Formerly) Professor of English

Jamia Millia Islamia

New Delhi – 110025

[asad0468@gmail.com](mailto:asad0468@gmail.com)

### VICE CHAIRPERSON

SWATI PAL

Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi  
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### SECRETARY

FATIMA RIZVI

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KALYANEE RAJAN

Assistant Professor  
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### FORMER CHAIRS

C. D. Narasimhaiah

Meenakshi Mukherjee

Harish Trivedi

GJV Prasad

We, at the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies in India (IACLALS), are delighted that the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad is collaborating with us for holding our annual conference on the theme, **TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND HEALING: REPRESENTATIONS IN SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE**, during February 20-22, 2025. The theme is extremely relevant to the contemporary world and has special resonances for South Asia. IACLALS brings together scholars and faculties from all over the country in its conferences, for dialogues, discussions, and presenting papers, all of which contribute substantially to the academic climate of the country. Holding this conference in a premier technological institution like BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad will give the participants a unique opportunity to see and explore meeting grounds between humanities, science, and technology and develop interdisciplinary perspectives. In the digital age when boundaries are blurred between disciplines of knowledge, participants in this conference will be exposed to multiple perspectives from different branches of knowledge and gain a holistic understanding of the issues foregrounded in the general theme.

I wish the conference a resounding success.

(Professor M Asaduddin)  
Chair, IACLALS

## CURRENT OFFICE BEARERS OF IACLALS

### Chairperson:

#### **Prof. M. Asaduddin**

Former Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Languages,  
Former Professor, Department of English,  
Faculty of Humanities and Languages,  
Jamia Millia Islamia.

### Secretary:

#### **Prof. Fatima Rizvi**

Professor  
Department of English and Modern European  
Languages  
University of Lucknow

### Zonal Representatives:

#### **East Zone**

##### **Prof. Debashree Dattaray**

Professor  
Department of Comparative Literature  
Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

#### **West Zone:**

##### **Dr. Amitendu Bhattacharya**

Associate Professor of English Literary Studies,  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani –  
Goa Campus.

### Vice Chair:

#### **Prof. Swati Pal**

Principal  
Janki Devi Memorial College,  
University of Delhi

### Treasurer:

#### **Dr. Kalyanee Rajan**

Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College  
(University of Delhi)

### North East Zone:

#### **Dr. Dhurjjati Sarma**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary  
Studies,  
Gauhati University, Assam.

### South Zone:

#### **Prof. M. Shobha**

Professor and Head, Department of English,  
Bangalore University, Karnataka.

### Central Zone:

#### **Dr. Priyanka Tripathi**

Associate Professor of English  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
Indian Institute of Technology Patna, Bihar.

## **Conference Organizing Committee: Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Conference Convenor  
and HoD:**

Dr. Shilpaa Anand

**Conference Coordinator:**

Dr. Tony Sebastian

**Advisor:**

Prof. T. Vijay Kumar

### **FACULTY**

**Accommodation:**

Hostels: Dr. Maya Vinai, Dr. Shakul Tiwari  
Cosy Inn: Dr. Ufaque Paiker, Dr. Bidisha Banerjee  
Brindavan Inn: Dr. Tony Sebastian, Dr. Krishnanunni Hari  
Celebrity Resorts: Dr Sarbani Banerjee, Aleena Khan  
Transport: Dr Shakul Tewari, Dr. Krishnanunni Hari, Dr Sarbani Banerjee  
Communication: Aleena Khan, Dr. Madhavi Jha,  
Hospitality: Dr. Debajit Bora  
Registration: Dr. Madhavi Jha, Dr. Madhushree Chakrabarty,  
Dr. Spandan Bhattacharya, Dr. Debajit Bora, Dr. Aruna Lolla,  
Dr. Harsh Mittal and Dr. A.K. Jayesh

### **POINTS OF ENQUIRY FOR THE DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE**

Dr. Krishnanunni Hari (Day 1 FN)  
Dr. Lavanya Suresh (Day 1 AN)  
Dr. Ufaque Paiker (Day 2 FN)  
Dr. Spandan Bhattacharya (Day 2 AN)  
Dr. Pranesh Bhargava, Dr. Kunaljeet Roy (Day 1 FN)

### **RESEARCH SCHOLARS**

**Accommodation:**

Hostels: Gandhi: Neeraj Umesh; Ganga: Ponnappalli Siri Varshini,  
Apurba Raychoudhary  
Cosy Inn: Chhaya Verma; Mithuna S M  
Celebrity: Muthyalu Ashwini; Ati Srilekha



Brindavan: Cheriyaachan B Mattam; Adrija Sengupta

**Registration and  
book of abstracts:**

Aysa Femin; Amreen Moideen; Shivangi Nautiyal; Ambika M S;  
Dhananjay Rajendran; Nandana R.;

Design: Hrittika Bhowmick

Banners, Standees: Amrit Amlan Pattanaik; Neeraj Umesh; Hrittika Bhowmick;  
Dhananjay Rajendran

Communication: Purba Barua

Hospitality: Rohit Jha; Archita Mazumdar; Ponnappalli Siri Varshini;  
Vineet Rajeev Sharma

**Venue in-charge:**

Day 1: Amrit Amlan Pattanaik; Archita Mazumdar; Lakshmi;  
Athulya; Dhananjay; Anusreeta

Day 2: Jinal; Archita Mazumdar; Adrija; Hrittika Bhowmick; Saritha;  
Aala Divija Vaishnavi; Ponnappalli Siri Varshini; Chhaya; Purba;  
Vineet; Neha; Srilekha; Ashwini

Day 3: Aysa Femin; Shivangi Nautiyal; Ambika M.S.;  
Amreen Moideen; Sandipan Sen; Shiva Rajwar; Sachendra;  
Apurba Raychoudhary; Amrit Amlan Pattanaik; Anna Varghese;  
Maloth Kartheek; Mir Insha Ali

## CONFERENCE CONCEPT NOTE

Globally, all cataclysmic events have resulted in corresponding archives of expressive resources, including oral narratives, writings, and performing and visual arts, which memorialize responses of those who have experienced, or, are experiencing ordeals laterally, or at first-hand. The South Asian region, owing to its history of commonwealth belonging and decolonization, and its global south categorization, has witnessed, over the years, historical and political crises, economic and ecological disruptions, cultural and sociological disturbances, that present grand patterns of trauma. These have shaped or reshaped histories of belonging, hybridized, or recreated identities or brought them under contestation, and led to conditions wherein people find themselves in perpetual flux. Significantly, this region has also witnessed instances of peoples' resilience, the coming into play of forces of healing, at times in most unexpected ways, from unanticipated quarters. The history of the South-Asian region, in other words, constitutes histories of peoples' struggles, and their dealing with crises, whether as resistance or protest, as forgetting and moving on, as continually learning and resiliently adapting to them, or as coping and healing, in spite of them.

Trauma, a key term in psychoanalytic approaches to literary study, has garnered significant interest, with broad applicability to individuals, cultures, and nations. All aspects of traumatic experiences, in their individual and collective dimensions, emphasize the role of peoples' resilience, overcoming crises, and moving on. Furthermore, memory plays a significant role in both falling into trauma and overcoming it. Both trauma and memory are, by nature, in their multifarious manifestations, psychological, social, historical, cultural, philosophical, religious, economic, and political. Artistic representations and memorialisation of trauma constitute acts of resistance, that despite recalling the scarring memories of violence and hurt, highlight the need for healing and rejuvenate the collective consciousness of a community, thereby emphasizing efforts toward resilience. Memory also acts as a safeguard against attempts to silence voices of transgression, and dissidence and is, in turn, often implicated in that silencing.

It is important to locate and understand the manifold ways in which traumatic memories of violence and resistance have led to resilience; how their narrativization and depiction in literature, film, theatre, art, and other cultural forms transforms the experiences into aestheticized expressions, thereby accruing layers of meaning and significance.

Examining the intricate interplay that exists between these realms and/or in the interstices between them, reveals how literary and cultural media not only preserve and reshape personal and collective memory but also serve as powerful acts of resistance and the silencing of traumatic histories and/or experiences.

What do these multimodal representations tell us about peoples' experiences and struggles? How does artistic self-expression relate to trauma, survival, resilience, and healing? How do they affect audiences? How do minor artistic expressions of trauma and resilience compare with dominant narratives? This conference seeks to address the above and related issues through readings of oral narratives, literature, performance, art, and sculpture.

It seeks to highlight ways in which archives may reflect or resist personal and/or collective memory and identity and the larger politics of preservation and documentation. It seeks to contribute to the fields of trauma, culture, and memory studies by fostering a rich, interdisciplinary dialogue that will challenge and expand perceptions of the past, present, and future.

**Sub-themes:**

1. Theorizing narratives, methodologies and representations: sources, sites, retelling, censorship, and contestation
2. Representations/ways of healing, therapeutics, caregiving and/or catharsis
3. Pandemic and post-pandemic illness and everyday trauma
4. Memorializing trauma: Individual and collective memories; Counter-memories and counter-narratives
5. Representations of resistance, agitation, and collaboration
6. Bearing witness: perpetrators, collaborators, spies, survivors and bystanders
7. Aphasia, amnesia, and trauma: memories of territorial occupation
8. War, atrocities, genocide, ethnic cleansing
9. Digitizing trauma, resilience, and memory
10. Trauma and its relation to precarity
11. Navigating legacies of colonialism, displacement, cultural erasure, and resistance
12. Memory activism and politics of remembrance and forgetting

13. Resilience, neuro-plasticity, and coping
14. Trans-cultural/ trans-national/ trans-generational expressions of casteist, sexist, racist and ableist trauma
15. Archives and narratives of migrant trauma
16. Ecological disasters and trauma
17. Role of language and translation in expressing and memorializing trauma, resilience, memory and healing

# IACLALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

February 20-22, 2025

**BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus**

## **PROGRAMME SCHEDULE**

*Day 1: 20th Feb., 2025*

**9:00 am to 9:45 am    Inaugural Session (F101)**

- Welcome Address: Shilpaa Anand, Conference Convenor & Head, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus
- Introduction to IACLALS: Swati Pal, Vice-Chair, IACLALS
- Opening Remarks on the Theme of the Conference: M Asaduddin, Chairperson, IACLALS
- Chief Guest's Address: Soumyo Mukherji, Director, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus
- Vote of Thanks: Tony Sebastian, Conference Coordinator, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

**9:45 to 10:30 am    Keynote Session (F101) (PLENARY)**

Keynote Address: Radhika Mohanram

*Title: "Complexifying Trauma Theory"*

**Chair: M Asaduddin**

**10:30 to 11:00 am    Tea**

**11 am to 12:00 pm    Parallel Session 1**

**11 am to 12:00 pm    Session 1.1: Trauma and the Question of Genre (F 101)**

**Chair: Swati Pal**

*Archival Bildungsromane: Twisted Family Histories, Nostalgia, and the Partition*

**Sharmista Sen Gupta**

*Fragmented Memories and National Identity in Fikr Taunsvi's The Sixth River Through the Lens of Trauma Studies*

**Nahid Sana Khan**

- 11 am to 12:00 pm      Session 1.2: Growing Up with Trauma 1 (F103)**  
**Chair: M.G. Prasuna**  
*Child Trauma and Pain: A Comparative Study of The Kite Runner and A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini*  
**Mohd. Ishaq Ahmed**  
*Children wandering far from home: Trauma, Gender and Resilience in Children's Literature featuring Rohingyas*  
**Arpita Sen**  
*Farah Bashir's Rumours of Spring: Girlhood at Siege*  
**Nidhi Kalra** [online]
- 11 am to 12:00 pm      Session 1.3: Trauma and Historiography (F106)**  
**Chair: A Giridhar Rao**  
*Railways and the (dis)-integration of SouthEast Asia in the aftermath of WWII*  
**Eirini Anastasiadou**  
*Suppressed Histories: DeCentreing the Empire and Colonial Historiography in Girish Karnad's The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*  
**Anita Abraham**  
*Matter, Memory and Cognition: A Material Historiography of the 1947 Partition*  
**Swatee Sinha**
- 12:00 to 1:00 pm      Parallel Session 2**  
**12:00 to 1:00 pm      Session 2.1: Objects of Trauma (F 101)**  
**Chair: Fatima Rizvi**  
*My Fridge Asked My Toe To Apologize: Affect Density in Non-Human Entities in Eka Kurniawan's Kitchen Curse Stories*  
**Angadbir Singh Kakkar**  
*The Immaterial Body and Material Endurance of Trauma in Feroz Rather's The Night of Broken Glass*  
**Deepanwita Dey**  
*Museum Representation and Visitor Perception of Trauma: An Analysis of the Representation of Women in the Partition Museums in Amritsar and Delhi*

**Suchandrima Das**

**12:00 to 1:00 pm**

**Session 2.2: Healing Trauma (F103)**

**Chair: Debashree Dattaray**

*Threads of Resistance: Memory Activism and Healing through Textile Arts in Post-Partition South Asia*

**Nithyasree Narayanan**

*Ideology As Antidote: Reconfiguration of Identity as A Healing Mechanism In Tahmima Anam's A Golden Age And The Good Muslim*

**Jayasree Mukherjee**

**12:00 to 1:00 pm**

**Session 2.3: Encounters with the Urban (F106)**

**Chair: Kunaljeet Roy**

*From Bhim Bhajan Mala to Dalit Rap: Remembering and Resisting Caste in the Hindi Public Sphere*

**Kuntal Tamang**

*Struggling in and for the city: Narratives of pandemic migration and trauma of displacement*

**Mohua Dutta**

*Still Louder than a Thousand Words? Trauma, Memory, New Media, and the Polo Grounds of Hyderabad*

**Nazia Akhtar [online]**

**1:00 to 2:00 pm:**

**Lunch**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

**Parallel Session 3**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

**Session 3.1: Visualising Trauma (F101)**

**Chair: Lavanya Suresh**

*Partition Trauma: A Depiction through Visual Art*

**Shubhangi Shrinivas Rao**

*Memory and Trauma: Picture Books and Portraits of Tibetan Exile*

**Shweta Sharma**

*Unaddressed Postcards: Looking at Tarun Bhartiya's  
Niam/Faith/Hynñiewtrep as a Curation of Colonialism,  
Christianity, Faith, and the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya*

**Sweta Kumar Gaur**

*Musings of Jhelum: Examining the Role of Popular Culture, War,  
and Collective Trauma in Shaping Kashmir's Cultural Memory*

**Aimun Bilal**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

***Session 3.2: Violence and Storytelling (F103)***

***Chair: Maya Vinai***

*'Disenchanted Tales from the Old Home in Qissa: A Tale of a  
Lonely Ghost*

**Sushmita Banerji**

*Memorializing Trauma: Reading Select Partition Memoirs &  
'Memorials'*

**Anjali Daimari**

*How to Kill a Writer: The Interplay between Art, Society, and  
Trauma in Salman Rushdie's Knife: Meditations after an Attempted  
Murder*

**Seetha Vijayakumar** [online]

*A Visual 'Storying' of the Partition of 1947*

**Sakshi Wason** [online]

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

***Session 3.3: Counternarratives: Trauma and Resistance (F106)***

***Chair: Bidisha Banerjee***

*On Reminding and Remaining: The Play of Dichotomies in Shehan  
Karunatilaka's The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*

**Kavya Mitchi D.**

*Memory and Trauma: A Study of Counter-Narratives and Activism  
in Select Dalit Writings*

**Shibangi Dash**

*Intertextuality as Resistance: Unpacking Agha Shahid Ali's The  
Country Without a Post Office (1997)*

**Mutqeen Khan and Raafi Ul Islam**



*'An Odd Museum of Ideas': Representation of Resistance in The White Tiger*

**Jaya Sarkar**

**3:15 to 3:30 pm**

**Tea**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

**Parallel Session 4**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

**Session 4.1: Film and Trauma (F101)**

**Chair: Spandan Bhattacharya**

*A Transgenerational Trauma and Resilience on the Indian Screen: A Study of Nationalism and Patriotism from Memory Studies Perspective*

**D. Sudha Rani**

*Documenting the Afterlife of Trauma*

**Sanjukta Naskar**

*The Story of a Film and a Subcontinent: Jago Hua Savera and its Memorialisation of Conflict and Resilience*

**Dhurjjati Sarma**

*Echoes of Silence: Cinematic Representation of Legal Trauma in Chaitanya Tamhane's Court*

**Kalplata**

*The Illusion of Healing: Romanticising Trauma and Emotional Bondage in Rockstar and Aashiqui 2*

**Mousumi Biswal** [online]

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

**Session 4.2: Inheriting Trauma (Library Hall)**

**Chair: Madhushree Chakrabarty**

*Ineffable complexities in the reconstruction of human rights violation: a study of the corporeal-verbal language in Mauricio Pešutić's The Barking of the Butterflies*

**Surendra Singh Negi**

*Experiences of 'Coolitude': Literary Recollections of Colonial Spectres*

**Khushi Atolia and Sarthak Dogra**

*Intergenerational Trauma and struggle for Agency in Independence*

**N Usha**

*Generational Trauma and the Split-Subject in Yashica Dutt's Coming Out as Dalit*

**Diksha Beniwal**

*A Home Divided: Narrativizing Partition Trauma, Migration and Displacement in M. S. Sathya's Garam Hava*

**Ayesha Irfan**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

***Session 4.3: Memory and Post-memory (F106)***

***Chair: Senath Walter Perera***

*Feminist Poetics of Remembrance: Reading Gender and Postmemory in South Asian Conflicts*

**Hibasamad A P**

*Narrating Public Trauma: A Study of Han Kang's Human Acts*

**Shobha M**

*Between Precarity and Placation: Ethics of Remembrance in Sri Lankan Diasporic Fiction*

**Meenu Chaudhary**

*Memory as Events of Unforgetting in Dayamoyee Katha*

**Katha Bhattacharjee**

*Memory and the Post-Apocalyptic World: Encountering History as its Spectral 'Other'*

**Indrani Das Gupta** [online]

**5:15 to 5:50 pm**

***Book Launch Session (F101) (PLENARY)***

***Chair: Swati Pal***

**6:00 to 7:30 pm**

***Cultural Event***

**7:30 to 9:00 pm**

***Dinner***

**----- END OF DAY 1-----**

**DAY 2: 21 Feb. 2025**

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

***Parallel Session 1***

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Session 5.1: Telling Trauma (G204A)**

**Chair: Krishnanunni Hari**

*From fable to Film: Rethinking Cultural Trauma and Violence in Kothanodi*

**Maitrayee Sarma**

*When Mirrors are Windows: Understanding Oppari as Women's Verbal Art*

**Divya Sharma**

*Women, Victimization, and Resilience: A Study of Select Indian Folktales*

**Rajkumar Singh**

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Session 5.2: Witnessing (F206)**

**Chair: Brati Biswas**

*“To See or Not to See”: The Politics of Documenting and Witnessing Violence on Screen*

**Haritha P**

*Creating a Witness: Negotiating Trauma through Cinema*  
*Saba Mahmood Bashir*

*Bearing Witness: Articulating Incarceration of Death Row Prisoners in India*

**Harishma Hari K**

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Session 5.3: Caste in Trauma (Library Hall)**

**Chair: Madhavi Jha**

*The Role of Dalit Autobiography in Memorializing Caste-based Trauma and Fostering Dalit Consciousness: A Close Reading of Om Prakash Valmiki's Joothan - A Dalit's Life*

**Amarjeet Nayak**

*Caste, Moustache, and Resilience through Moustache: A Novel*  
**Ved Prakash**

*A View from the Margins: Caste and/in Bengal Partition*

**Anandita Pan and Sreenath V S**

**10:00 to 11:00 am**     **MMM Prize Session (G204A) (PLENARY)**

**Chair: Swati Pal & Shobha M**

*MMM Prize 2025 winner A. K. Muneer in conversation with Shobha M*

**11:00 to 11:15 am**     **Tea**

**11:15 to 1:00 pm**     **Parallel Session 2**

**11:15 to 1:00 pm**     **Session 6.1: Language Politics and Pedagogy (G204A)**

**Chair: Ufaque Paiker**

*The Trauma of Linguistic Genocide: Language Policy and Practice in India*

**A Giridhar Rao**

*Human Rights in the Realm of an Interplay between Inheritance and Learning of Languages in India*

**Mehar Fatima**

*Remembering and Forgetting: Bilingual Processing of the Trauma of Partition in Qurratulain Hyder's Self-Translation of Aag Ka Darya*

**Mohd. Aqib**

*Bhakti Beyond Religion: Fostering Hope Through Translation and Performance*

**Nitya Pawar**

**11:15 to 1:00 pm**     **Session 6.2: Growing Up with Trauma 2 (F206)**

**Chair: Asmat Jahan**

*"Her listless eyes": Narrativising Developmental Trauma of the 'child-women' in Ismat Chughtai's select short stories*

**Kalyanee Rajan**

*Children in the Sri Lankan Civil War: Reading Trauma, Resilience and Agency through Cultural Representation*

**Anu Susan Abraham**

*Reclaiming the Quotidian Supernatural: Disability, Trauma, and Childhood in Lila Majumdar's Children's Fiction*

**Bidyabrata Majumdar**

*Writing Trauma and Role of Gender and Culture in Trafficking Narratives: A Comparative Study of Patricia McCormick's Sold and Corban Addison's A Walk Across the Sun*

**Sheetal Kumari**

**11:15 to 1:00 pm**

**Session 6.3: Memorialising Trauma (Library Hall)**

**Chair: Dhurjjati Sarma**

*Female Sexuality, Trauma and Internalized Longing: Discovering Unspoken Dimensions in Early Indian Literary Discourse*

**Hemasoundari R**

*Navigating legacies of Colonialism, Displacement and Cultural Negotiation: A Study of Sikh Periodicals (1900-1920) and Framing of Modern Sikh identity*

**Guntasha Kaur Tulsi**

*Notes Towards Understanding Partition Trauma through Personal Memories: A Case of Lala Dhani Ram Bhalla*

**Girija Suri**

**1:00 to 2:00 pm**

**Lunch**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

**Parallel Session 3**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

**Session 7.1: Staging Trauma (G204A)**

**Chair: Debajit Bora**

*Remembering Pain Through the Body: A Study of Heisnam Kanhailal's Theatre*

**Adhyeta Mishra**

*Staging Partition: Memory, Trauma, and Healing in Asghar Wajahat's Jis Lahore Nai Dekhya, O Jamiy Nai*

**Aneesaa Choubey**

*Silent Scars: The Invisible Psychosocial battles in Dramatic Narratives*

*Hitaishi Chauhan*

*Traumas that Don't Heal*

**Chitra Panikkar**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

**Session 7.2: Traumatic Violations (F206)**

**Chair: Radhika Mohanram**

*Where is my Country? Abduction, Dislocation and Belonging in Razai Butt's Baano*

**Asmat Jahan**

*The trauma of (Marital) rape: Writing as resistance and healing in Meena Kandasamy's When I Hit You*

**Pratusha Bhowmik**

*'En Route to Bangladesh': Traumatic Memory and Violence in the Conflicting Narratives of 'Birangonas' in Tarfia Faizullah's Seam*

**Srijeeta Adhikary**

*The Un-talked Trauma: The Legal, Social, and Cultural Trauma of Marital Rape and its Resistance*

**Pritha Sarkar**

**2:00 to 3:15 pm**

**Session 7.3: Consuming Trauma (Library Hall)**

**Chair: Debashree Dattaray**

*Postpartum Food and Food Practises in Mappila Muslim Culture: The Formation of a Knowledge System from a Women's Space*

**Aysha Femin N K and Khadeeja Ramziya**

*Food, Ritual, and Power: Domesticity and the Dynamics of Resistance in Marginalised Spaces*

**Rituparna Mondal**

*Culinary Memory as Resistance: Interplay of trauma and resilience through Gastronomic Identity in Esther David's The Book of Rachel*

**Tanya Sharma**

*Echoes of the past: Sensory Experiences of Trauma and Resilience in The God of Small Things and Burnt Shadows*

**Lekshmi B**

**3:15 to 3:30 pm**

**Tea**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

**Parallel Session 4**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

**Session 8.1: Displacement and Trauma (G204A)**

**Chair: Ayesha Irfan**

*Migration, Trauma and Women in Khadija Mastur's Partition Novel Āngan*

**Piyush Raval**

*Narration of Trauma, Terror and Memory in Sarojkumar Roychoudhury's "Neel Agun" and Hassan Azizul Haq's "Agun Pakhi"*

**Sayak Moitra**

*"Bade Bade Deshon Mein Aisi Choti Choti Baatein Hoti Rehti Hai" – Exploring Inter-Generational Anxieties and Apprehensions of the Indian Diaspora in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*

**Daisy Ramchiary**

*Enduring Statelessness: Rohingya Poetry and the Journey from Repression to Resistance*

**Anamika Sukul [online]**

*Decolonizing Through Design: Diasporic Fashion as a Bridge Between Western Forms and Indian Identity*

**Gurpreet Kaur [online]**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

**Session 8.2: Engendering Trauma (F206)**

**Chair: Senath Walter Perera**

*Fragmented Flesh: Manto's Women and the Grievous Survival in Partition's Shadows*

**Suneeta Chura**

*Fexile: Mapping Portrayals of Women in Exile*

**Kathryn Hummel**

*"All wars are essentially wars against women": Trauma, Violence and the Female Body in TD Ramakrishnan's Sugandhi Alias Andal Devanayaki*

**Lakshmi Menon**

*Unpacking Gendered Trauma in Jean Sasson's For the Love of a Son*

**Sindhu J**

*Loneliness, Trauma and Old Age: A Study of Pankaj Kapoor's Dopehri*

**Saurav Kumar**

**3:30 to 5:15 pm**

***Session 8.3: Ecologies of Trauma (Library Hall)***

***Chair: N. Usha***

*Tracing the Trajectory of Trauma Recovery: Artistic Responses in the Aftermath of Kerala's Ecological Disasters*

**Anne Joseph**

*Changing environments, altering livelihoods: Re-imagining 'collective memory' and 'cultural ecology' through selected novels*

**Sayan Mazumder**

*Trauma in the Wake of Ecological Crises: Memory and Representation in Uttarakhand's Environmental Disaster(s)*

**Shivangi Nautiyal**

*Available to be Wasted: Toxic Topographies, Eco-trauma, and Ecoprecarity in Ambikasan Mangad's Swarga*

**Paromita Patranobish**

*From Trauma to Resilience: Militant Pessimism in Healing Environmental Crises in Select Anglophone Indian Dystopias*

**Argha Basu**

**5:30 to 6:00 pm**

***Poetry Reading Session (G204A) (PLENARY)***

***Chair: Kalyanee Rajan***

**6:00 to 7:30**

***Cultural event***

**7:30 to 9:00**

***Dinner***

**----- END OF DAY 2-----**

**Day 3, 22 Feb. 2025**



**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Parallel Session 1**

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Session 9.1: Conflict and Trauma (F101)**

**Chair: Chitra Panikkar**

*War Trauma and Secondary Trauma in the novels of Anuk Arudpragasam*

**Sowmya A**

*Exploring Trauma in the Complex Interplay of Colonialism, Race, and War in Mulk Raj Anand's Across the Black Waters*

**Ravi Kant [online]**

*Exploring the Intersection of Trauma and Testimony in Nadia Murad's Memoir: A Brief Study*

**Shivangi [online]**

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Session 9.2: Illustrating Trauma 1 (G204A)**

**Chair: Amitendu Bhattacharya**

*Vanni: Graphic Narratives and Memorialisation of Trauma*

**Manish Solanki**

*Reimagining Partition through Graphic Narratives in This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition*

**Barnali Saha**

*Engaging with Traumata: Reading the Fluid Texts and Images of Sharanya Manivannan*

**Ambika M S**

**9:00 to 10:00 am**

**Session 9.3: Emplacing Trauma 1 (F206)**

**Chair: Aruna Lolla**

*The Religious and the Mythical in processing Collective Trauma: An Enquiry into Shehan Karunatilaka's Chats with the Dead*

**Swathimuthu K B**

*Traumatic Imagination as a Site of Healing and Counter-Memory in Shehan Karunatilaka's The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*

**Vagesh Nandini**

*Caught between Assimilation and Alienation: Mahasweta Devi's "Imaginary Maps" as the Fragmented Map of Belonging*

**Arijita Pradhan** [online]

**10:00 to 11:00 am**     **Parallel Session 2**

**10:00 to 11:00 am**     **Session 10.1: Digitality and Trauma (F206)**

**Chair: Suchismita Satpathy**

*Reclamation of Self-Identity in Digital Space: Narratives of the 'Other' from the Denotified Nomadic Tribes of India*

**Prathama Sarkar**

*Rebel Rebel: the Paradox of Mehta's Unintentional Terrorism in Hari Kunzru's Transmission*

**Pier Paolo Piciuccio**

*Archives to Algorithms: The Evolution of Partition Trauma and Memory in the Digital Age*

**Moumita Roy** [online]

**10:00 to 11:00 am**     **Session 10.2: Illustrating Trauma 2 (G204A)**

**Chair: Nibedita Mukherjee**

*Graphic Trauma of the Sacrificed: A Reassessment of the Ecological Others as Scapegoats of Violence in Sarnath Banerjee's Graphic Novel All Quiet in Vikaspuri (2015)*

**Arkajit Das**

*Frames of Resilience: Narratives of Violence and Traumatic Memory in Munnu and Kashmir Pending*

**Tiasa Bal**

*Political Trauma of 'powerpolis' : Reading The Graphic (Re)-Imagination Of Emergency In Vishwajyoti Ghosh's Delhi Calm*

**Sukriti Bhukkal** [online]

**10:00 to 11:00 am**     **Session 10.3: Emplacing Trauma 2 (F206)**

**Chair: Madhavi Jha**

*Dialectics of Indigeneity: fluidity, contestations and gender in the context of northeast India*

**Himalee Deka**

*Tea Garden labourers of Assam and Historical Erasure of their Trauma: A Feminist overview of Arupa Patangia Kalita's Josnar Jhitas*

**Violina Borah**

*Indira Goswami's The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker and the Assertion of Identity of the Northeastern Women*

**Anavisha Banerjee** [online]

**11:00 to 11:15 am**      **Tea**

**11:15 to 1:30 pm**      **CDN Prize Contest Session (PLENARY) (F101)**

**Chair: Fatima Rizvi and Kalyanee Rajan**

*Mapping Trauma through Social Lenses: Resilience, Resistance and Healing in Bangla Urban 'New' Songs*

**Hriya Banerjee**

*Carrying the Weight: Caste and Trauma in Atarjit's "Gilli Pand Da Bojh"*

**Pooja Duggal**

*Navigating Life and Loss on the River Ganga: Analysing Bhatiyali Songs as Econarratives of the Fishing Community of West Bengal*

**Pritha Chakraborty**

*Resilience and Neuroplasticity in the Face of Trauma: Coping Mechanisms in Future Tense: A Novel and The Collaborator*

**Roshima Uday**

*Transfiguration as a Coping Mechanism in Negotiating with Insidious Trauma*

**Sania Wahid**

**1:30 to 2:15 pm**      **Lunch**

**2:15 to 2:30 pm**      **CDN Prize 2025 Distribution (F101) (PLENARY)**

**Chair: M. Asaduddin, Fatima Rizvi, Kalyanee Rajan**

**2:30 to 3:30 pm**      **Parallel Session 3**

**2:30 to 3:30 pm**

**Session 11.1: Embodiment and Trauma (F101)**

**Chair: Shilpaa Anand**

*Illness as a Traumatic Experience: Reading Sangeetha Srinivasan's Acid*

**Shivam Kundu**

*Temporal Disruptions in Trauma and Disability in One Little Finger: A Theoretical Engagement with Robert McRuer's Crip Times*

**Manisha**

*Disability, and Caste Intersectionality: Navigating Trauma, Resilience and Healing in Satish Chander's "Thappu"*

**Brati Biswas**

**2:30 to 3:30 pm**

**Session 11.2: Locating Trauma (G204A)**

**Chair: Sindhu J**

*Understanding Social Conflict: Locating the family in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland*

**Chandrima Karmakar**

*The Pressure of the Real: A Study of Two South Asian Trauma Memoirs*

**Somya Charan Pahadi**

*Honour as Trauma: Affective Action in Shivmurti's Tiriyacharittar (1987)*

**Sanyogita Singh [online]**

**2:30 to 3:30 pm**

**Session 11.3: Trauma and the Novel form (F206)**

**Chair: Anjali Daimari**

*Bharati Mukherjee's Novels: A Journey towards Essence of Selfhood and Ethnic Identity for Womanhood*

**Mohammad Sabir**

*The Shangri-la Urge: Interwoven Depictions of Loss, Refugeeedom, Resilience and Mysticism in Contemporary Tibetan Novels*

**Priyanka D'Rozario**

*The Multifarious Strategies of Narrating Trauma in The Kite Runner*

**Abhinaba Chatterjee**

**3:30 to 3:45 pm**

**Tea**

**3:45 to 4:45 pm**

**Parallel Session 4**

**3:45 to 4:45 pm**

**Session 12.1: Faith and Resilience (F101)**

**Chair: Kalyanee Rajan**

*Cartographies of Trauma: Mapping Silences, Resilience, and Hope in Rajathi Salma's The Hour Past Midnight*

**Fatima Zaheer**

*Pits To Pedestals : Behind the Walls of Worship—Understanding Kappiri Muthappan*

**Gowri Murali**

*The Woman who Sing of Pain: Rethinking Trauma in the Goddess Myths of the Ajodhya Hills*

**Nibedita Mukherjee**

**3:45 to 4:45 pm**

**Session 12.2: Mediations of Trauma (G204A)**

**Chair: Sanjukta Naskar**

*"Bondage of Me to Me for Me": Body, Violence and Trauma in Tinna Hongngam's 'A Girl of November - A Multimedia Art Exhibit'*

**Shivangi Rani**

*Performing 'Reclamations': Resurgence of the 'Roots' in Kanhailal's Theatre*

**Subhayu Chatterjee**

*The Turn to the Fantastical: Qissa, A Tale of a Lonely Ghost as a Partition Film*

**Paulomi Chakraborty**

**3:45 to 4:45 pm**

**Session 12.3: Acts of Silence (F206)**

**Chair: Shobha M**

*Between Domestic Distress and Collective Conflict: Trauma in Daisy Hasan's The To-Let House*

**Medha Devi**

*Silhouettes of Silence: Understanding silence as a metaphor for micro-revolution in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*

**Aishiki Bandyopadhyay**

*Voice of the Silence: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Trauma in Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence*

**Shefali Kohli** [online]

**4:45 to 5:30 pm**

***Valedictory Session (F101) (PLENARY)***

***Valedictory Address: Kalpana Kannabiran***

***Title: "Justice and the Constitution-as-Commons:***

***Jurisliteratures, Courtly Theatres and Literary Convivialities"***

***Chair: T. Vijay Kumar***

***Vote of Thanks: Fatima Rizvi, Secretary, IACLALS***

***Vote of Thanks: BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus***

**5:50 to 6.10 pm**

***Annual General Meeting of IACLALS (F101) (PLENARY)***

**7:00 to 9:00 pm**

***Dinner***

**----- *END* -----**

# **Abstracts**

## **Trauma of Linguistic Genocide: Language Policy and Practice in India**

A Giridhar Rao (Faculty Member, Azim Premji University)

“Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?” — Ray Gwyn Smith

In one reckoning, India has some 800 languages and 70 scripts. For the most part this rich resource has been neglected in educational practice, thereby continuing, what Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has called “linguistic genocide”. However, from Macaulay's "Minute" in the early 19th century, through Gandhi's writings in the early 20th, to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in the 21st century – that is, in its colonial, early modern, and contemporary phases – India has imagined variously what multilingual education means in this linguistically diverse and deeply unequal country. This paper rapidly surveys some key documents in this history of colonizing and decolonizing the mind through language education. It argues that current education policy documents, such as the NCF, promise a more just, equitable, and inclusive language education. However, challenges remain of operationalizing this vision. A monolingual ideology needs to be changed in teacher education, learning materials, and multilingual classroom pedagogy and assessment. If India is to meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal of Quality Education, we will need to actively use the linguistic and cognitive resources that learners bring with them to the classroom. A key strategy will be a nuanced use of mother-tongue based multilingual education. The paper concludes with a vision of what such education might look like.

## **The Multifarious Strategies of Narrating Trauma in *The Kite Runner***

Abhinaba Chatterjee (Independent Researcher)

While contemporary discourse on trauma, as well as the literature that portrays trauma, has focused on the experiences of victim-survivors and, more recently, perpetrators, this paper would argue that the role of the bystanders is equally important in the depiction of trauma. Drawing on Judith Herman's 'Trauma and Recovery', this paper would analyse the multifarious strategies of narrating trauma in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. The paper would argue that there are several layers of traumatic narrative in *The Kite Runner* viz. personal trauma and ethnic and war traumas whereby the narrative provides a profound exploration of trauma's enduring effects on personal and national levels, emphasizing the pervasive and lasting influence of such experiences.

At another level, the paper would argue that Hosseini is able to exercise narrative authority over those instances of national trauma for which he was present as a child, namely the 1979 communist coup and resulting upheaval. Later traumas which occurred following Hosseini's emigration to the West, such as those incurred during the reign of the Taliban or the post-9/11 invasion, require an increased degree of narrative sensitivity. Hosseini's commitment to the careful depiction of Afghan history for a Western audience is never more apparent than in his rendering of Afghanistan's national trauma which is depicted as an allegory for the turmoil engulfing Afghanistan following a coup in 1973 which toppled the monarchy and precipitated decades of political uncertainty, starting with a communist takeover and the invasion of Russian forces in 1979.



Thus, this paper would argue that Hosseini's adaptation of multifarious strategies of narrating trauma in *The Kite Runner* opens up diverse vista wherein multiple perspectives are explored, forcing the reader to evaluate their actions and inactions.

**Remembering Pain Through the Body: A Study of Heisnam Kanhailal's Theatre**  
Adhyeta Mishra (Independent Researcher, Jadavpur University)

Theatre as a performance art has often served as a powerful symbol of resistance, especially for communities that have had to undergo a long history of oppression. The Indian state of Manipur is one such region which has been the hotbed of endless sectarian conflicts and remained on the receiving end of state-aided oppressive measures, for decades now. Hailing from this conflict-tormented state, Heisnam Kanhailal and his theatre group 'Kalakshetra Manipur' founded and popularized the concept of 'Theatre of the Earth' where the actors revolutionized performance by becoming the embodiment of suffering. The physical body, empowered and rejuvenated by the earth, assumes much importance in Kanhailal's theatre wherein the bodies transform into sites of remembrance, thus aiding the collective memory of the Meitei community. Much of Kanhailal's theatrics are rooted in the indigenous traditions of the Meitei community and their ancestral teachings. By using the affective and sensory knowledge of the performers, Kanhailal ventures into documenting the corporeality of oppression faced by the Meitei community of Manipur and the traumatic history of state-aided violence. My paper will attempt to study the role of the physical body in Heisnam Kanhailal's 'Theatre of the Earth' in the context of Manipur's political and sectarian feuds while attempting to locate the body as a source of agency and reclamation. By examining the unique aesthetic choices of his theatre and tracing indigenous Meitei roots, I will be studying Kanhailal's theatre as an expression of 'mnemonic imagination' wherein trauma and memories of violence are re-remembered and enacted through the body. Finally, this paper will study how remembrance can serve as an act of resistance and the role of collective memory against state-aided collective amnesia with an analysis of three of his most celebrated plays *Pebet*, *Memories of Africa* and *Draupadi*.

**Musings of Jhelum: Examining the Role of Popular Culture, War, and Collective Trauma in Shaping Kashmir's Cultural Memory**  
Aimun Bilal (Research Scholar, Christ University, Bangalore)

This paper examines the 'artistic representations and memorialisation of trauma' in popular culture, particularly focusing on select music videos - *Jhelum*, *Osh Haraan*, and *Ishq*. These music videos have been critiqued to examine the role of popular culture and media in uniting the artists and actors of Kashmir across ethnicities, depicting their collectivist struggle, and preserving their historical experiences. The paper employs the frameworks of psychoanalysis and cultural memory in deciphering the cultural understanding of conflict, both at an individualistic and collectivistic level. It further investigates the role of Cultural Studies and Memory Studies in contributing to a more nuanced understanding of conflict and war, moving beyond the frameworks of postcolonial literature and the binaries of the coloniser and the colonised. The findings reveal that popular media, particularly music, has become a vital platform for artists to

represent collective experiences and a tool of dissemination for reliving and documenting people's cultural memory and collective trauma. The music videos contribute to making historical archives, emphasising their cultural significance. The study argues that popular culture has significantly shaped the understanding of war and conflict, further leading to the assimilation of distinct culture(s) and cultural identities, uniting people by shared experiences of trauma and unifying symbols. A notable shift has been observed in the representation over time, which has led to the creative expression of trauma on both micro and macro levels. However, the politics of remembering is shaped by the meaning-making of events that hold cultural relevance and significance.

Keywords – Popular Culture; Memory; Trauma; Kashmir; War; Representation

### **Silhouettes of Silence: Understanding silence as a metaphor for micro-revolution in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things***

Aishiki Bandyopadhyay (Student, English and Foreign Languages University)

The term revolution, more often than not, is underpinned by a sense of grandiose. However, the narrative in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is shaped in a way which brings to the forefront personal acts of resistance and resilience which when viewed through a broader social lens, become symbolic and maybe interpreted as microcosm of revolution. The everyday acts of rebellion become central to the possibility of carving a socio-political change. This paper aims to concretize the idea of silence as a metaphor for revolution as painted in the novel. To characters like Ammu, Velutha, and Estha, silence becomes a way of reclaiming agency as well as a means of resisting the societal impositions along with characters like Roy, who device silence as a means of subversion and exercising autonomy. Additionally, by refusing to speak about their transgressions, characters like Ammu and Velutha resist the love laws, thus making silence pivotal even in challenging stringent laws. The narrative as well, is interspersed with silences and punctuated with significant absence of speech, leading to fragmented structure. Therefore, what is deliberately left unsaid helps in understanding nuances of the micro-revolution. In critically analysing, how silence becomes a significant metaphor in portraying micro revolution, this research interprets how silence becomes a space for alternate realities in *The God of Small Things* and in turn these imagined spaces become a form of revolution, transcending the constraints of a society that seeks to silence, suppress and control individuals in general and marginalized in particular. These micro-revolutions crystalised through silence have a ripple effect and when woven into the social fabric, become a subtle yet strong resistance with the potential to deconstruct grand narratives and dismantle oppressive social structures.

### **The Role of Dalit Autobiography in Memorializing Caste-based Trauma and Fostering Dalit Consciousness: A Close Reading of Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan: A Dalit's Life***

Amarjeet Nayak (Associate Professor, NISER, Bhubaneswar)

Through a close reading of a significant life writing by a foremost Dalit writer, this paper would like to examine the issues of representation of individual and collective trauma through the prism of caste. Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan: A Dalit's Life* (Hindi Original

1997, English translation 2003) deals with issues of subtle and overt marginalisations on the basis of caste, leading to traumatic experiences which not only subject the individual to inhuman humiliation at the moment, but also the memories of those traumatic experiences scar one for life. This paper examines the ways in which this autobiographical narrative uses individual memory of instances of childhood trauma to bring forth the larger realities of the collective humiliation and suffering of the community. While this autobiographical narrative, like any other text in this genre, is about individuals and their interaction with society at large, it is different from the mainstream upper caste autobiographies wherein it often pits the marginalized self against the powerful mainstream society, and its rigid and hierarchical norms. The paper will examine how the portrayal of village life as far from idyllic and in fact a site of violence, often resulting in deeply traumatic experiences, is a unique feature of Dalit writings such as *Joothan*. It will also be an endeavor of the paper to look at the ways in which Dalit literature, especially Dalit autobiography, memorializes trauma in not just recollecting the instances of trauma and violence, but also using the memory of that trauma to awaken the Dalit consciousness.

### **Engaging with Traumata: Reading the Fluid Texts and Images of Sharanya Manivannan**

Ambika M S (Student, BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus)

Sharanya Manivannan is a Sri Lankan-Indian versatile artist, engaging in multiple forms such as poetry, essays, short stories, novels, and illustrated books, in addition to working as a journalist. According to her biography, her work draws on “her own experiences of dislocation, abuse, and resilience” and “amalgamates deeply personal questions about identity, trauma, and longing with a feminist framework intended to impact the collective imagination about how to care for ourselves, nature, and one another” (Sharanya - Long Bio). Her graphic duology, *Incantations Over Water* and *Mermaids in the Moonlight* (a children’s book), features Ila, a mermaid narrator, who guides readers through the vast, planetary world of water and its embodiment in various cultural landscapes. In the context of Sri Lanka’s civil war and other catastrophes affecting the island, Ila becomes the voice of poetic lament, yearning and offering her ontological entanglements to her audience. Grief, defined in psychology as “the anguish experienced after a significant loss,” often includes physiological distress, separation anxiety, and apprehension about the future. By placing a half-fish, half-human mermaid at the center of the narrative, Manivannan complicates the expression of collective grief in response to both natural and cultural calamities. This paper traces her unique artistic engagement with the traumatic experiences of civil war, exploring raw emotions of grief, pain, love, sexuality, and diasporic identity from a non-human perspective. It also examines how the mysterious regional legend of the singing fish serves as a literary trope, symbolizing the many omissions and silences from the long-standing war.

References: “Sharanya Manivannan – Long Bio – Sharanya Manivannan.” Accessed May 1, 2024. <https://sharanyamanivannan.in/2024/01/15/sharanya-manivannan-long-bio/>.

## **Enduring Statelessness: Rohingya Poetry and the Journey from Repression to Resistance**

Anamika Sukul (Faculty Member, St. Stephen's College, Hyderabad)

This paper examines the migrant and refugee situation in South Asia, a region marked by historical conflicts and economic disparities that have driven significant population movements. This paper situates the Rohingya crisis within the broader South Asian context of migration and displacement, formulating a fresh theoretical perspective on their systemic persecution, statelessness, the colonial legacies, and their enduring plight of having to live as unwanted refugees in camp spaces.

The discussion is developed mainly across two dimensions: following Giorgio Agamben's theories on Foucauldian biopolitics and camp spaces, this paper contextualizes the forceful expulsion of the Rohingya community and their statelessness, along with the lived experience of the refugees centering around experiences of repression suffered; and second, it interprets how literary medium is used as a counter discourse of resistance to break through the silences. To elaborate, the first part of the study seeks to concretize how Agamben's theoretical concepts are applicable into explaining a real-world case of injustice against the Rohingya population of Myanmar, and the concluding part focuses on how some of the writers from this community have used the medium of poetry as a counter discourse of resistance, which can break through the silences and challenge their systemic repression through the years. Barbara Harlow's conceptualization of resistance writing is used here for framing up the analysis.

This paper tries to analyze the crisis of this group of migrants through the lens of their ethnic literature, namely writings by the Rohingya people addressing the pain and despair of their community through the narrative form of poetry. This paper draws on *I am a Rohingya: Poetry from the Camps and Beyond* (2019), edited by James Byrne, as a representative specimen of their ethnic writing for developing the study.

### **A View from the Margins: Caste and/in Bengal Partition**

Anandita Pan (Faculty Member, Department of Liberal Arts, IIT Hyderabad)

Sreenath V S (Faculty Member, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras)

Dalit literature in Bengal emerged in the hands of Dalit refugees who migrated to West Bengal (the part of Bengal that is included in India) from Bangladesh after the 1947 Partition. This literature holds special significance in the pan-Indian spectrum of Dalit literature due to its unique narration of and experience as a Dalit refugee. Terming it as a "consolidated movement within Bangla literature," Manohar Mouli Biswas (2017) views Bengali Dalit literature as challenging the brahmanical supremacy over mainstream Bengali literature and views Dalit writings in Bengali as revolutionary activism that can actually bring about social change. Bengali Dalit literature, therefore, marks a systemic and epistemological intervention. This holds special significance in the context of Bengal where the early arrival of Marxist ideology created a sense of political awareness among the Bengali intelligentsia who viewed oppression in terms of class and ignored/denied the existence of caste. This intentional erasure served two purposes—incorporation of a larger section of people disadvantaged through class; construction of a progressive

narrative with the Left party as the saviour. While the former ensured the number of votes during the elections, the latter portrayed Bengal and its intelligentsia at the vanguard of an alternative politics. Bengali Dalit literature, however, challenges the belief that the Bengali educated and Left-aligned community is unmarked by caste. This essay explores the recent popularity of Bengali Dalit writing and its impact on Dalit consciousness through Manoranjan Byapari's celebrated account *Interrogating My Chandal Life*. This paper grapples with the following questions: What did Bangladeshi Dalits experience in post-partition West Bengal? How does their identity as 'Dalit refugees' intervene and transform the ways we understand caste and citizenship? How have Bengali Dalit writings contributed in transforming the Dalit literary canon?

**Indira Goswami's *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* and the Assertion of Identity of the Northeastern Women**

Anavisha Banerjee (Assistant Professor, Bharati College, University of Delhi)

My paper will focus on the Assamese writer, Indira Goswami's novel, *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*, originally written in Assamese in 1986 and translated into English by the author in 2004. It represents the position of women, especially the young widow Giribala, who belongs to the Assamese Brahmin family. The position of Assamese women (especially widows) with reference to the upper caste, the gender politics and the political insurgency of Assam will form important backdrops for exploring the aspect of pre and post-independence position of women.

The paper will attempt to look at the colonial reforms of the nineteenth century towards Hindu Bengali women, its impact on the Assamese women before Assam was severed from Bengal and the later stages (1905), its formation as a separate state of Northeast. The writings of Tanika Sarkar, Sumit Sarkar and Partha Chatterjee will focus on the reforms towards the liberation of nineteenth century women. These will be used to analyze the pre- and post-Independence position of the Northeast, especially with reference to Assamese women and their need for a separate identity and their revolt against patriarchal, socio-religious and political diktats. The concept of Nationalism, position of women and tradition versus liberalism within the politics of Assam's statehood, will form important thematic concerns that the paper will seek to address. The centre-margin paradigm and the concept of resistance towards "Otherization" become an important aspect of negotiation with reference to identity politics of women.

Indira Goswami's own position as mediator between the Indian Government and the militia of Assam, her contribution in forming committees related to a peaceful solution has won numerous recognitions and awards. This also looks at other avenues of assertion of Northeast identity.

Keywords: women's reform movement, widowhood, Northeast identity, resistance, insurgency

**Staging Partition: Memory, Trauma, and Healing in Asghar Wajahat's *Jis Lahore Nai Dekhya, O Jamiyai Nai***

Aneesaa Choubey (Student, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad)  
Unnimaya C P (Student, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad)

This study examines the interplay of memory, trauma, and healing in South Asian theatre through an analysis of Asghar Wajahat's seminal play *Jis Lahore Nai Dekhya, O Jamyai Nai* (*One Who Hasn't Seen Lahore, Hasn't Been Born*). First performed in 1989, this Hindi play addresses the traumatic events of the 1947 Partition of India and its lasting impact on South Asian communities. The research investigates how theatrical performance serves as a medium for expressing collective trauma, preserving historical memory, and fostering healing processes.

Through a multifaceted approach combining textual analysis, performance studies, and audience reception theory, the study explores the play's narrative techniques, characterization, and symbolism. It examines how Wajahat's work navigates the complex terrain of communal identities, shared suffering, and the possibility of reconciliation. The research also considers the play's evolution over its three-decade performance history, assessing its ongoing relevance and impact on intergenerational dialogue about Partition.

By situating *Jis Lahore Nai Dekhya, O Jamyai Nai* within the broader context of Partition literature and South Asian theatre, this study contributes to our understanding of how artistic expression engages with historical trauma. It explores the unique potential of theatre to create spaces for collective remembrance and healing. The findings offer insights into the role of cultural productions in shaping collective memory and fostering empathy across divided communities, with implications for post-conflict societies beyond South Asia.

### **My Fridge Asked My Toe To Apologize: Affect Density in Non-Human Entities in Eka Kurniawan's *Kitchen Curse Stories***

Angadbir Singh Kakkar (Research Scholar, Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University)

Affect Density – a concept introduced by Silvan Tomkins – is defined as the product of the intensity of an Affect and the time-duration it exists for. Thus, in a social setting, Affect Density may lead to both creating and effacing trauma. Therefore, the Affect of joy or shame would be more in a person suffering from them for ten years, as opposed to someone inhabiting the Affects for the same duration but with less intensity. The former would have more Affect Density. This paper attempts to apply Affect Density to *Kitchen Curse Stories* by Eka Kurniawan, a compilation of sixteen short stories dealing with the political upheaval and social trauma in Indonesia. As a corroboration, “The Stone’s Story” deals with the murder witnessed by a stone and its inability to express it or bring the culprit to justice. Another such story, “Graffiti in the Toilet” emphasizes the need for a less-censored media by describing school-children using a toilet wall as a place to leave messages for each other, stirring their colleagues to upend an oppressive government. While all the stories deal with traumatic events, they employ non-human entities – such as a toilet wall and a stone – to express human concerns as well as human Affects, and the resultant trauma. This paper analyses the presence of the human in these non-human entities, through the manifestation of human Affects such as shame and joy. The variations in Affect Density are explored using the aftermath of non-human entities – in “Make an Elephant Happy,” the eponymous elephant is cut to pieces, whereas the toilet-wall in “Graffiti in the Toilet” is tarnished but remains extant. These aftermaths are

explored in the social context of Indonesia, as well as whether certain Affects are more inclined towards generation of trauma than others.

**Suppressed Histories: Decentring the Empire and Colonial Historiography in Girish Karnad's *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan***

Anita Abraham (Associate Professor, Tara Government College (A))

This study undertakes a critical examination of Girish Karnad's historical play, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, which explores the life and times of the 18th-century ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore. Published in 2004, the play is based on a Farsi manuscript written by Tipu Sultan himself and challenges dominant colonial narratives and historiography. By employing postcolonial theory, the study decentres the Empire's perspective, shedding light on the complexities of Tipu Sultan's rule and resistance against British colonial expansion. A nuanced analysis of the play's themes, characters, and historical context, reveals how Karnad's work subverts colonial discourse. *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* humanizes the 18th-century ruler, highlighting his military prowess, political strategies, and cultural identity. Karnad challenges simplistic portrayals of Tipu Sultan as a "tyrant" or "fanatic", perpetuated by colonial historiography. *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* contributes to the ongoing conversation on postcolonialism, decolonizing knowledge, historiography, and literary representation, highlighting the importance of reclaiming suppressed histories and challenging dominant narratives. By decentring the Empire, this study challenges dominant colonial narratives of Indian history, highlights the complexities of colonial resistance, and showcases the significance of indigenous perspectives.

Keywords: postcolonialism, decolonization, historiography, colonial resistance, subaltern studies

**Memorializing Trauma: Reading Select Partition Memoirs & 'Memorials'**

Anjali Daimari (Professor and Head, Gauhati University)

Writing about the traumatic experiences following the Partition in the subcontinent Urvashi Butalia very aptly puts it in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*: "How do we know this event except through the ways it has been handed down to us: through fiction, memoirs, testimonies, through memories, individual and collective". Many years down the line the trauma that this catastrophe invoked continue to confound the victims, the witnesses, the people who have been caught in this unimaginable imbroglio, the displaced generations that followed and the readers of these accounts who can only empathize and beyond understanding try to see the resilience that filters through in the accounts in the form of individual and collective fiction, memoirs, testimonies. This paper will take up a few contemporary memoirs and a 'memorial' on Partition that record the trauma that people went through during Partition - *Torn from the Roots: A Partition Memoir* by Kamla Patel (1977; First English Translation 2006); Salman Rashid's *A Time of Madness: A Memoir of Partition* (2017), Kavita Puri's *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories* (2019). These accounts weave a tapestry of

human experience over many decades and “reveal a history of ruptured families and friendships, extraordinary journeys and daring rescue missions that reverberates with compassion and loss”. In their works the authors revisit the horrors opening up for the readers a crucial engagement with an event that still has its impact in the socio-political fabric of the affected countries and its people. The theories on Trauma and Memory will provide a framework to undertake this study of how each of these works engage with trauma focussing on the telling or the language of trauma or the lack of it.

### **Tracing the Trajectory of Trauma Recovery: Artistic Responses in the Aftermath of Kerala's Ecological Disasters**

Anne Joseph (Student, National Institute of Technology, Trichy)

Since 2018, Kerala has faced multiple ecological crises that have brought national and international attention to its ecological vulnerability. In August 2018, severe flooding and landslides affected nearly one-sixth of the state's population. The Indian government classified the event as a Level-3 Calamity, or "Calamity of a Severe Nature." More recently, the 2024 Wayanad landslides - one of the deadliest in Kerala's history, with over 420 fatalities and 397 injuries - highlighted the fragility of the region's ecosystem. These crises not only caused widespread physical destruction but also intensified eco-anxiety, a form of psychological distress emerging as a key mental health concern amidst increasing climate instability.

In this paper, I examine how the trauma surrounding the 2018 Kerala floods gets represented in artistic works, focusing specifically on the film *2018* and the song "Karalurappulla Keralam" (translated as "The Brave Kerala"). *2018* a survival thriller by Jude Anthany Joseph, and the song "Karalurappulla Keralam," written by Joy Thamalam and sung by Ishaan Dev, reflected the resilience of Keralites during times of crisis and contributed to the construction of a collective consciousness grounded in unity and shared strength. Unlike typical narratives centred on loss, these portrayals highlight messages of resilience and recovery. The paper will also illustrate how art can serve as a means of communal healing and analyse how communities find avenues for processing trauma and nurturing a sense of hope through such narratives.

The paper also seeks to explore how these artistic responses have informed the community's response to the 2024 Wayanad landslides. The paper aims to demonstrate how stories of survival and camaraderie foster resilience and empower communities to handle unforeseen exigencies.

Keywords: eco-anxiety, collective consciousness, resilience, communal healing

### **Children in the Sri Lankan Civil War: Reading Trauma, Resilience and Agency through Cultural Representation**

Anu Susan Abraham (Doctoral Research Scholar, IISER Bhopal)

One of the violent events in the history of postcolonial South Asia that kindled mass violence that lasted for almost twenty-six years was the Sri Lanka Civil War. The Sri Lankan writer N Malathy, the translator of Malarvan's (a child soldier in the LTTE)



memoir, *War Journey: Diary of a Tamil Tiger* (1993) into English from Tamil, describes Malarvan as a child “born at a unique juncture in the Tamil Eelam history” (xii). This description applies to all children who were born, who lived, died and survived during the ethnic tension between the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils. They were all born at a unique juncture in the history of South Asia because the protracted violence that lasted for almost twenty-six years from 1983 to 2009 irrevocably disrupted their childhood. In this paper, I try to understand the experiences of children through three cultural texts: two novels, *On Sal Mal Lane* (2013) by Ru Freeman and *Funny Boy* (1994) by Shyam Selvadurai, and one film text, *Dheepan* (2015) by Jacques Audiard. I selected two authors, one belonging to the Sri Lankan Sinhalese community and the other from the Sri Lankan Tamil community, to see how their perspectives differ while discussing the same event. I also included Audiard, the French director, to see how he, as an observer, formulated his perceptions about the historical event. Using insights from the trauma and memory studies, I will analyse these representations to understand children’s trauma, resilience and agency during the conflict. This paper will also focus on the effects of ‘everyday violence’ such as domestic violence, abuse, poverty, etc., experienced by children in Sri Lanka and its intersection with the larger conflict, the War, which is not much discussed in the officially documented histories of the conflict.

### **From Trauma to Resilience: Militant Pessimism in Healing Environmental Crises in Select Anglophone Indian Dystopias**

Argha Basu (Assistant Professor, SRM Institute of Science and Technology)

The proposed study aims to identify the methods of combating and healing environmental trauma (Fuller 2024) emerging from the Anthropocene as reflected, conceived and delineated in select Anglophone literary dystopias from India. The ambit of speculative narratives has demonstrated commendable strength in accentuating and recalibrating humanist concerns, which mimetic fiction often falls short of addressing. Environmental trauma and the climate anxieties emanating from it are frequently neglected as the consequences hardly dismantle the contemporary flow of life. Or, the rate of changes is too slow to be conceived by an otherwise occupied mind. Here, the dystopian narratives intervene. This genre can induce perceptual changes by introducing unnerving elements of cognitive estrangement. The research tracks the characters’ environmental trauma and resilience by focusing on the causes and consequences of nuclear detonations in Manjula Padmmanabhan’s *The Island of Lost Girls* (2015) and Gauri Mita’s *After Annihilation* (2019) (as both these literary texts depict post-apocalyptic worlds and offer contrasting images of capitalist gain and sustainable growth). Considering the sense of control as one of the pivotal components of the Anthropocene, the work investigates the potential of militant pessimism (where a sense of hope lingers in the face of inevitable catastrophe) as a functional defence mechanism against environmental trauma and its healing.

Keywords: Environmental trauma, Anthropocene, Dystopian narratives, Cognitive estrangement, Militant pessimism

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### **Caught between Assimilation and Alienation: Mahasweta Devi's *Imaginary Maps* as the Fragmented Map of Belonging**

Arijita Pradhan (Assistant Professor, Assam University)

This paper attempts to analyze the traumatic transformation of the indigenous communities in post-independence India, and posits pertinent questions relating to assimilation and differentiation. It examines how the destruction of the environment has become an inherent aspect of "development", and explores how urbanization and globalization have accelerated the erasure of tribal culture. The first section of the paper focuses on the forces of urbanization and the predominance of print culture, which resulted not only in the alienation of these communities, but in the loss of language and literary cultures. As an extension, this study will explore the politics of the discourse of identity – the sense of estrangement in tribals, inhabiting the contact zone and grappling with conflicting worldviews, who are unable to connect with either culture. The second section of the paper critically reviews Mahasweta Devi's novella "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay and Pirtha" (from *Imaginary Maps*), and engages with the after-effect of collective trauma, resulting from the cultural displacements, on communal identities of the Adivasis of Pirtha. By close textual analysis of the text, an attempt will be made to examine the dilemma of the indigenous group of people trapped between two cultures, belonging to neither. Through complicating the categories of identity and negotiating with the attempts of homogenization, this paper posits important questions relating to cultural amnesia and the survival of indigenous culture.

### **Graphic Trauma of the Sacrificed: A Reassessment of the Ecological Others as Scapegoats of Violence in Sarnath Banerjee's Graphic Novel *All Quiet in Vikaspuri*** Arkajit Das (PhD Scholar, University of Kalyani)

The colonization of natural resources involves the play of power dynamics and therefore, results in the creation of the 'ecological other' or 'environmental disgusts' as Sarah Jaquette Ray identifies these others. Sarnath Banerjee's cli-fi graphic novel *All Quiet in Vikaspuri* (2015) is set against the fictitious yet ever-so-real man-made water-wars of Delhi. The act of green colonization and disproportionate distribution of ecological elements give birth to the oppressor and the oppressed, whom Nietzsche refers to as the 'creditor' and the 'debtor' of pain respectively. Drawing on Rene Girard's theorization on violence and sacrifice, this paper argues that Banerjee's text *All Quiet in Vikaspuri* hints at the arbitrary selection of the 'scapegoat' figure or the object of sacrificial offering as a result of the debtor's obligation towards the creditor to heap the communal blame and neutralize the existing violence. Beyond the usual stand on environmental racism, this paper attempts to portray the scapegoat mechanism through the reassessment of the

‘water-borne criminals’ mentioned in the text as the sacrificable commodities. The paper also explores the traumatic past of select characters who are denied their environmental justice and posed as the sole ‘guilty’ to restore a temporary order in a society that suffers from environmental inequality. In doing so, the paper also analyzes the spatial transformation of the traumatic experiences of these scapegoats and examines the ecological trauma of these disabled, indigenous, and migrant bodies who are doubly marginalized. Finally, this article attempts to assess whether Banerjee’s graphic novel *All Quiet in Vikaspuri* as a verbo-visual medium has been befitting to recollect and restore the immediacy, and viscosity of the traumatic experiences of the scapegoats.

**Children wandering far from home: Trauma, Gender and Resilience in Children’s Literature featuring Rohingyas**

Arpita Sen (Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Delhi)

This paper studies the social and psychological impact of migration and displacement on young Rohingya refugees, focusing especially on Rukhsanna Guidroz’s novel *Samira Surfs* (2019). First, I analyse the motivation behind the protagonist Samira’s forced migration and study Myanmar’s transforming stance to rights, legality, and citizenship. I then dissect how even after migration and despite being in Bangladesh (long considered a place of safety) young refugees gain no relief from their suffering. They remain dislocated and this further disorients their perceptions of self. I argue that this novel exposes a range of traumatic experiences and its impact upon forced migrants before, during and after migration, and forces readers to take into cognisance that the trauma is not due to a singular event but rather it is an ongoing process and that it is multi-dimensional. I demonstrate that although the novel was written for children, Guidroz steers clear of sanitising the portrayal of trauma and migration. Instead, she demonstrates a nuanced understanding of Samira’s ordeals as a refuge seeker and offers insights into the unique trauma that children and young adults struggle with. Through her portrayal of the brutal ‘precarious experience of everyday living’ readers are forced to revisit and revise their understanding of trauma. In the final section of the paper – I examine the only way out of her trauma is for Samira to incorporate her past into her new identity. This presents readers an alternate way of looking at the ideas of trauma, vulnerability, resistance and resilience in the lives of young refugees and migrants. This disrupts the stereotype of the “powerless” third world female that abounds in the Western world and also upsets the accepted, yet often simplistic, notions regarding experiences and identity of refugee and migrant Rohingya children as portrayed in popular discourse.

**Where is my Country? Abduction, Dislocation and Belonging in Razai Butt’s *Baano***  
Asmat Jahan (Associate Professor, Jamia Millia Islamia)

The recent developments in the field of trauma studies have not only challenged the restrictive framework offered by the traditional model of trauma, they have also foregrounded the need to apply a pluralistic perspective to examine trauma in the larger socio-cultural context. The new critical insights suggest the limitations of the classic model of trauma and the need to examine trauma taking into consideration various contentious debates that mark a considerable shift in the conceptual understanding of

trauma and its representation in literature. Commenting on the paradigm shift in the field of trauma studies Michele Balaev remarks that “Alternative models challenge the classic model’s governing principle that defines trauma in terms of universal characteristics and effects.” These new theoretical frameworks offer the critics the possibilities of examining closely trauma’s “specificity and the process of remembering.” Moving away from the traditional model of trauma as an unrepresentable experience to a revisionist model of trauma, the paper will attempt to examine the specificity of trauma by situating it within its particular socio-cultural context to engage with issues related to abduction, dislocation and belonging in the novel *Baano* written by Pakistani author Razia Butt. *Baano* tells the tragic plight of an abducted Muslim women who was forced to marry a Sikh man whom she could not accept as her life partner. The paper will examine critically the representation of trauma in *Baano* and the complex manifestations of issues related to abduction, dislocation, home and belonging.

Keywords: Partition, Trauma, Abduction, Home, Dislocation

**A Home Divided: Narrativizing Partition Trauma, Migration and Displacement in  
M. S. Sathyu’s *Garam Hava***

Ayesha Irfan (Associate Professor, University of Delhi)

The film *Garam Hava* was released in 1973, and is based upon a story written by Ismat Chughtai, and this story was adapted for the purpose of the film by Kaifi Azmi and Shama Zaidi, conceived upon their own personal experiences during the time of partition. The film depicts a defining moment in the life of an affluent Muslim family in the wake of India’s partition, and it is set in the year 1948, immediately after the assassination of Gandhi. The focus of the story is upon the Mirza’s family, who are living in their huge ancestral home in Agra, UP and they are into a shoe manufacturing business. Salim takes care of the family shoe business, while Halim is engaged in politics. Salim has two sons, and a daughter Amina. His daughter Amina is engaged to her cousin Kazim, the son of Halim Mirza.

Halim migrates to Pakistan in a hurry without transferring the ancestral property in the name of his brother Salim Mirza. The story depicts the increasing marginalization of the family of Salim Mirza in the wake of partition. He is rendered homeless, displaced and dispossessed even without crossing the border. Salim Mirza is also accused of espionage while he is trying to correspond with his family members across the border. The displacement trauma is captured brilliantly when the family is dispossessed of its ancestral home, while the old grandmother is trying to conceal herself in a small space where she can fit in, instead of moving out of the haveli where she had been brought in as a child-bride. This film highlights the loss of the community and kinship ties and a secure sense of identity. For Amina partition is also about the trauma of the loss of her love, the desire to get married to the young men with whom she falls in love, but both of them migrate to Pakistan one after the other, and she ends her life by suicide.

### **Postpartum Food and Food Practises in Mappila Muslim Culture: The Formation of a Knowledge System from a Women's Space**

Aysha Femin N K (Research Scholar, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad)

Khadeeja Ramziya (Independent Researcher)

From the Marnn Kozhi (a chicken dish with medicinal values) which is consumed for nine consecutive days, post-birth to the various Lehyams, postpartum food is a carrier of traditional knowledge and culture of Mappila Muslims on the Malabar coast. Beyond the idea of nourishment, the postpartum food tradition has embedded layers of healing and identity formation, offering a material site to define and declare cultural belonging through methods of social distinction and the organisation of everyday life. The avenues of both postpartum care as well as food preparation are often considered the domain of women. This paper looks at the ways in which Muslim women of Malabar create, sustain and draw from a knowledge system that enables them to embody and perform their identities through the preparation and consumption of food. Postpartum food preparation is often a collective and performative activity: where recipes are handed down orally from one generation to the other, the methods of preparation are deliberated upon through mediations with midwives, other family members and even neighbours, and traditional recipes are often readapted to suit modern demands of time and understandings of health. The paper will illustrate that these avenues of embodied knowledge, affective networks and memories that thread the past to the present often require as much 'intelligence' as those held traditionally superior, such as music and writing, and are also spaces where women exercise power and influence, rethinking Western binaries of submission/resistance and moving away from feminist geographies that privilege the public over the private, written over oral. This paper looks into the formation of a knowledge system within the women-only domestic spaces of postpartum food tradition that sustains and contributes to the cultural formation of a community.

### **Reimagining Partition through Graphic Narratives in *This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition***

Barnali Saha (Faculty Member, Vivekananda School of English Studies, Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies)

While the Partition of India in 1947 has been extensively explored in literature, cinema, and historical scholarship, the graphic narrative format in *This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition*, edited by Vishwajyoti Ghosh, offers a fresh and unique perspective on this traumatic event. Graphic novels and comics, with their combination of visual storytelling and textual narrative, engage the reader in a way that traditional literary forms do not, making them an innovative medium for revisiting Partition's complex and multifaceted history. This paper critically examines how *This Side, That Side* uses the graphic format to reframe Partition's violent legacy and its long-lasting effects on individual and collective memory. The anthology brings together diverse voices that explore the human cost of Partition, with artists and writers employing both personal and historical narratives to unpack themes of loss, displacement, and identity. The use of visual elements—such as symbolism, color, and fragmented panels—allows for a nuanced depiction of trauma, emphasizing the fragmentation of lives and communities

during and after the Partition. The paper argues that graphic narratives provide a more immediate and visceral experience of Partition's emotional and psychological toll, making the past accessible in ways that resonate with contemporary readers. Moreover, by incorporating multiple voices and perspectives, the work challenges singular, dominant narratives of Partition, offering alternative stories that reflect the complexity and diversity of lived experiences. The paper also explores how the medium's potential for non-linear storytelling allows for a more fragmented and open-ended representation of history, reflecting the disjointed and often contradictory memories of Partition survivors. Ultimately, *This Side, That Side* exemplifies the power of graphic narratives to offer a reimagined space for memory, resistance, and healing.

### **Reclaiming the Quotidian Supernatural: Disability, Trauma, and Childhood in Lila Majumdar's Children's Fiction**

Bidyabrata Majumdar (PhD Research Scholar, University of Kalyani)

This paper will look into the use of the imaginary and the supernatural in Lila Majumdar's fiction as antithesis to the recurring trope of physical disability and its consequent isolation and trauma in children. Although the trope of a disabled, bullied or lonely child was present in Bengali children's literature before Lila Majumdar, she was unique for making the aforesaid trope central to most of her fiction. Besides allotting a central space for scared and despondent children, she was the first among Bengali children's writers to make the supernatural or the outwardly a seamless part of the quotidian. This paper will analyse how indulging in a kind of supernatural and imaginary, which are not alienated from daily life, helped alleviate the aforementioned trauma in children, who are implied as disabled in various senses.

Not unlike other newly industrialised societies, children's literature in Bengali also started with a didactic tone, and the supernatural, although not absent, perpetually enjoyed a marginal role and was never a part of the quotidian. Children having active and decisive roles was also very rare. Stemming from a colonial legacy, Bengali children's literature before Majumdar was largely focused on instilling colonial moralities, the construction of conqueror figures, fairy tales and more mundane depictions of children. As Nivedita Sen points out, such literature was more about children than for them (*Family, School and Nation: The Child and Literary Constructions in 20th Century Bengal*). Majumdar reverted this hierarchy by allowing far more agency to children, especially to the disabled, lonely, bullied and scared figures. Carey Caruth pointed out that trauma is the recurrent remembrance of near-death experiences and the comprehension of an improbable survival. In Majumdar's case, the quotidian supernatural and the imaginary become tools to recognise and confront trauma.

### **Disability and Caste Intersectionality: Navigating Trauma, Resilience and Healing in Satish Chander's "Thappu"**

Brati Biswas (Professor, Dyal Singh Evening College, University of Delhi)

The paper aims to look at the ways gender, caste, class and disability intersect in an ableist world as depicted in the short story titled "Thappu", by Satish Chander. Both the Dalit and the disabled body are stigmatised by the upper caste, patriarchal society.

Inhabiting her disabled body, the gendered protagonist of Thappu lives a life that is circumscribed by her caste, class and disability. The story reveals how the gendered disabled body is viewed by the family of the girl and her mother. Her upper caste and class position allows her access to education but restricts her expression of desire and sexuality. It limits her independence, freedom and agency to choose her own partner. She faces stiff resistance from her family and community when she gets friendly with a Dalit Christian school mate. She is defiant and challenges her community to find her a suitable boy. Her orthopedic disadvantage makes her dependent on her mother for care and mobility. Her mother is an emblem of sacrifice and resilience. She chooses to be with her disabled girl rather than her husband who can't accept the beautiful but incomplete child. The paper would explore how the women negotiate a space for themselves and the movement from Trauma to Healing in the narrative.

Keywords: Gender, Disability, Caste, Vulnerability, Trauma, Healing.

**Understanding Social Conflict: Locating the family in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland***

Chandrima Karmakar (Assistant Professor, Maharani Kasiswari College)

It has been a long-standing practice to analyse society from the viewpoint of its typical conflicts. Conflicts affect the quality and structure of every society. Peace and harmony are therefore sought everywhere recognizing the persistent reality of conflict. It is often dismissed as being incongruous with structure, yet it tends to offer a vantage point for understanding society in India. In this paper I try to locate the relatively orderly worlds of the family in the otherwise disorderly world of conflicts as presented in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. In doing so, the attempt is to develop a methodological understanding of 'conflict' as a social phenomenon in the post/colonial world. While trying to trace the interrelationships of two brothers, Udayan and Subhash, Lahiri tries to understand the conflict-affected cityscape of Calcutta during the 1950s and 60s. Her novel is set in the background of the Naxalite movement and the resulting social conflict that plagues both the social space as well as the more structured 'family space'. Lahiri's novel presents the opportunity to understand the vast expanse of the definition of conflict – 'from brawls in the bazaar to wars between nations' (Coser, 1956). The relational nature of conflict however makes it difficult to come to a definitional consensus from a methodological perspective. In this paper, an attempt is made to bring into bold relief the various nuances of conflict especially considering that the 'socialscape' of post/colonial India has been riddled with social conflicts.

Keywords: Social conflict, Jhumpa Lahiri, Naxal Movement, family, space.

**Traumas that Don't Heal: A Limerent Woman Haunts the Conscience of Ananthapuri**

Chitra Panikkar (Senior Professor, Department of English, Bangalore University)

For over 51 years, a woman lived on the streets leading to the Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Trivandrum, believing herself to be the Queen of Travancore. In her mind, she

was wedded to the bachelor Maharajah, Sri Chithira Thirunal, the last among the Kings of Travancore. Her story of unrequited love has a legendary status in the annals of contemporary Travancore history, but it is also a heart- wrenching tale of a young, talented, extremely beautiful woman whose tale of early childhood neglect/loneliness or a loveless marriage led her to seek comfort in fantasy bonds. It is the story of an undetected trauma that never got an occasion to meet with support, treatment, or healing. When she died an old mad woman, reclining her head on the steps of the northern entrance to the Padmanabha Swamy temple in the 1990s, cultural organizations in Trivandrum hailed her as an icon of eternal love and gave her a cremation that befits a queen. What still remained unaddressed was a possible hidden story of trauma faced by a sensitive artist girl-child, who, when pushed into the practicalities of a common married life, sought solace in a fantasy world of imagined true love, and then succumbed to a total imbalance of mind. The paper seeks to retell the story of Sundari Chellamma, an erstwhile victim of trauma, who never got a chance to recover or heal. The paper uses playwright and veteran film actor Narendra Prasad's *Rani Ammachi*, a play written and staged long ago in Trivandrum as its primary source text.

### **A Transgenerational Trauma and Resilience on the Indian Screen: A Study of Nationalism and Patriotism from Memory Studies Perspective**

D. Sudha Rani (Associate Professor, VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology)

Nations exist in the minds of its individuals more than geographically. Nationalism fosters a community through 'ties of birth and blood' (Canovan 2000: 416) and unites people despite cultural and ethnic diversity. It is a challenging task to develop nationalism among people of India which hosts many diversities. Memory of independence struggle remains a very powerful narrative to build such ties reinforcing what must be remembered and what must be forgotten. The memory of independence struggle, trauma (physical and psychological) caused during that time and resilience shown by Indians is of immense significance to the post-independence times in developing nationalism and overlapping patriotism. The collective memory of this trauma and resilience passed down to the second and third generation might have a lesser psychological impact on them, as they do not share the same experience. But literature can act as a prosthetic memory to recreate the trauma in the most authentic form to the readers/audience.

As Indians are united by the trauma (physical and psychological) of slavery and resilience during colonial time still attracts many filmmakers to nurture nationalism among the Indian youth, we see a lot of films dealing with this subject. Within the Indian context, cinema, more than print or 'state-controlled radio and television,' has had a profound influence on the articulation of nationalism (Virdi 2003: 6). Owing to the significance of trauma during the colonial period and the resilience shown by the freedom fighters and the significance of cinema in dealing with the development of nationalism and patriotism, it becomes necessary to study these aspects closely. Therefore, the present paper considers select films from Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil to study the trauma inflicted to freedom fighters and resilience shown by them takes the centre stage leading to development of nationalism and patriotism among the Indian youth.



**“Bade Bade Deshon Mein Aisi Choti Choti Baatein Hoti Rehti Hai” – Exploring  
Inter-Generational Anxieties and Apprehensions of the Indian Diaspora in *Dilwale  
Dulhaniya Le Jayenge***

Daisy Ramchiary (Student, Tezpur University)

Released in the year 1995, *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, or *DDLJ*, as it is more popularly known, is nothing short of a cultural milestone in the history of Bollywood. Considered to be a modern classic, the movie is significant in terms of being one of the first Indian movies to place the Indian Diaspora or the NRIs front and center within its narrative. The movie, which kicked off the trend of creating films that catered to the Indian diasporic experience, has gone on to become the longest running movie in the history of Indian cinema, completing nearly 30 years of screening in the Maratha Mandir Theatre.

The paper attempts to explore anxieties based on the intergenerational conflicts that are seen within generations of Indian diasporic families, often based on changing perspectives on traditions, desire, and identity. Within the larger fears of displacement and belonging, lie deeper questions surrounding gendered expectations, negotiating cultural dissonance, and controlling desire. This paper aims to dive into how the older and younger diasporic generations navigate and face these issues, and how it creates differences in ideologies amongst the characters in *DDLJ*. Moreover, the paper also explores how *DDLJ* tries to portray possible ways of resolving this complex interplay of generational fears and traumas, and what it means in the larger context of understanding the overall diasporic experience.

Keywords – Diaspora, Trauma, Identity, Culture, Desire

**The Immaterial Body and Material Endurance of Trauma in Feroz Rather’s *The  
Night of Broken Glass***

Deepanwita Dey (Research Scholar, Indian Institute of Technology Bhilai)

Set in the backdrop of the conflict-ridden and highly militarized region of Kashmir, Feroz Rather’s *The Night of Broken Glass* (2018) depicts the complexity of navigating life in a city infested with paroxysms of violence, death, and trauma on an everyday basis. The text is replete with images of bodily disfigurements and dismemberments, characterising the unpredictability of life given quotidian certainty of violence. Trauma in this context embodies a constitutive presence as characters deliberately synthesise and preserve memories of violence and loss through its manifestation into everyday objects such as rosaries of bullet shells, dead pigeons, blood-soaked pherans, and unclaimed possessions that remain long after the material decomposition of bodies. While these objects serve as lingering links to the lost bodies that are either refused burials, cannot be identified, and cannot (or are not allowed to) return to their homes and families, the marks and wounds inscribed onto these objects also act as testimonies bearing witness to the violent legacies of the past and its continuity in the present. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer’s concept of testimonial objects, this paper examines the dialectic between the immateriality of the body and the material endurance of trauma. It explores how disfigured bodies and defiled material remnants function as testimonials, facilitating

diverse modes of bereavement and memorialisation. At the same time, they act as forms of resistance against oppressive forces, combating threats to the erasure of individuality and the pathological nature of violence unfolding the everyday. In doing so, the text defies and contests the prevailing indifference and muted responses to the ordinariness of violence in Kashmir by shedding light on everyday traumatic encounters that often get wiped from public memories and thus choosing to remember what the world deliberately tries to forget.

### **The Story of a Film and a Subcontinent: *Jago Hua Savera* and its Memorialisation of Conflict and Resilience**

Dhurjjati Sarma (Faculty Member, Gauhati University)

A unique instance of its kind, the film *Jago Hua Savera* (1959) is representative of the prevailing social-political situation of the Indian subcontinent in the immediate post-Independence years. Directed by A.J. Kardar, the film is based on Manik Bandopadhyay's famous Bengali novel *Padma Nadir Manjhi* (1936), and its script is written by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, noted Urdu progressive poet who, for the sake of the cinematic reconstruction, refashioned the source narrative. Portraying fishermen's lives on the banks of the Padma—a major river in present-day Bangladesh—dependent on the river for sustenance and frustrated by the exploitative machinery of the fishing trade controlled by opportunist moneylenders and owners of boats, both the novel and the film collectively depict the prevailing social-economic reality of eastern India from the early to middle decades of the twentieth century. This paper engages with the representation of the aforementioned situation with special focus on *Jago Hua Savera*, both as an adaptation of Bandopadhyay's novel and as a reflection of the turbulent times in the aftermath of the Partition, when a single undivided country was split into two geo-political units with all the attendant complexities of identity, language, and religion. Moreover, as a film made during the so-called waning years of the Progressive Movement, it symbolised the undying spirit of poet-activists like Faiz Ahmed Faiz and also represented a major milestone in the film histories of the south Asian countries involved in its production. The study will analyse the film in the light of Faiz's stated endeavour in particular and locate its relevance towards memorialising the narratives of conflict and resilience unfolding over the years following the creation of post-independent India and Pakistan.

Keywords: Conflict and resilience, Cinema and activism, *Jago Hua Savera*, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Padma Nadir Manjhi, Manik Bandopadhyay

### **Generational Trauma and the Split-Subject in Yashica Dutt's *Coming Out as Dalit*** Diksha Beniwal (PhD Student, IIT Kanpur)

Dalit literature, mirroring the real-life experiences of caste discrimination and violence, is congested with the imagery of both physical and psychological trauma. Yashica Dutt's memoir titled *Coming Out as a Dalit* (2019), is the story of a woman hailing from a dalit middle-class background. Dutt's memoir sheds light on how the psychological remnants of caste cast a shadow over one's potential as an individual and one's sense of freedom.

As she talks of the lives of those dalits who exist somewhere “in-between”, this paper looks at how the narrative becomes a testimony to the psychological as well as generational trauma of belonging to a caste that has been marginalized and subjected to extreme violence for centuries. I trace and use the theories of Jacques Lacan and Shoshana Felmen to discuss how Dutt’s memoir presents us with a split subject, one that is endlessly oscillating between the broken self-image and the piteous public image of a dalit.

This paper seeks to critically evaluate the significance and relevance of Rohith Vemula’s suicide in Dutt’s supposedly courageous and transgressive act of “coming out”. Additionally, it is imperative to examine the connection with Vemula that Dutt claims to feel as she is herself split between the roles of a mute spectator, a fellow sufferer, and a relatively privileged counterpart of Vemula. In the process, this paper unravels the idea of generational trauma and how it affects someone like Dutt both on accounts of being a dalit, and a woman, who has witnessed her mother being subjected to domestic violence.

### **When Mirrors are Windows: Understanding Oppari as Women's Verbal Art**

Divya Sharma (Student, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur)

Ritual lamentations have been integral to funeral practices in most traditional cultures. In Tamil Nadu, ritual lament or Oppari has been practised by women since the Sangam age. Classical literature has traces of such performances that attest to the longevity of Oppari. Despite its history, the practice of Oppari in contemporary times is seen as an excess of womanly emotions that can conjure a ‘bad omen’ to the family. Since the performance is now majorly attached to specific marginalized communities, it is considered ‘dirty’ and ‘improper’. While Oppari, in the present day, is employed in popular films and songs to represent voices from below, this mode of performance has been fundamental to women belonging to backward castes, classes, and regions in expressing their everyday plights.

Interestingly, unlike most other performance art forms that require practice and rehearsal, Oppari does not require any prior ‘technique’. It has been passed from one generation to the next through shared and collective memories of pain and trauma. One learns the performance primarily by being a witness to it.

The central aim of this paper is my attempt to uncover the social and gendered stratifications of individuals that contribute significantly to one’s trauma responses. By investigating Oppari as a verbal art, my research aims to unravel the nuances of performance stemming from generational and historical trauma. Using Diana Taylor’s ideation of repertoire and Jacques Derrida’s conceptualisation of archives, the paper highlights the subtleties of resistance exercised by women Oppari performers in their commonplace and ritual practice. I will use Oppari songs collected during my fieldwork in the villages of Madurai and Tirunelveli as the primary material for this paper.

### **Exploring the Intersection of Trauma and Testimony in Nadia Murad’s Memoir: A Brief Study**

Shivangi (Assistant Professor, KVA DAV College for Women, Karnal)

Remembering is a fundamental aspect of daily human life, yet it remains a complex process that resists easy definition. The interdisciplinary field referred to as “memory

studies” examines a diverse array of topics, ranging from the basic biological and cellular mechanisms of encoding and retrieval to the ways political and cultural systems can either encourage the remembrance or suppress the recollection of historical events. This research paper explores the interplay between memory function and trauma experiences. While prevailing discourse often highlights the impact of trauma on memory, this study investigates how the act of remembering is shaped by specific cultural and political contexts, with the aim of historicising these experiences. Nadia Murad’s testimony serves as a powerful account of the Yezidi genocide and the sexual slavery suffered by Yezidi women. The paper examines the conditions under which she recounts her story and assesses her effectiveness in articulating her trauma, with the intention of bearing witness and documenting the crimes committed against her community.

### **Railways and the (dis)-integration of South East Asia in the aftermath of WWII**

Eirini Anastasiadou (Visiting Assistant Professor, BITS Pilani)

Extensive literature on the history of technology has been generated in the last two decades, focusing on Europe. The dominant narrative in this literature is a teleological account of progress toward European unification and integration. The theoretical frameworks used to describe developments in Asia are different. There are two strands of literature: one discusses the ‘transfer’ of technology from Europe to Asia through processes known in the literature as the ‘transfer’ and ‘appropriation’ of technology in the long 19th century and up to the outbreak of WWII. Considering the case of the Indian subcontinent before WWII, literature has extensively discussed the role of the British in building India’s railway system. The paper I am proposing here will discuss railways in the Indian subcontinent as carriers of disintegration, conflict, terror, and, consequently, trauma. It will focus on the Partition of British India, one of contemporary history’s most significant migration movements. The paper will focus on the narratives of refugees transported by railways. In this context, it will aim to highlight railway technology as a facilitator of this migration movement and, therefore, a facilitator of British India’s disintegration into two separate nation-states. This is important in two ways historiographically: on the one hand, it brings forward voices silenced in the historiography of technology and the historiography of transport, traffic, and mobility, two branches of scholarly literature that are inspired by the study of cases primarily from Europe and the USA. On the other hand, it presents transport infrastructure, specifically railways, as an instrument of disintegration instead of integration and ‘progress’. The research will be based on archival sources that will be sought initially from the Partition Museum in Amritsar and Delhi, as well as several online sources, secondary literature, and, whenever possible, literature.

### **Cartographies of Trauma: Mapping Silences, Resilience, and Hope in Rajathi**

**Salma’s *The Hour Past Midnight***

Fatima Zaheer (PhD Scholar, University of Lucknow)

Traumatic experiences shape our lives in unexpected ways and leave lasting impacts on our future. *The Hour Past Midnight* by Rajathi Salma, translated into English by Laxmi Holmstrom is a seminal work in Tamil literature offering a labyrinthine exploration of the

lived experiences of women in a conservative Muslim community in Tamil Nadu. The novel delves into the complex lives of six Muslim women including Rabia, Zohra, Fatima, Wahida, Farida and Amina living in a small patriarchal society. The lives of these women are bound by a pervasive sense of emotional and sexual repression with little to no room for self-expression and personal freedom. They are confined to their homes owing to restrictions imposed on them by their religious, fundamentalist society, and culture. This paper aims to critically analyze the novel by means of trauma and feminist theories to highlight various ways in which women navigate or overcome their mundane existence, primarily their relationship with their bodies. The paper studies how purdah serves as a key factor in coercing women into submission, enabling men to practice autonomy over them. The study is also an attempt to understand and universalize ideas of women's trauma, hope, and resilience in their day-to-day lives from psychological points of view. Keywords: Tamil literature, patriarchy, spiritual fundamentalism, trauma, resilience.

**Notes Towards Understanding Partition Trauma through Personal Memories: A Case of Lala Dhani Ram Bhalla**

Girija Suri (Assistant Professor, Amity University, Gurgaon)

Personal memories of survivors and witnesses of the Partition of 1947 serve as a precocious method to recuperate family histories of trauma, loss, relocation, rebuilding, and salvaging of what remains of their material, cultural, and intangible heritage. In this context, this paper attempts to study the life history of one such migrant from Lahore, Lala Dhani Ram Bhalla, a prominent Hindu resident of Lahore and owner of the first ever leather shoe company housed in the famous Anarkali Bazar, who was once known for his pioneering efforts in the field of education (such as establishment of DAV schools and colleges), philanthropy, support to the leaders like Nehru and Gandhi for freedom struggle, and impetus to the arts by hosting students of Shantiniketan and Tagore himself. The social, entrepreneurial, and familial history of Bhalla, like many other Partition migrants, has suffered amnesia and runs the risk of complete erasure. Through an analysis of the first hand accounts of his second generation survivors, in the form of oral testimonies and photographs, this paper delves into the complexities of the migrants' trauma of restarting and resettling in a new nation, the hijacking of narratives by those in power, and the coming to terms of their identities as 'refugees' in the post-Partition era. As the story of Bhalla has been archived for the first time by the Partition Museum in Delhi, the paper will also look at how digital archiving and memorializing personal memories through museums offer the simultaneous experiences of reliving the trauma while offering, perhaps, the only way to preserve the micro-histories of a people who had once played significant roles in the social, cultural, economic, and even political history of the undivided India, and now struggle to effect a closure to the aftershocks of Partition.

Keywords: Partition, trauma, memories, testimonies, survivors, Lala Dhani Ram Bhalla

## **Pits to Pedestals: Behind the Walls of Worship—Understanding Kappiri Muthappan**

Gowri Murali (Student, University of Hyderabad)

The paper attempts to trace the evolution of the slave identity and the subsequent deification and iconography associated with the Kappiri Muthappan, believed to be the spirits of slaves brought to Cochin by the Portuguese from the African continent. The paper begins by addressing the violent and oppressive history surrounding the myth of Kappiri Muthappan and how it has come to be a signifier of the culture and history of Fort Kochi. The term “Kappiri”, believed to be a corrupted form of the term “kaffir”, was used to refer to enslaved individuals brought to Kerala. In the seventeenth century, it was believed that Portuguese cached their treasures tied to slaves inside thick walls, so that it could only be reclaimed by their descendants, in later generations. Over time, these walls were uncovered and the slaves came to be worshipped by the community in Fort Kochi. The belief emerged that the enslaved individuals, who were subjected to this practise, transformed into spirits residing in trees.

The study delves into how acts of trauma and oppression evolved, over time, into reverence. It aims to decode the history of enslavement, through the enslaved body and the journey to veneration, with a particular focus on shrines like Mangattumukku, in the region. It further analyses how the oppressed body becomes the site of resistance and assertion of the marginalized identity. The paper emphasises on the subversive understanding of the creation of deities who reflect the lived realities of marginalisation and oppression experienced by the people of a community and outside it. The study also examines the representations of Kappiri Muthappan in art and culture, enriching the discourse on the intersection of reverence, identity and historical trauma.

## **Navigating legacies of Colonialism, Displacement and Cultural Negotiation: A Study of Sikh Periodicals (1900-1920) and Framing of Modern Sikh identity**

Guntasha Kaur Tulsi (Faculty Member, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College)

The 20th century undivided Punjab was a confluence of cultural negotiation, vernacular identity-formation and creation of forms of expression of rebellion and (re-)adjustment. This paper shall be utilizing the method of accessing archives and select Sikh periodical literature during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

This period became seminal for the consolidation of symbols, icons and institutions with reference to modern Sikh identity. Be it the finalizing of the rahitnamas, Sikh rituals and calendrical cycles, discussion about the state of the gurudwaras or undertaking of reforms within the domain of expanding Sikh education or women empowerment; this period defined and re-defined the major contours of contemporary Sikh identity, eventually also determining the discursive nature of post-partition Punjab politics.

The primary sources placed at the center of this paper emerge from the fold of the Singh Sabha Movement (1873) and have been majorly written in Gurumukhi. They testify to the importance of resilience, resistance to trauma or cultural acclimatization, mainly due to their unfiltered and community-centered contents. Most of these deal with articles on Sikh identity; indispensable, yet at times, problematic impact of colonial

modernization, necessity of preserving one's indigenous language, script and cultural markers and importance of expansion of community education, with a renewed focus on women empowerment.

Furthermore, placed as these sources are during a critical juncture of India's nationalist history and significant consciousness of the undivided Punjab, they capture people's struggles and movements of the nature of Ghadar uprising, Komagata Maru rebellion and Akali and Gurudwara reform movements. The journals also exhibit unique modes of self-expression, documentation of Punjabi language, as it stands at the state of transition and formation into a modern expression.

### **Decolonizing Through Design: Diasporic Fashion as a Bridge Between Western Forms and Indian Identity**

Gurpreet Kaur (PhD Research Scholar, Department of English & Cultural Studies, Panjab University)

This paper examines how Indian fashion designers/artists in the diaspora adopt decolonial stances through their designs, navigating the complexities of identity, heritage, and resistance to Western fashion norms. Positioned between their Indian cultural roots and the demands of Western markets, these designers challenge colonial legacies by reinterpreting traditional Indian aesthetics, aligning with Walter Dignolo's notion of "alternatives TO modernity" (218). By analyzing textiles, cultural symbols, and design choices, the paper explores how these artists reclaim indigenous and non-Western ways of knowing and creating. Diasporic designers fuse Indian elements with Western silhouettes, embodying Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space", where new cultural forms emerge. This hybridization, rather than diluting cultural authenticity, becomes an act of resistance against both Western cultural essentialism and rigid definitions of tradition within Indian society. Fashion, in this context, operates as a space of cultural negotiation, where tradition and modernity coalesce into new and hybrid forms. Stuart Hall's assertion that "Cultural identities ... undergo constant transformation" underpins the idea that these designers engage with their Indian heritage while consciously resisting reductive and exoticized representations shaped by colonialism and perpetuated by Western fashion.

The paper intersects decolonial theory, diaspora studies, and fashion as part of cultural studies, examining how identity and resistance are expressed through clothing and design. Bhabha's concept of the "interstitial space" of the diaspora allows for the ambivalence of cultural translation, opening possibilities for resistance, innovation, and the formation of new identities. These diasporic designers challenge global fashion norms while contributing to the broader decolonization of cultural representation and identity formation.

### **Bearing Witness: Articulating Incarceration of Death Row Prisoners in India**

Harishma Hari K (Research Scholar, Central University of Kerala)

The intricate interplay of trauma, resilience, and healing as represented in South Asian literature and culture, a region marked by historical upheaval, social stratification, and cultural diversity, narratives of trauma are pervasive yet nuanced. Hence, their study

investigates how literature and cultural expressions not only document experiences of suffering but also illuminate pathways toward resilience and healing.

The paper tries to explore the complex narratives presented in *The Punished* and *Prison Voices from Death Row: Indian Experiences*, two poignant collections documenting the experiences of death row prisoners in India. Through the lens of Project 39A, this study examines how these narratives reflect not only the trauma of the prisoners but also their families, investigating the intricate dynamics of suffering and resilience.

The study will analyse how these individuals sustain resilience in the face of their harrowing realities and explore whether they encounter genuine healing or remain caught in a perpetual state of ambivalence, drawing on trauma theory. Additionally, this work seeks to draw connections between the social status and educational backgrounds of the prisoners, offering insights into how these factors correlate with the prevalence of death sentences within this demographic.

By engaging with the intersection of trauma, resilience, and social justice, this presentation aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the penal system in India and its implications for both individuals and society. The paper discusses the role of narratives in shaping perceptions of justice and healing, emphasizing the need for a nuanced exploration of the human experience within the complexities of punishment and redemption. Through this analysis, the paper tries to engage to foster dialogue on the potential for healing within a system that often perpetuates cycles of trauma.

Keywords: Death Row, Trauma, Resilience, Healing, Project 39A, Social Status

### **“To See or Not to See”: The Politics of Documenting and Witnessing Violence on Screen**

Haritha P (Assistant Professor, Daulat Ram College)

This paper aims to look into the nuances of documenting and witnessing violence on screen by focusing on two movies, *Jai Bhim* (2021, Tamil ) and *Papilio Buddha* (2013, Malayalam). Both the movies attempt to document the police brutalities on vulnerable communities— the Tribals, the Dalits, and the Women— in India. Both the movies have been inspired by real life incidents of police brutality, especially the infamous “third degree” tortures used by the police on members of marginalised communities. The movies discuss the practice of filing false charges against members of the vulnerable communities for personal, political, and financial gains by the people in power, which alienates and further annihilates the possibility of any upward mobility for these communities. Such practices have been used to reinforce the existing power structures and create and maintain the culture of fear. Both the movies attempt to capture in great detail the extreme measures of physical violence and torture used by the police against the falsely accused. This paper aims to look at the dilemma of the creator to document and the dilemma of the viewer to perceive the violence on screen. How does the creator decide the extent to which the violence should be visually recreated on screen? How does the viewer grapple with the violence on screen? The paper wants to analyse how both these movies fight against the attempt to minimise and sanitise the depiction of violence to make it convenient and digestible for the viewer. This paper argues that this conscious, realistic documenting of violence is used as a tool to create a moral dilemma in the mind



of the viewer (privileged with the very act of watching) to see or not to see the violence on the screen. In a society where the oppression is often invisible and intangible, this enforced watching/not watching itself is a tool to experience and understand the trauma of the Marginalised.

### **Feminine Sexuality, Trauma and Internalized Longing: Discovering Unspoken Dimensions in Pre-Colonial Indian Literary Discourse**

Hemasoundari R (Student, English and Foreign Languages University)

Trauma, understood by existing scholarship as the “insistent recurring” cycles of unpredicted emotions and physical symptoms (Bean 2022) or an “emotional response to a terrible event like an accident... physical or emotional abuse, neglect...” (APA 2013) invariably restricts the state of being to an experience that the individual has been exposed to, as an external factor uprooting the normalcy of daily experience that urgently requires to be revisited. What demands investigation is the internalisation of an event – an unfulfilled dream, an unachieved goal, a false ambition or unsatisfied pleasure – as a leading cause to trauma. Sexuality, on the other hand when juxtaposed with trauma studies has largely been treated as a product of sexual abuse, assaults and rape (Roth 1988, Lang 2010, Shors 2016). However, scholars like Stoller (1986), Diamond (2013) and more recently Bean (2022) have attempted associating love and sexuality as causes to emotional trauma, a perspective gaining traction only lately.

It is in this context that the paper, through a comparative and qualitative analysis traces the internalized longing in the female in pre-colonial Indian literature, from the Sangam’s *Akananuru*, to works of Kalidasa, Jayadeva and Harsha and the Ula poetry genre representing a form of feminine sexuality that Freud (1920) mentions as addictive states of sexuality to cope with the trauma of loss. Overflowing sexual desire then cannot just be seen as a coping mechanism for the phobia and paranoia of the loss of partner but the trauma internalised for the very act of sex itself, where the female becomes both the object of desire and the person actively desiring. These literary depictions thence in a way paint a vivid picture of the inexplicable experience of trauma through excess sexual desire that individuals today might face contributing to the objective of addressing the uncategorised and lesser spoken mediums of trauma.

### **Feminist Poetics of Remembrance: Reading Gender and Postmemory in South Asian Conflicts**

Hibasamad A P (Independent Researcher)

“What a culture remembers and what it chooses to forget are intricately bound up with issues of power and hegemony and thus with gender” (Hirsch and Smith, 16).

Ever since the emergence of nation-states, South Asia has witnessed outbreaks of wars and militarization that relate to nation-building, state-formation and sometimes because of external threats also. The traumatic experiences of these human-made catastrophes are documented and subjected to study. Gender is one of the major constitutive elements in inflecting the experiences of ‘conflict’ and trauma in war-torn societies. But there is always a tendency to conflate the experiences of men as the ‘human’ experiences of trauma. Marginal voices from societies are rarely heard in

‘his’stories. Memories are the only possible counter tools to question the linearity of hegemonic historical narratives written by the privileged. Thus a political action is embodied in the act of remembrance when the collective, public, hegemonic memory fails to acknowledge the voices of vulnerable sections of society.

The intended paper tries to engage in a feminist reading of memories in *The Orders Were to Rape You* (2021) and *Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora* (2016). Writers who contributed to the texts chose to travel across generational and national boundaries to document their lost past. The paper looks into the ways in which memories act and are transmitted across nations and generations to reflect on the feminist politics of remembrance in the South Asian context.

Keywords: Postmemory, Vulnerability , Sisterhood , South Asian women.

### **Dialectics of Indigeneity: fluidity, contestations and gender in the context of northeast India**

Himalee Deka (Faculty, Maharaja Agrasen College)

The ideological concept of indigeneity is neither fixed nor denied to an absolute definition, rather it works as a fluid ideology which germinates many contestations. The dialectics of indigeneity is often riddled with many counter arguments like how to define who are the first settlers of a particular geographical territory or a space or how to define the exact definition of indigeneity in a geographical territory when most of the communities inhabiting that region claim being indigenous of that land, or which are the identical markers to define that. This becomes problematic many times and this results in an identity politics, chaos which most of the times paves way to a civil war or ethnic violence. Thus the idea of indigeneity works “as a political resource in identity politics ... it intersects with local, national and global sociopolitical debates following the framework of “us” versus them in various contexts.” And if we were to discuss the discourse of indigeneity in the context of northeast India, it becomes more of a maze of arguments and counter arguments. The fluid nature of the term makes it more difficult to define who are the first settlers of this region, since the region is home to multifarious ethnic communities who came at different points of history. There has been a series of events which has commenced at different points of time reinforces the clear distinction between us/them. Arupa Patangia Kalita’s *Felanee* shows the intricacies of the idea of indigeneity, how it can impact the socioeconomic and sociopolitical situation of a state or region as well as lives of individuals. Therefore, the paper will attempt to analyse the nuances of indigeneity, how it has been a huge factor to be reflected in politics, literature or other fields.

### **Silent Scars: The Invisible Psychosocial battles in Dramatic Narratives**

Hitaishi Chauhan (Faculty Member, Nagpur Institute of Technology)

Albert Camus says, “A guilty conscience needs to confess. A work of art is a confession.” Drama exhibits the artistic power play of characters dealing with invisible agony dominated by societal norms. Today’s world is full of modern blissful spies and artificial intelligence adversities. Human capacity is defined as bystander whereas trust in sensors

has increased instead of senses. World dominated by machine has overshadowed the human psyche and emotions as work expectation is leading to work exploitation which is very much visible through the increasing suicide attempts. In this era of physical evidence, it's difficult to seek justice to find emotional solace. Unlike visible scars, invisible scars run deeper, representing emotional and psychological wounds that grow gradually and are influenced by our social environment. This brings our attention to the concept of Psychosocial Trauma which looks at an individual in the context of the combined influence that psychological factors and the surrounding social environment have on their physical and mental wellness and their ability to function. As Adolf Meyer states, "We cannot understand the individual presentation of mental illness, without knowing how that person functions in the environment." The psychosocial theory is accompanied by Trauma studies to deal with agony, pain and societal human misery. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. However, a person may experience trauma as a response to any event they find physically or emotionally threatening or harmful. This paper will discuss how drama can or is playing a crucial role in dealing with psychosocial trauma specifically concerning the plays of Manjula Padmanabhan and Manjima Chatterjee.

### **Mapping Trauma through Social Lenses: Resilience, Resistance and Healing in Bangla Urban 'New' Songs**

Hriya Banerjee (Netaji Subhash Engineering College)

"My songs were not matching with my surroundings. ... I'd seen a corpse of a young man in the canal beside me...the knife was still stabbed on his back. ... I was going to office...I was 23...all of a sudden a man came up and pointed a pistol at me... used a slang and enquired who'd slept with my mother – Mao Se Tung or Zhou Enlai? I admit that from that moment I am a terrorist. This man made a terrorist out of me." – Kabir Suman.

Bangla song was going through a vacuum that did not reflect the traumatic socio-political chaos in Bengal, especially since the Naxalite Movement in the 60s-70s. Major attempt at voicing the angst of the times was made by Moheener GhoRaguli in the mid 70s, though they were not well-received at that time. With the arrival of Suman Chattopadhyay in the portico of Bangla music in 1992, the language, expression and subjects of Bangla songs changed – they started mirroring the anxieties and trauma of the contemporary times. Besides Suman, artistes like Nachiketa, Anjan Dutta, Pratul Mukhopadhyay, Bipul-Anushree and music bands like Cactus or Fossils used their compositions as a mode of resilience and weapon of resistance against complex traumatic issues of gender, class, religion or even loneliness in the modern urban set-up. Contemporary incidents like the demolition of Babri Masjid, the Bantala-rape case or the murder of Graham Stuart Steins came up in the 'new' Bangla songs. This purgation of repressed emotions and utterance of shared pain acted as a mode of healing for the Bangla audience – cathartic expressions of collective as well as individual trauma, which were missing in Bangla music till then.

My paper aims to trace the representations of socio-political trauma in Bangla 'new' songs, and investigate how resilience and resistance to the same bring about a healing through ventilation of collective and individual expressions.

**Memory and the Post-Apocalyptic World: Encountering History as its Spectral 'Other'**

Indrani Das Gupta (Assistant Professor, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi)

The predominance of the motif of 'memory' in contemporary fiction has often functioned as the key to connect us to our distant past and to restore our broken selves. The significance and value of memory has been understood as foundational to identity to both remember and negotiate traumatic incidents and to critically engage with the socio-political vectors of modernity. An enigma that both soothes and unsettles us, memory often operates in a dialectical manner between past and present, self and other, human and non-human, representation and non-representation, etc. In this paper, memory draws our attention to an age where "the dichotomy between natural and unnatural, made and born" is "confound[ed]" (Hayles 157), and subsequently engage with what Ulrich Beck identified as intrusions of a traumatic past (1). In Priya Sarukkai Chhabria's novel, *Clone* (2019), the traumatic historical encounters of a clone with its human original functions as a series of "spectral intrusion[s]" (Beck 1) that engenders a critical understanding of the entwined relationship of humans and non-humans. Simultaneously, the novel's representation of digitalising of memory as historical archives in museums enumerates an experiential world of a cyborg (clone), and which opens the "wounds of history" (Bell 2). Chhabria's novel rewrites history by including the spectral figure of the posthuman to revise liberal humanist concerns.

**'An Odd Museum of Ideas': Representation of Resistance in *The White Tiger*;**

Jaya Sarkar (Assistant Professor, Mahindra University)

The proposed paper will analyze the precarious characterization of Balram Halwai, a driver, in the 2021 film *The White Tiger*, based on the novel of the same name written by Aravind Adiga. This film throws light on the marginalized and the invisible voices of the globalizing world- the domestic help. The film studied in the proposed article will offer an entry point into the plight of domestic workers as they exist in social and cultural margins. The domestic space goes from personal and private to a contact zone where people from different castes and classes come together, resulting in a juxtaposition of localities, social classes, desires, and experiences. The film presents a stark reality of the underprivileged and offers an honest portrayal of a driver by showcasing actual social realities. The character of Balram Halwai, played by Adarsh Gourav, is not likable as he goes on to fulfill the dreams of his employer after murdering him. The abuse and neglect experienced by Balram are presented without the need to provide an idealistic viewpoint or a solution to his turmoil. The struggles and resistances represented by Balram facilitate the production of new dynamics within an already established network of power relations. A performative disruption of the 'order of things' occurs when Balram forges a new politics of the self. By engaging with Judith Butler's theory of precarity, Foucault's concept of transgression, and Parvati Raghuram's theory of migration and domestic work

in India, this article will demonstrate that the domestic workers provide a focal point to the contemporary middle-class Indian domestic space because of their direct link to a poor socio-economic background while being a crucial part of the smooth functioning of such a household.

**Ideology as Antidote: Reconfiguration of Identity as a Healing Mechanism in  
Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age* and *The Good Muslim***

Jayasree Mukherjee (Assistant Professor, Usha Martin University, Ranchi)

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud defines “traumatic” as “any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield ... with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli” (1920: 33). This overbearing stimulus thus enters the inner layer of the human psyche that remains unprepared to deal with this unforeseen shock. Breuer and Freud have claimed shocks to cause a “splitting of consciousness” thereby creating a “double conscience” in every case of hysteria (1955: 9). This paper argues that such split or impaired consciousness seeks healing through a reconfiguration of the identity of the trauma victim who attempts to redefine her/his identity by affiliating her/himself with an identity of choice. The paper establishes its argument with reference to Bangladeshi author Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age* (2007) and *The Good Muslim* (2011)—the first two books of the author's *Bengal Trilogy* set in her homeland of origin.

Taking Rehana, Maya and Sohail as cases in point, the paper demonstrates the ways in which the characters attempt to remodel their fractured identities recuperating from the trauma of the War and post-War period by aligning themselves with three different ideologies that becomes the core defining element of their identity: Rehana with motherhood by securing possession of her children from the custody of her brother-in-law, safeguarding them in a war-torn nation; Maya with conscientious professionalism as a doctor serving the female victims of the Liberation War by aborting their illegitimate children borne through rapes at the hands of the Pakistani army; and Sohail with religious devotion by attempting to become a model Muslim. The paper argues that this commitment to a chosen ideology/philosophy is an attempt on part of these characters to reconfigure their identities fractured and injured by the trauma of an unparalleled political mayhem, and thereby, effectuate healing.

**Echoes of Silence: Cinematic Representation of Legal Trauma in Chaitanya  
Tamhane's *Court***

Kalplata (Faculty Member, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad)

The 2014 Marathi film *Court*, directed by Chaitanya Tamhane, offers a nuanced and unsettling portrayal of trauma as it is enmeshed within the bureaucratic mechanisms of the Indian legal system. Through a detailed examination of the trial of Narayan Kamble, a Dalit activist and folk singer, accused of inciting a sewer worker's suicide through his lyrics, the film exposes the systemic inequities entrenched in the judiciary. The courtroom, depicted as a sterile and indifferent space, becomes a site where the voices of the marginalized are systematically stifled.

This paper argues that the film employs cinematic minimalism—such as the use of static shots, the stark absence of background music, and understated performances—to underscore the alienation and dehumanization faced by the accused. The narrative structure captures the suffocating stillness that accompanies bureaucratic oppression. This aesthetic approach mirrors the disempowerment of individuals caught within a legal system that functions as an instrument of control, exacerbating the psychological trauma experienced by those who are already socially marginalized.

By positioning the courtroom as a space where legal procedures mask the perpetuation of structural violence, *Court* offers a subtle but profound critique of the judiciary's complicity in upholding systemic injustice. The paper explores how the film's restrained cinematography aligns with trauma theory, emphasizing how silence, omission, and delay become tools of oppression, and how these very mechanisms contribute to the endurance of trauma for the accused. In this way, *Court* reveals the intersection of law, trauma, and power, offering a quiet but scathing indictment of the Indian legal system's role in perpetuating societal hierarchies.

**“Her listless eyes”: Narrativising Developmental Trauma of the 'child-women' in Ismat Chughtai's Select Short Stories**

Kalyanee Rajan (Faculty, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College, University of Delhi)

The striking clarity and surgical precision with which Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai (1911-1991) laid bare the lives women inhabiting the middle-class Muslim households in her literary oeuvre, remains unparalleled to date, owing to her astonishing powers of observation and authentic, uncensored linguistic idiom she employed therein. Doubly marginalised by being both female and children in conservative Muslim households in Central and North India, the “child-women” in Chughtai's stories suffer considerable amount of Developmental Trauma (DT) as they traverse the rude intersections with the lives of adults around them, including encounters which suddenly eclipse their childhood. Researchers and Doctors in Psychology Departments around the globe continue to work towards gaining newer insights into DT and the impact it has on the lives of people who suffer from it. DT involves recurrent ill-treatment and abuse which could be in various forms of physical and sexual abuse, chronic neglect, witnessing domestic violence, being unloved by their primary caregivers, among others, in the developmental stages of childhood, all of which leave a lasting impact on the lives of the individuals who undergo it. This paper seeks to analyse and signpost the narrativizing of such trauma in select short stories of Ismat Chughtai, which serves as a powerful mode of bearing witness to and giving voice to hitherto-silenced section of the society in mainstream literary works. The stories that will be considered in order to examine and theorise the manifestations of DT for ‘child-women’ are “Tiny's Granny”, “The Wedding Suit”, “The Net”, “Gainda” and “Childhood”. Keywords: bearing witness, developmental trauma, childhood abuse, Ismat Chughtai, domestic violence

### **Memory as Events of Unforgetting in *Dayamoyeer Katha***

Katha Bhattacharjee (Student, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata)

This paper aims to examine the crucial catalytic role played by memory in the portrayal of trauma, both psychological and corporeal, of the Partition of India as experienced by the woman subject through the reconstruction and retelling of their lived experiences. Individual memory is transmitted and assimilated into collective and cultural memory, thereby, creating a national identity for the self and the community and in weaving together the strands of memory, culture and history. Narratives reminiscent of forced migration and displacement coupled with trauma, collective loss and personal pain unravel the repressed individual desires and collective consciousness about the homeland subjected to an abrupt closure without erasure. In *Dayamoyeer Katha*, the volatile nature of memory is highlighted when a single incident acts as a stimulus opening the floodgates of the pain of separation that had long been repressed and buried under the fragmented sense of identity and selfhood rendering the narrator extremely vulnerable. Furthermore, memory is perceived as a transcendental force which facilitates the narrator to oscillate between the past and the present, thereby, negotiating with the spatio-temporal and geo-political understanding of borders and boundaries. Collective consciousness is placed in juxtaposition to individual identity throughout the narrative emphasizing the interconnectedness of lived experiences and memory. The narrative, though primarily a nostalgic return to the suppressed past, does not always represent a romanticized portrayal of the native land. It critiques the gender disparities and societal differences within a strictly hierarchical society yet the main narrative of nationhood supersedes such fragmentations to arrive at a unified narrative of identity.

Keywords: memory, reconstruct, woman, identity, lived experiences.

### **Fexile: Mapping Portrayals of Women in Exile**

Kathryn Hummel (Faculty Member, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa campus)

This paper explores the concept of 'fexile'—a gendered, although not essentialist, experience of displacement, exile and trauma—and through its lens the portrayal of women characters and their arcs in South Asian written and visual narratives (from practitioners including but not limited to: Abeer Hoque, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Buri Bhai, Amrita Sher-Gil, Nalini Malani and Manjushree Thapa). Drawing on diverse depictions of exile, from enforced physical migration to cultural non-belonging, the paper discusses the spaces of ambivalence inhabited by these characters, showing how fexile can manifest internally, often through memory, as well as through tangible, geographic relocation. Readdressing the narrative binary structure that traditionally associates women with subjectivity, nature and domestic spaces and men with objectivity, civic engagement and the public sphere, the discussion underlines a corollary between portrayals of fexile as embodied, emotional and psychological and narratives of trauma, resilience, decolonisation and hybridity in regional contexts.

**On Reminding and Remaining: The Play of Dichotomies in Shehan Karunatilaka's  
*The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida***

Kavya Mitchi D. (PhD Scholar, National Institute of Technology Calicut)

History occupies an indomitable position in constructing and reinforcing ideas of what and who constitute a nation based on the paradigm of inclusion and exclusion. This becomes apparent in the case of post-conflict societies where the historical narrative from the perspective of the perpetrator of violence differs drastically from that of the victim. Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* (2022) acts as a counter-narrative to challenge dominant historical records of the Tamil Genocide in Sri Lanka and recover marginalized voices. The novel revolves around a murdered journalist, Maali Almeida, whose afterlife mission is to implicate the Sri Lankan government, IPKF and the United Nations in the violent conflicts involving LTTE. Borrowing Dipesh Chakrabarty's notion of historical wounds as a "particular mix of history and memory," the paper seeks to understand how the "wounded" remember and experience their past (78). As opposed to a linear and strictly objective method of remembering, the historical wound enables diverse forms of narrativizing the trauma faced by minority communities like the Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhala civilians who were caught up in the crossfire between the LTTE and the government. James Berger's theoretical insights on the "apocalyptic representations of historical catastrophes" is beneficial in recognizing the protagonist's position as a ghost shaped by the historical wounds (xii). The paper states that the ghost serves a dual purpose. On one hand, it exists as a spectral reminder of unresolved trauma, evoking an amalgamation of horror, fascination and relief on the account of being acknowledged. On the other hand, the ghost is a representative of all that remains amidst the forced disappearances, obliterated memories and silenced histories. The study thus reveals the potential of creative ways of remembering to resist and strategically subvert certain versions of history.

**Experiences of 'Coolitude': Literary Recollections of Colonial Spectres**

Khushi Atolia (Assistant Professor, Suresh Gyan Vihar University, Jaipur)

Sarthak Dogra (Independent Researcher, University of Delhi)

In the aftermath of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, the Indian indenture system was introduced in 1833, a reconstructed form of slavery, to address the labour shortage in European plantations, leading to "indentured servitude". The migrated labourers were called 'Girmitiyas' or pejoratively, 'Coolies'. 'Coolitude', in Edouard Glissant's conceptualisation, seeks to propagate a creative mode of expression as a response to trauma inflicted in the form of oppression.

This paper will examine the traumatic experiences and memories of the Girimits as represented in Brij V Lal's "The Tamarind Tree", Anirood Singh's "Passage from India" and Gitan Djeli's "Mother Wounds". These short stories present the spectres of a colonial past through narratives of (post)memory and recollection of a collective trauma. Their experiences serve as instances of unrecorded memory and challenge the idea of a reliable universal history. The authors highlight the plight of the Girimitiyas through narratives of intergenerational traumas and lived corporeal experiences. Djeli further nuances her narrative by depicting the trauma of women who migrated in this arrangement and shows



their double marginalisation as wives and daughters of “coolies”. Moreover, the idea of forgetting and remembering is explored in her story through her quest to locate her matrilineage.

Through a Postcolonial analysis of these literary works and using Marianne Hirsch’s concept of “Postmemory”, this paper will examine the experiences of the Indian indenture system presented through mediators who become custodians of collective memory. This paper will also portray how these memories have been transferred to the future generations of the Girimits and how they still haunt the community as ghosts from their traumatic past.

Keywords: Memory, Trauma, Girimitiyas, Transgenerational, Migration.

### **From Bhim Bhajan Mala to Dalit Rap: Remembering and Resisting Caste in the Hindi Public Sphere**

Kuntal Tamang (Associate Professor, Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi)

The discourse of trauma has provided a framework to comprehend the enduring impact of structural violence, both inherited from the past and perpetuated in the present. It has introduced a subject position—the trauma victim—through which marginalized individuals can occupy a political space to demand justice, seek compensation, and assert their rights. In India, Dalits and other marginalized communities, despite being granted equal rights by the Constitution, continue to face systemic oppression.

Literature has been instrumental in memorializing, renarrativizing, and providing testimony to trauma. Drawing from the work of scholars such as Geoffrey Hartman and Dominick LaCapra, trauma literature serves as a medium for “testimony” that not only addresses psychological wounds but also creates “empathic unsettlement” (LaCapra, 2001). LaCapra argues that it is through “performative engagement with trauma” writing imparts to readers a sense of the terrifying experiences it narrates, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the lived realities of trauma victims (LaCapra, 2004).

This paper aims to investigate how intergenerational trauma inflicted by caste oppression is expressed and resisted through literary and performative forms, particularly songs and oral narratives. These songs, produced by lower caste communities, highlight the daily structures and processes of caste-based violence and provide a medium through which collective trauma is remembered and voiced. Specifically, I will analyze collections of Bhim Bhajan Malas published by Dalit presses in Hindi during the late twentieth century in Uttar Pradesh, as well as the rise of contemporary Dalit Rap proliferating on YouTube. Through this analysis, the paper will explore how trauma is narrativized and transformed into acts of resistance that challenge and disrupt the oppressive systems responsible for its perpetuation.

### **“All wars are essentially wars against women”: Trauma, Violence and the Female Body in TD Ramakrishnan’s *Sugandhi Alias Andal Devanayaki***

Lakshmi Menon (Faculty Member, HHMSPB NSS College for Women)

Malayalam author TD Ramakrishnan’s work of historiographic metafiction *Sugandhi Alias Andal Devanayaki* blends history, politics, myth, and personal identity. Set against

the backdrop of the Sri Lankan Civil War, it centres on two women, the titular Sugandhi – a missing activist – and the mythical Devanayaki. Through the novel, Ramakrishnan explores how individuals experience and respond to systemic violence and trauma that results from masculinist power structures and how violence in war becomes a tool for asserting power over marginalized groups, particularly the politicised bodies of women.

This paper will examine the novel with a focus on how war and political conflict disproportionately affect women and how trauma becomes something that is experienced both individually as well as collectively. The novel's exploration of gender focuses on the complex and often contradictory roles women play in society, while its depiction of violence underscores the lasting scars of conflict on both individuals and communities. Ramakrishnan does not present trauma as something that can be easily overcome, but rather as a lingering force that shapes identities and relationships. Sugandhi's disappearance is an act tied to this trauma, as she becomes a symbol of those lost to the war.

This paper will therefore focus on the way in which the novel foregrounds how marginalised bodies can be manipulated to serve dominant masculine political agendas while at the same time highlighting how they can occupy spaces of resistance, how women are often silenced and oppressed by the machinery of war, navigate trauma, reclaim their identities, and resist the violence imposed upon them.

### **Echoes of the past: Sensory Experiences of Trauma and Resilience in *The God of Small Things* and *Burnt Shadows***

Lekshmi B (Research Scholar, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore)

Sensory memory frequently possesses a subtle force that acts as an intimate connection between past trauma and the ongoing struggle for resilience. This research focuses on how sensory memory defines trauma and resilience in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*. Both novels eloquently demonstrate how sensory registers aid in navigating personal and historical trauma, by confronting the past, thereby providing an emotional grounding to the characters. Considering food as a tangible and metaphorical medium for the communication and experience of trauma and resilience, the researcher examines how these memories, particularly those associated with food, serve as a crucial lens through which characters handle bereavement, preserve cultural ties and promote survival. A close reading of these novels will concentrate on particular sections that use food, physical experiences, and sensory environments as storytelling methods to memorialize trauma. Furthermore, the utilization of postcolonial and transnational frameworks will be implemented to investigate how characters adeptly maneuver through cultural erasure, displacement and resilience throughout diverse geographies and historical periods.

### **From Fable to Film: Rethinking Cultural Trauma and Violence in *Kothanodi***

Maitrayee Sarma (Research Scholar, Gauhati University)

Through an investigation of Bhaskar Hazarika's award-winning Assamese film *Kothanodi* (2015), this paper will look at how contemporary South Asian culture is negotiating its relationship with folklore, and how this negotiation is being shaped by

popular understanding of trauma and violence. The film is a retelling of multiple Assamese folktales, which were first anthologized in Lakshminath Bezbarua's *Burhi Aair Xaadhu* (*Grandmother's Tales*) in the early twentieth century. With its dense noir visual landscape and violent themes, Hazarika's film places the tales in a completely different genre, and by doing so highlights the violent subtext in indigenous folklore. This paper posits that *Kothanodi* is a product of the rise in narratives of "social horror" that confronts grim social realities, and the cultural memory of trauma that it signifies, through grotesque imagery. Mark Fisher's interpretation of the concept of hauntology, and the relationship between horror and crisis in visual media will also be explored in this reading of the film. The exploration of horror in visual media focuses on spatial negotiations, and Hazarika's film also attempts to do so by projecting the idyllic rural landscape of rural Assam as a space storied with lost cultural trauma and violence. Through an in-depth comparative analysis with the source tales as found in Barua's text, this paper will attempt to read *Kothanodi* as a cultural product of a society dealing with the difficult task of confronting the anachronistic nature of violence, and as a representation of a desire for healing on a societal level.

### **Vanni: Graphic Narratives and Memorialisation of Trauma**

Manish Solanki (Faculty Member, Department of English, Sardar Patel University)

The paper proposes to analyse the graphic novel *Vanni: A Family's Struggle* through the Sri Lankan Conflict in the context of memorialisation of trauma. *Vanni* by Benjamin Dix (Research and Story) and Lindsay Pollock (Script and Illustration) was published in 2019. It documents the devastating impact of the Sri Lankan civil war on the inhabitants of Vanni, the north region of Sri Lanka. It tells the story of two fishing families –the Ramchandrans and the Chologars– as they are affected by the 2008-2009 battle of Kilinochchi. Thousands of Sri Lankan families were killed, as collateral damage, in the armed conflict between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE. The narrative chronicles a five-year period encompassing the Boxing Day Tsunami (26 December, 2004) and the end of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009. It is an ethnographic comic that documents the loss of life, families, livelihood, and living with the loss. It also captures the alienating attempts at asylum-seeking in a foreign nation. It deals with current violence and the violence of abrupt and mass displacement that stays on after one has physically moved away from the explicit conflict zone.

The paper seeks to examine the various narrative strategies employed in this graphic novel in its engagement with the issues of family, warfare, violence, displacement, disappearances, torture, trauma, alienation and asylum-seeking.

### **Temporal Disruptions in Trauma and Disability in *One Little Finger*: A Theoretical Engagement with Robert McRuer's Crip Times**

Manisha (Research Scholar, Central University of Rajasthan)

Trauma studies and disability studies intensively focus on problematics of representation but are rarely explored together. This paper examines the relationship between time, trauma, and disability in Malini Chib's *One Little Finger*, through the theoretical frameworks of Cathy Caruth's trauma studies and Robert McRuer's concept of crip time.

Chib's account of living with cerebral palsy offers an experiential testimony of trauma of ableism, disrupts temporal continuity, and challenges normative perceptions of progress and recovery. Trauma as an unassimilated and recurring experience is crucial to understanding the temporal disturbances in Chib's narrative. Her encounter with exclusion and institutional barriers reflects Caruth's theory of trauma as a rupture in the linearity of time, wherein the traumatic event is neither fully grasped nor processed in its original occurrence. Instead, it reemerges in a fragmented and unpredictable way. Robert McRuer's concept of "crip time" provides a critical framework for analyzing how disability interrupts ableist temporal norms. Chib's narrative resists the conventional temporality of productivity and linear progression, as she experiences a non-normative rhythm defying societal expectations. Crip Times reconfigures time through the lived reality of disability, emphasizing the need for flexibility and adaptability in understanding how disabled individuals experience time. Chib's interactions with her environment, medical systems, and social structures reveal a disjointed temporality that aligns with McRuer's argument that disabled bodies exist outside the boundaries of normative temporality, constantly negotiating institutional delays and social isolation. By a theorization of trauma and crip time together, this paper situates within a broader discourse on the temporal dimensions of disability and trauma.

### **Between Domestic Distress and Collective Conflict: Trauma in Daisy Hasan's *The To-Let House***

Medha Devi (PhD Scholar, Central University of Rajasthan)

Daisy Hasan's *The To-Let House* (2010), set in 1970s-1990s Shillong, portrays the lives of two families, the landowning native Khasi family and the tenant migrant family, against the backdrop of the city's significant transformation. During this period, Shillong shifted from a cosmopolitan city to being embroiled in the struggle for native claims over the place. In the novel, the domestic or personal experiences parallel societal or collective disturbances. This intersection between personal/domestic and public experiences significantly contributes to the vulnerability of the migrant characters. When the domestic space becomes a site of violence, abuse, alienation, secrets, repressed emotions, and unresolved pasts, it embodies what Freud calls the *unheimlich* or uncanny. It then becomes a space that renders such "unclaimed experience" traumatic.

The use of flashbacks, fragmented narration, personification of objects, and distorted recollections of the past reveals the characters' inner turmoil and their struggle to cope with traumatic experiences and everyday realities. Each character bears the burden of their past, influencing their present lives and shaping their relationships. The paper explores the various facets of trauma experienced by both natives and migrants under different circumstances. It examines the trauma of young characters like Kulay, whose distress stems from dysfunctional relationships with his parents, and Di, a victim of physical abuse, to trace how these experiences affect their adolescent transitions. Additionally, it considers how the hegemony displayed by the native community at the collective level enables characters like Governor to exploit the migrants further. Finally, the paper investigates the element of the *unheimlich* in the novel as it manifests through grotesque imagery and subconscious fantasies, which, in turn, document the trauma.

Keywords: Shillong, domestic space, public experiences, uncanny, trauma, adolescent transitions.

### **Writing (about) Grief: Navigating Precarity in Selected Sri Lankan Writings**

Meenu Chaudhary (Assistant Professor, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi)

Sri Lanka's history is marked by a complex interplay of contested narratives and competing nationalist ideologies, which have often overshadowed alternative perspectives on the island's identity. The civil war engendered countless displaced individuals, profoundly affecting their sense of self and belonging. Resultantly, the histories of marginalised figures such as the migrants are often silenced to legitimise violence and ethnic discrimination. The aim of this paper is to place precariousness experienced in such conflict zones, within a transformative framework wherein expressions of mourning seek to reorient some of the interpretive definitions of trauma. In this regard, the works of Sri Lankan-born writer Roma Tearne, delineate the negotiations that are central in imagining the migrant self.

Tearne's *Bone China* explores the generational trauma witnessed by the De Silva family as the members traverse growing ethnic polarisation in Sri Lanka and the complexities of assimilation in London. The elderly Grace and the younger members of the family shuttle between the two spaces, hyphenated as they are, both as Tamil ethnic minority and as uprooted entities in a foreign land. The fragility of bone china is reflected in the ways in which the family suffers bereavement as it continues to oscillate between commemorating the ancestral home and claiming the emerging-self in the host land. The fragmentation suffered is carried across the nation-state as cultural dissociation as well as intergenerational friction, replaying the trauma of the war-torn psyche.

How does narrativising grief lend visibility to such exilic consciousness? The question will be explored through Judith Butler's reflection on vulnerability and its link to envisioning a reconciliatory interdependency in regions ravaged by prolonged wars. Butler's commentary on the ethics of remembrance can contribute in evaluating both systemic injustices and redemptive possibilities concerning war-affected grounds.

### **Human Rights in the Realm of an Interplay between Inheritance and Learning of Languages in India**

Mehar Fatima (Faculty Member, Jamia Hamdard University)

In the process of language learning and acquisition of a single foreign language, an identity crisis in making, denial of oneself may happen. A single language usage is a detrimental practice culminating in loss of linguistic rights. Hence, some languages are stigmatised. The linguistic inheritances like mother tongue, home language, regional languages and many domestic versions of languages fall under the shadow of shame and social ostracisation. To deprive a person from learning a language is atrocious, the loss of one's own mother tongue and home languages is a crime. It is to prevent a person from having different views of the world, as every language has a view. The multiple views of the world constitute multiple languages. Languages become identification markers. Another important study is the role of lingua franca. This paper attempts to foreground

the function of Human Rights in the realm of an interplay between inheritance and learning of languages. The aim is to examine the discourses of languages in the lives of the people in private and public spheres. Universalising a language may be an important topic to study in the diversified multilingual societies of the world. Some studies have found that crime also emerges from a certain kind of linguistic environment. This paper shall explore the language usage and their effects in the socio-cultural environment. In these spheres, it is pertinent to look at the constitutional aspect of language in relation to both linguistic majorities and minorities. Studying languages against the backdrop of International Conventions, Constitution of India and 8th schedule of the Constitution will reflect the human rights dimension in relation to language. This paper will also probe into the concept of Critical Pedagogy in understanding language learning. And the most important analysis can be made by a critical study of the Education Policies of India, with special emphasis on NEP 2020.

### **Bharati Mukherjee's Novels: A Journey towards Essence of Selfhood and Ethnic Identity for Womanhood**

Mohammad Sabir (Associate Professor, Nagpur Institute of Technology, Maharashtra)

Bharati Mukherjee's novels intricately explore the complex journey of selfhood and identity for women, particularly within the context of immigrant experiences. Through her protagonists, Mukherjee delves into the multifaceted nature of womanhood, reflecting on the cultural dislocation and personal transformation that accompany the migration process. Her narratives often juxtapose the traditional roles imposed by Indian society with the aspirations and struggles faced by women in a Western context, highlighting the tension between cultural heritage and individual desires. In works such as *Jasmine* and *The Holder of the World*, Mukherjee crafts characters who navigate the challenges of identity formation in a landscape marked by both oppression and empowerment. These women grapple with the duality of their existence—torn between the expectations of their native culture and the possibilities of their new environments. Mukherjee's portrayal of their journeys underscores the quest for self-definition, where the act of storytelling becomes a means of reclaiming agency and asserting identity. Her protagonists often undergo profound metamorphoses, shedding old identities to embrace new selves shaped by their experiences. This evolution reflects a wider commentary on the fluidity of identity, suggesting that selfhood is not a fixed state but an on-going process of negotiation and reinvention. Ultimately, Bharati Mukherjee's exploration of women's identity encapsulates the struggle for autonomy and self-realization within the intersection of cultural, social, and personal realms. Her work resonates with contemporary discussions on feminism and migration, illuminating the pathways through which women can assert their identities in an increasingly globalized world. The present study invites readers to explore the multifaceted meanings of womanhood and the quest for selfhood within evolving cultural landscapes.

## **Remembering and Forgetting: Bilingual Processing of the Trauma of Partition in Qurratulain Hyder's Self-Translation of *Aag Ka Darya***

Mohd. Aqib (Student, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia)

Qurratulain Hyder (1927–2007) was a leading third-generation writer of Partition Literature in Urdu fiction. Her third novel, *Aag Ka Darya* (1959), considered her magnum opus, shows a deep engagement with the trauma of Partition by presenting it as the obstetric death of a civilization while giving birth to the nation-states of India and Pakistan. It covers a period of nearly two thousand years while portraying a recursive set of central characters in different avatars and configurations who often meet a tragic end in the requiem for a dream of existential harmony. Re-imagining this long saga that the author denies has anything to do with reincarnation, she published its self-translation in English as *River of Fire* (1998) thirty-nine years later. Compared to the source text in Urdu, the English novel introduces remarkable variations, including a large-scale abridgement of details that significantly shortens the text, re-chapterization by giving them names and by re-distributing material over their bifurcations and aggregations, an altered mode of narration, the removal of paratext, and the rewriting of several scenes. In the perception limited by conventional lenses, these transformations in the text are often seen as 'mistranslation' or 'loss'. Challenging this view, the proposed paper looks at Hyder's self-translation of *Aag Ka Darya* as a source of 'gain' in translation by reading the source and target texts side-by-side in the light of the theories of language-dependent memory and reading the texts as inflected by the respective languages of encoding and recall. In doing so, the paper explores how Hyder's bilingualism affects her processing of the Partition trauma.

Keywords: Qurratulain Hyder, Partition, trauma, self-translation, bilingualism, language-dependent memory

## **Child Trauma and Pain: A Comparative Study of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khalid Hosseini**

Mohd. Ishaq Ahmed (Research Scholar, Maulana Azad National Urdu University)

In Khalid Hosseini's novels, the portrayal of child trauma and pain serves as a microcosm reflecting broader societal issues in Afghanistan, highlighting how individual psychological suffering intersects with socio-political turmoil, thereby illustrating the profound impact of societal instability on the development and resilience of children. The novels of Khalid Hosseini, particularly *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, serve as poignant narratives that delve into the profound impacts of trauma and pain on children in Afghanistan. This research seeks to explore how Hosseini portrays the experiences of young protagonists amidst the backdrop of socio-political upheaval and conflict in Afghanistan. By examining themes of loss, betrayal, resilience, and the search for identity, this study aims to uncover the ways in which trauma shapes the lives of children in Hosseini's novels. This research intends to illuminate the broader implications of child trauma and pain in war-torn societies, offering insights into the psychological, emotional, and social dimensions of suffering as depicted in Hosseini's compelling literary works. This statement outlines the scope and focus of the research on how trauma

and pain affect children in Khalid Hosseini's novels set in Afghanistan, emphasizing the thematic elements and the broader implications of these narratives. The study aims to uncover how Hosseini portrays the experiences of children facing adversity, trauma and suffering through a critical examination of narrative techniques, character development, and thematic exploration in his novels. This research seeks to elucidate broader societal implications, including the impact on individual, development, familial dynamics.

Keywords: Trauma, Psychology, Resilience, Loss, War-torn

### **Struggling in and for the City: Narratives of Pandemic Migration and Trauma of Displacement**

Mohua Dutta (Assistant Professor, Jaypee Institute of Information Technology (JIIT Noida))

It took a global pandemic, which prompted the country of 1.3 billion residents to implement the world's largest nationwide lockdown, to bring attention to India's long-neglected issue of internal migration. While no efforts were spared in repatriating immigrants, internal migrants were initially denied any infrastructural assistance in leaving the cities and towns where they temporarily lived and worked, forcing them to march on foot, crowd at bus stops and train stations, cycle thousands of miles, and rely on personal networks to reach their homes. Instead, the interstate workers were labelled as "violators" and disease carriers, detained and lathi-charged at state borders for violating lockdown orders, and had chemicals sprayed on them as a "sanitizing" measure. The literary response to this historical tragedy has been one of absorbing trauma, but also revealing how the relationship between migration, labor and capital is embedded in the specificities of caste, class, and gender identities. While novels and short-stories featuring middle-class protagonists explored issues of love, relationships, loneliness and frustration of being trapped inside spacious apartments, non-fictional books like *1232 Km: The Long Journey Home* (2021) by Vinod Kapri, *Homebound* (2021) by Puja Changoiwala, and *Jamlo Walks* (2021) by Samina Mishra and Tarique Aziz sketched a stark portrayal of thousands of desperate lower-class migrants forced to return to their native villages by covering thousands of kilometers on foot or by bicycle, evading police checkpoints, battling hunger, exhaustion and fear to embark on the long, potentially fatal, journey home. Although the cities remain as migrant-hostile as ever, laborers have returned to the city to find work, freedom, and empowerment. This paper examines narratives of pandemic migration and trauma of displacement through the lens of these contrasting and contradictory experiences of struggling in and struggling for the city.

### **Archives to Algorithms: The Evolution of Partition Trauma and Memory in the Digital Age**

Moumita Roy (PhD Scholar, Jamia Millia Islamia University)

This paper delves into the impact of digital technology on the preservation and transmission of Partition memories in the Indian subcontinent. It explores how digital platforms have revolutionized access to historical resources, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of this watershed moment. The paper examines the ways in which digital



archives, online collections, and virtual exhibitions have expanded the reach and accessibility of Partition narratives, making them available to a wider audience beyond traditional spaces. Deriving from James E Young's theory of "counter-monument" or anti-memory as in memory against itself, where consciously constructed memory through selective narrative or art brings the mass production of memory (Andreas Hyussen 1995), the paper discusses the challenges and opportunities presented by digital memory. On the one hand, digital platforms can be susceptible to manipulation and distortion, raising questions about the authenticity and reliability of online content. On the other hand, digital technology offers new possibilities for interactive storytelling, immersive experiences, and community engagement, fostering deeper connections between individuals and the past. Ultimately, the paper argues that digital technology offers both promise and peril for preserving Partition history and ensuring that its lessons are not forgotten. While it presents challenges related to authenticity and accessibility, it also provides unprecedented opportunities for engaging with the past in new and meaningful ways. By carefully considering the potential benefits and drawbacks of digital memorialization, we can harness its power to create a more inclusive and accessible understanding of the Partition's legacy.

### **The Illusion of Healing: Romanticising Trauma and Emotional Bondage in *Rockstar* and *Aashiqui 2***

Mousumi Biswal (PhD Research Scholar, Banaras Hindu University)

Prakash Chandra Pradhan (Professor, Banaras Hindu University)

This paper explores the emotionally destructive relationships depicted in *Rockstar* (2011) and *Aashiqui 2* (2013) through the lens of trauma theory and co-dependency. By applying Cathy Caruth's theory of belated trauma and Judith Herman's concept of traumatic bonding, this analysis reveals how the male protagonists, Jordan and Rahul, project their unresolved psychological wounds onto their female partners. Both men exhibit deep emotional scars from childhood neglect and career failures, which manifest in self-destructive behaviours. While their relationships initially seem to offer healing, they ultimately reinforce emotional dependency and co-dependency. These dynamics associate with Judith Butler's notion of melancholia, where attachment and loss perpetuate the men's self-destruction. Their female partners become emotional crutches, shouldering the burden of their instability while receiving little support in return. As these men spiral into self-destruction, the relationships become psychologically harmful, mirroring a form of emotional abuse. This analysis argues that love in both films is an illusionary remedy, masking the protagonists' unaddressed trauma and creating toxic cycles of dependency. The films present traumatic narratives on the dangers of romanticising emotional instability and the fragile boundaries between love and psychological harm.

### **Intergenerational Trauma and struggle for Agency in *Independence***

N Usha (Professor, Krishna University)

In *Tomb of Sand*, Geetanjali Shree emphasizes the pivotal role of women in storytelling, stating, "Once you've got women and a border, a story can write itself. Even women on their own are enough. Women are stories in themselves, full of stirrings and whisperings

that float on the wind, that bend with each blade of grass.” This perspective underscores the influence of gender and partition as a significant literary theme that has inspired numerous powerful narratives in postcolonial Indian literature. Similarly, *Independence* (2023), written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, delves into the intergenerational trauma caused by partition and its enduring impact on Dr. Naba Kumar Ganguly and his daughters, Priya, Jamini, and Deepa, across the shadow lines of the divided Bengal. Indian Independence changes their lives forever, and their children continue to grapple with the legacy of the past, highlighting how trauma can be inherited across generations.

This paper explores the psychological consequences of trauma due to partition in this fiction and the violence that followed, particularly after Dr. Ganguly’s killing in a riot on Direct Action Day in Calcutta. This event transforms the daughters’ once simple life in Bengal into one filled with anxiety, depression, and turbulence. The three sisters struggle to cope with their education and experiences, revealing the enduring nature of trauma. The narrative also uncovers the limitations imposed on women in colonial India, their struggle for agency, and the ways in which they can exert influence, even in adverse circumstances. This autobiographical plot is deftly woven into the historical context, and the emotional undercurrents are effectively depicted through the usage of tiny Bengali poems that have been translated into English.

### **Fragmented Memories and National Identity in Fikr Taunsvi’s *The Sixth River* Through the Lens of Trauma Studies**

Nahid Sana Khan (Assistant Professor, Zakir Husain Delhi College (Evening), University of Delhi)

Fikr Taunsvi’s *The Sixth River* (Chhata Darya) is a poignant account of the trauma experienced during the Partition of India in 1947, offering a visceral depiction of the violence, displacement and emotional devastation endured by millions. Written as a diary, the text chronicles Taunsvi’s personal reflections on the chaos surrounding the division of Punjab, transforming it into a literary archive of collective trauma. By blending the individual and collective experiences, *The Sixth River* exemplifies the fragmented subjectivity typical of trauma narratives, where the linearity of time and coherence of self are disrupted.

Trauma studies theorists such as Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra offer frameworks through which Taunsvi’s text can be analysed. Caruth, in her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience*, emphasizes how trauma resists full representation, leaving survivors haunted by repetitive, intrusive memories. This resonates with Taunsvi’s fragmented style, where events are recounted in a disjointed, often hallucinatory manner, reflecting the disorienting impact of Partition. Similarly, LaCapra’s distinction between acting out and working through trauma is pertinent here. *The Sixth River* illustrates how the Partition’s traumatic experiences were not merely a historical event but a psychological rupture that continued to affect survivors, making ‘working through’ difficult in the immediate aftermath.

The text also engages with Judith Herman’s notion of trauma as a disruption of connection—between self, others and the community. Taunsvi’s portrayal of Lahore’s destruction, a city once representing harmonious coexistence, highlights the loss of cultural and social ties, further compounding the trauma of displacement. Through these

theoretical lenses, *The Sixth River* emerges not only as a literary reflection on Partition but also as an embodiment of how trauma distorts memory, identity and the possibility of healing, contributing to broader discourses in trauma studies.

### **Still Louder than a Thousand Words? Trauma, Memory, New Media, and the Polo Grounds of Hyderabad**

Nazia Akhtar (Assistant Professor, International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad)

The growth of New Media in the twenty-first century has allowed for greater plasticity, variety, and range in/of artistic, intellectual, and public engagements in relation to trauma, history, and memory. This paper focuses on Susnata Paul and Aviral Virk's graphic strip "Operation Polo that 'Liberated' Hyderabad" (2018), first published in *The Quint*, and which depicts the precise nature of the process and impact of the transfer of power in princely Hyderabad to an independent Indian Union. It is not the first creative text – fiction or non-fiction – to portray this theme. What, then, does Paul and Virk's text offer to the historical record and memorative undertakings associated with this fraught period of Hyderabad's history?

In this paper I concentrate on the collage-like "pre-evolved" form, memorative/commemorative substance and narration, plasticity of medium, and conditions of production and circulation of Paul and Virk's graphic strip. I ask the following questions: What does a digital graphic strip enable for the act of witnessing on the part of new and old publics, and who, indeed, can be identified as publics with access to such freely available "content"? How does this particular graphic strip on Hyderabad's troubled past evoke a body of historiographical and visual representations, like a palimpsest or collage of sorts? What possibilities do New Media engender for the public archive of Partition? In addressing these questions, I seek to show the new constraints and possibilities created or catalysed by New Media for processes of remembering and reminding, testifying and witnessing, crucial acts in the performance of citizenship and belonging in relation to trauma, history, and memory in twenty-first century South Asia.

### **Silent Echoes in the Time of Crisis: Understanding Trauma and Healing through COVID-19 Narratives**

Neha Dagar (Research Scholar, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi)

COVID-19 has a history replete with traumatic memories of suffering, death, and void. The individual struggles and the collective pain of society have left a never-ending scar on the minds and hearts of people. During the pandemic, everyone talked about how to take care of physical health, ignoring the mental well-being of the patients and their families. I worked as a resource person under the Beat Covid Campaign with Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education (MGNCRE), Ministry of Education, Govt. of India from May 2021-September 2021 (i.e., during the second and the most traumatic wave of Covid). Drawing from the reports and experiences, the paper aims to highlight the trauma, silence, resilience, and psychosocial conditions through the narratives of COVID-19-affected people. I conducted 50 workshops across 50 Higher Educational Institutions (including IITs, NITs, government and private colleges, etc.) in Delhi, Uttar

Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir on “Psychosocial Skills for Handling Covid Pandemic Conditions”. I collaborated with the colleges and universities to form teams of students and teachers. I mentored them in volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic and providing any help possible to the affected people (Food distribution, medical aid, and especially psychosocial support). Reflecting on the ground realities and the day-to-day stories of people about loss and grief during COVID-19, I aim to investigate the multifaceted role of silence and empathy to understand how people express their ordeal. Moreover, drawing from the experiences, the paper will highlight the pandemic and post-pandemic anxieties of the patients, analysing the effect on their psyche hindering their everyday lives and tasks at hand. The paper will not only analyse the atrocities of the pandemic but also the collective effort of the community, especially young volunteers.

### **The Woman who Sing of Pain: Rethinking Trauma in the Goddess Myths of the Ajodhya Hills**

Nibedita Mukherjee (Professor, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University)

As scientific evidence postulates, the Earth’s biodiversity is fast depleting and the world is facing human-caused sixth mass extinction (Kolbert, 2014). The global horror of the pandemic has raised fear-led concerns about the negatives of unsustainable consumption of nature’s wealth and the ensuing environmental crisis. A constant effort has begun to look away from the megalomaniac, power and politics driven dystopian world view to ancient ecotopias of esoteric indigenous populations. The heterogeneous mountain and ensuing forest growths surrounding and protecting the “nation-state” of India has also fallen prey to the destructive axe of industrialization, migration and quarrying. But environmentalists such as Sunderlal Bahuguna, Kinkri Devi, C.K. Janu and Vandana Shiva have drawn the awakening of human consciousness towards the multiple environmental hazards and how one must battle against them for the integral need of *Staying Alive* (Shiva 1988). This paper intends to speak of the indigenous literature arising from these mountain-forest ecotopias and the traumatic experience of the people living there. The Ajodhya Hills have been an integral part of the extended mountain range of the Eastern Ghats in India. These Hills have been covered with forest lands since prehistoric times and are home to a number of indigenous communities such as Santals, Lodhas, Birhors, Totos, Kherias, Mundas, etc. This geographical location and the ensuing environmental degradation has made life and living a continuous struggle for them, especially for the female half of their population. They are the food procurers and providers and hence the depleting mountain and forest ecosystem has intensified their hardships in obtaining food, water, fuel and fodder. The intense hardships of their life has made them establish a deep bonding with the mountain which is essential for their existence and they have echoed their concern through their cultural rendition of folk myths and folk songs.

### **Farah Bashir's *Rumours of Spring*: Girlhood at Siege**

Nidhi Kalra (Assistant Professor, FLAME University)

Kashmiri women's narratives are an emergent area of study in postcolonial literary studies with close connections drawn from the work of Deepti Misri, Ananya Jahanara Kabir, and Amrita Ghosh. A landmark text has been recently published, Farah Bashir's *Rumours of Spring* (2021) and it stands out among other Kashmiri women writers for simultaneously resisting colonial visibility and juggling this while evoking her own lived experience of girlhood. The work paints a telling picture of how Bashir's own life and body as well as the lives and bodies of her family and social context live with and live through militarised conflict and constant potential injury, if not always dreadfully other and worse forms of threat, torture, violence, or death. The text portrays a complicated literary landscape that juggles journalistic, auto/biographical, and historical writing of the space of a Kashmiri home from an adolescent's perspective in Kashmir from 1989-1994. This paper will analyse key instances where Bashir's adolescent narrating voice presents inner turmoil that is at once personal and social, and certainly political and borne out of a portrayal of her girlhood. It will seek to problematize this framing voice through probing the risks of incorporating a girl's innocent subjectivity in the text while discussing the aspects of description that resist a colonizing gaze. Lastly, it will discuss how Bashir's text draws a roadmap for postcolonial reading of her text, ethically charging the reader as a post memorial witness through exploring the concept of Arielle Azoulay's civic citizenship, while running the risk of "well-meaning" feminist colonial appropriation as understood through Kayrn Ball's idea of the disciplining gaze.

### **Threads of Memory: Women's Textile Traditions as Cultural Resilience Post-Partition**

Nithyasree Narayanan (Student, The English and Foreign Languages University)

As one of the most traumatic events in South Asian history, the Partition of 1947 uprooted millions, tearing apart families, communities, and the fabric of everyday life. Amidst the chaos, women, often relegated to the margins, shouldered the silent burden of loss and survival. Yet, woven into the domestic and cultural traditions they carried with them, emerged an enduring narrative of resilience. Textile arts—embroidery, weaving, quilting—became vital modes of memorialising trauma and reclaiming identity in the aftermath of Partition.

Partition not only severed geographical ties but disrupted cultural continuity, particularly for women. In resistance, textile traditions—phulkari from Punjab, kantha from Bengal—transcended its functional role to become symbols of psychological and emotional survival. Each stitch became a thread of resistance, memorializing trauma while promoting cultural healing and adaptation. Creation was an essential outlet to reclaim agency for women, challenging the silencing of their experiences while offering pathways for resilience amidst chaos.

This interdisciplinary study draws on visual analysis of textile artefacts, discourse analysis of oral histories, and close readings of literary representations to explore how these textile traditions served as potent vehicles of cultural memory, community rebuilding, and intergenerational healing. In doing so, it reveals the ways in which

textiles allowed women to confront trauma, resist cultural erasure, and engage in acts of memory activism.

By focusing on post-colonial South Asia and the trauma of territorial occupation, this research brings to the fore the importance of minor artistic expressions of resilience over dominant narratives. Textiles turn out to be a personal therapy as well as a political act—a complex interplay between trauma, memory, and resistance. They helped rebuild fragmented histories and identities after partition while also fostering emotional catharsis.

### **Bhakti Beyond Religion: Fostering Hope Through Translation and Performance**

Nitya Pawar (PhD Scholar, Ashoka University)

This study explores the translation and performance of bhakti songs as a source of hope and community resilience during challenging times. Based on conversations with Chandrakant Radican, a scientist who began translating bhakti poetry on Instagram during the pandemic and gained influential popularity through his provocative and non-religious stand, and Shruthi Vishwanath, a feminist performer and curator of devotional songs, often found on the road singing them for the empowerment of women and lower castes, the paper investigates how these creative practices foster shared understanding and support. Bhakti—rooted in the Sanskrit word "bhaj," meaning "to share"—offers a framework for building supportive communities. By approaching bhakti from non-religious perspectives of translation and performance, this paper reveals its relevance for modern subjects, highlighting how these acts contribute to healing, resilience, and hope.

### **Available to be Wasted: Toxic Topographies, Eco-trauma, and Ecoprecarity in Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga***

Paromita Patranobish (Assistant Professor, Mount Carmel College, Bangalore)

This paper takes its cue from Puar's concept of debility as a form of forced geopolitical precarity and Mathur's application of it to contexts of ecological precarity as a necropolitical tactic of neoliberal consumer Capitalism-- to analyse the specific configurations of environmental trauma that accrue in toxic topographies, and to bodies that they harbor. With reference to Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga*, based on the rampant poisoning of human and nonhuman ecologies through indiscriminate aerial spraying of Endosulfan, I will examine how contemporary neoliberal extractivist economies of production engender particular kinds of chemically saturated, abject, and wasted spatialities. These become sacrifice zones in which death-worlds are serially manufactured through technologies of exclusion, disposal, and exposure. Such necrocapitalist cartographies of Anthropogenic slow violence in turn serve as crucibles for particular idioms of precarious embodiments whose disabled logic subverts normative metaphysics of the "anthropos." In *Swarga* the primary register of such precarity is not just the poisoned and maimed flesh but also the psychological and affective dimensions through which such flesh materializes as porous entanglements with the other. The novel thus deliberates on a politics of resistance that highlights this enmeshed ontology as a response to anthropocentric philosophies of bounded personhood. It explores states of eco-trauma and affective dispositions of grief, melancholia, attachment and care, as

offering fragile but possible exits out of the Capitalocene's rationale of metabolisation of planetary resources for profit. Drawing on a transnational field of waste and toxicity studies, I study Mangad's approach to the Anthropocene triad of toxicity, trauma, and precarity as a racialized borderland serving as a threshold for configuring alternative expressions of multispecies ethics, stewardship, conservation and commemoration.

**The Turn to the Fantastical: *Qissa, A Tale of a Lonely Ghost* as a Partition Film**

Paulomi Chakraborty (Faculty Member, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Bombay)

The Partition of 1947 has dominantly appeared in cinematic traditions of the Indian sub-continent in the form of melodrama—even if allegorically for many decades (Sarkar)—or, when taking a more critical path, usually through social realism. *Qissa: A Tale of a Lonely Ghost* (2013), a transnationally-produced, Punjabi-language film, directed by Anup Singh, takes recourse to neither cinematic modes. It is a startling film in many ways. Not the least of them is how it is a 'Partition film'—even if complicatedly, even as it complicates what we think is one—and how it slides into the fantastical mode. These two aspects of the film are, I argue, related.

In the proposed paper, I grapple with what the fantastic allows the film to do in comparison to other critical Partition films that stay with realism, such as, to take one memorable example also in Punjabi and transnationally-produced, *Khamosh Pani: Silent Water* (Dir. Sabiha Sumar, 2003). The fantastic in *Qissa*, I show, is counterpoised to the audio-visual literalizing possibilities of the medium of cinema, to give us a macabre, uncanny text that unsettles not only the nomenclature of 'a Partition film' but also established scholarship on gender and violence in relation to the Partition.

Engaging with *Qissa* in the above framework will allow us to think about several questions raised by the CFP, especially the one that queries how “artistic self-expression relate(s) to trauma, survival, resilience, and healing”. The paper will also contribute to the sub-theme, among others, of “Theorizing narratives, methodologies and representations: sources, sites, retelling, censorship, and contestation”.

**Rebel Rebel: The Paradox of Mehta's Unintentional Terrorism in Hari Kunzru's *Transmission***

Pier Paolo Piciuccio (Faculty Member, Department of Foreign Languages, University of Torino, Italy)

In this paper, I discuss the paradox that Arjun Mehta, the protagonist of Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*, can at the same time be considered a terrorist and an innocent person.

Hari Kunzru's second novel, *Transmission* (2004), is fascinating because it describes the idiosyncrasies inherent in the global system, as reflected in a number of clamorous contradictions. This paper addresses the remarkable paradox centering around the protagonist himself: after migrating to California, Arjun Mehta, an Indian computer programmer, is fired by the software company that hired him. As a result, Mehta creates a virus to demonstrate just how indispensable he is to his former employer. The virus that he unleashes infects the whole world, with some critics describing it as a terrorist act. However, this description of Mehta is irreconcilable with the novel's portrayal of him as

an innocent character: in fact, the novel unambiguously reflects his genuine ignorance of the devastating consequences of his action.

In my paper, I deconstruct the notion that Mehta can be viewed as an ‘unintentional terrorist’, analyzing his case from three distinct perspectives. First, the theories by eminent political philosophers such as Walter Benjamin, Hanna Arendt, Slavoj Žižek and Frantz Fanon will be employed to chart the use of violence either in generic situations or in response to global forms of capitalism. Second, Sigmund Freud’s theories on split personality as the result of repression affecting the unconscious will be utilized to shed light on Mehta’s incongruous behavior. Third, various anthropological studies will be applied with a focus on Mehta’s roguish and subversive conduct as a trickster.

### **Migration, Trauma and Women in Khadija Mastur's Partition Novel *Āngan***

Piyush Raval (Associate Professor, Sardar Patel University)

Khadija Mastur (1927-82) wrote politically charged novels and short stories in Urdu in the heyday of the Progressive Writers’ Movement in South Asia. The present abstract reads her partition novel *Āngan* (1962) from the perspective of trauma and argues how migration, caused by partition, does not lead to trauma but liberation of women. Translated as *The Inner Courtyard* (2001) and *The Women’s Courtyard* (2018), *Āngan* is set in the political patriarchal milieu of the 1940s and privileges women’s voices and politics. The āngan/courtyard, an open space in front of the house, surrounded by verandas on three sides, is a space meant for the protection of women from outside men, a virtual imprisonment. Mastur here focuses on women’s lives in the courtyard during intense global political events.

The partition of the India in 1947 was marked by tragedies like migration of masses, violence, rape and abduction of women and children. Though most partition literature focuses on violence, *Āngan* takes a different route in referring to the riots and atrocities only in newspapers. Aliya and her mother take a plane to Lahore without encountering violence at the border. Migration usually results in trauma but in *Āngan*, instead, it disrupts the patriarchal milieu and leads to women’s empowerment. Migration opens up new possibilities of independence for women who get liberated from the prison and violence of the courtyard. The movement of Aliya and her mother to Pakistan ends the traditional male dominance. As patriarchy and classism are destructive for women, Mastur makes Aliya avoid love and marriage, thinking that love is for fools and marriage is for slaves. Thus, Mastur in *Āngan* gives a story of partition, unmarked by traumatic encounters for its chief personages. It is a quiet story of women’s freedom, marked by loneliness and loss, but not trauma.

### **Carrying the Weight: Caste and Trauma in Atarjit’s “Gilli Pand Da Bojh”**

Pooja Duggal (Research Fellow, Panjab University)

This research paper examines the complex theme of trauma in Atarjit’s Punjabi Dalit short story titled “Gilli Pand Da Bojh” (The Burden of a Wet Bundle). This paper analyses the protagonist's experiences to address the impact of historical oppression



related to caste. Additionally, it looks at how socio-economic conditions further stereotype caste-based identities.

This short story depicts how the ‘mad’ protagonist fails to accept her husband due to his poor financial conditions. Instead, she can only see him as a ‘seerie’ (sharecropper) and a lower-caste Chuhra. The protagonist grapples with the socio-political implications of caste discrimination, where the burden is not only physical but also psychological, echoing the generational trauma faced by marginalised communities.

By integrating perspectives from trauma theory, the paper focuses on how caste and trauma intersect to create a multifaceted understanding of suffering and survival. Ultimately, this research paper brings to light the importance of recognising and addressing the layered experiences of trauma within and across cultures. By situating "Gilli Pand Da Bojh" within this discourse, the paper contributes to the ongoing conversation about the impact of casteist traumas in contemporary society.

### **Reclamation of Self-Identity in Digital Space: Narratives of the ‘Other’ from the Denotified Nomadic Tribes of India**

Prathama Sarkar (Research Assistant, Jadavpur University)

The politics of the self and the other significantly shape the dynamics between the center and its periphery in socio-cultural contexts. Dominant cultural forces establish a normative central stance, relegating nonconforming voices to the periphery or as ‘other.’ In India, this process of otherisation can be historiographically traced from colonial to post-independence times. One such instance is the Denotified Nomadic Tribes (DNT) of India. A set of nomadic indigenous communities was labelled as ‘criminals’ under the Criminal Tribes Act (1871) during the British Raj. In post-independence India, although they are de-notified, they continue to face widespread stigmatization and the legacy of ‘criminalization’ continues in different forms through the implementation of the Habitual Offenders (Control and Reform) Act (1956). Despite persistent societal challenges, including low literacy and high incarceration rates, contemporary voices from DNT communities articulate their narratives beyond these issues. They are actively archiving their artistic expressions and oral histories related to trauma and resilience, thereby challenging the state-sponsored amnesia. The Budhan Podcast, produced by Budhan Theatre, exemplifies this effort, by building up a digital archive documenting their oral narratives, livelihood struggles, and perspectives on the changing politico-social landscape, and citizenship rights. This paper will explore how these digital archives re-frame the ‘other’ as self in the digital space and how this podcast series influences the power-knowledge discourse in contemporary India. It will also examine the emergence of a new readership in digital spaces, contributing to the activism focused on identity reclamation and further this paper will theorize this initiative as a counter-‘otherization’ process. For this purpose this paper will critically analyse the pertinent legal-historical reports on the DNTs and the digital archives curated by the Budhan Theatre.

**The trauma of (Marital) rape: Writing as resistance and healing in Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You***

Pratusha Bhowmik (Faculty Member, Bodoland University)

The aim of this paper will be to employ literature as a medium to explore the lesser discussed concept of rape especially within marriage in India. The paper proposes to highlight the concealed idea of rape specifically existing in Indian society by referring to Meena Kandasamy's novel *When I Hit You* which represents women's language of pain and perspective on rape. By looking at the traumatic condition of the unnamed narrator, the paper will problematize the concept of rape and show how (marital) rape is not merely a sexually violent act of abuse, but it also involves patriarchal conditioning and ideological underpinnings which largely contributes to the trauma of (marital) rape. The unnamed narrator in the novel has been depicted as a survivor and the way she experiences the trauma of (marital) rape reveals a lot about the subtleties and nuances associated with the trauma of (marital) rape. The paper will argue for the need to bring married women's bitter sexual experiences out of the closet and show how the writer's act of writing can be read as an act of resistance against the patriarchal, conservative and outdated concept of rape which sidelines the sexual rights of married women in India. In the wake of recent developments in India to criminalize marital rape the paper seeks to contribute to the momentum by using Kandasamy's novel to promote women's concerns, more so married women's right to their own bodies. The paper will build on the scholarly theorizations of trauma and (marital) rape to also show how literature has the scope to address the silenced and invisible aspects of trauma and carries within it the possibility to address process of healing and well-being.

**Navigating Life and Loss on the River Ganga: Analysing Bhatiyali Songs as Econarratives of the Fishing Community of West Bengal**

Pritha Chakraborty (School of Business, Woxsen University)

Mini Chandran (Professor, IIT Kanpur)

The paper explores select Bhatiyali songs of fishing communities of West Bengal as econarratives (Stibbe 2024) that underline the intertwined realities of ecological precarity or "ecoprecarity" (Nayar 2019) and cultural resilience. Positioned within the framework of environmental humanities, the study examines how these oral traditions navigate the duality of rivers—the especially, the Ganga and the Padma—as both life-giving and destructive forces, shaping the socio-cultural and environmental consciousness of riverine communities. Through an analysis of Bhatiyali, the paper underscores how themes of trauma, displacement, and loss are intricately woven into the community's lived experiences and emerge in their cultural representations. Traditionally, these songs transmute grief into mystical expressions, offering both catharsis and continuity amidst adversity. However, as rivers increasingly encroach upon land and displace entire villages, the songs are undergoing a critical transformation—from mystical reflections on life and death to assertive voices of resistance against developmental projects and government apathy. This transformation signifies a growing awareness among the communities, repositioning Bhatiyali as narratives of resistance that challenge environmental degradation and articulate a collective demand for justice. By situating

Bhatiyali within the broader context of environmental humanities, this paper underscores indigenous perspectives on life and loss along the riverine landscape, contributing to the discourse on cultural/folk narratives in the face of ecological crises.

Keywords: Rivers, erosion, Bhatiyali, fishing communities, ecoprecarity, econarratives, memorates

### **The Un-talked Trauma: The Legal, Social, and Cultural Trauma of Marital Rape and its Resistance**

Pritha Sarkar ( Faculty Member, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar)

My paper aims to study the trauma of marital rape in India and its resistance through a web series titled *Sampurna 1* (2022) written by Anuja Chattopadhyay, and directed by Sayantan Ghosal. In the Indian legal system, marital rape does not have a separate legal recognition within the Indian Penal Code, and falls within the domain of domestic violence. My paper critically engages with these laws in India through a feminist lens, its limitations, and the failure in its implementations. Beyond the laws, the paper shall engage with the why of the violence through anthropological feminist lenses, followed by the why in the failure of its recognition. While dealing with the failures in recognising violence, the trauma associated with this violence is analysed through the text. The paper also moves into a deeper analysis into the why(s) of the trauma and its reflection in personal life. In the process, it engages in reading the internalisation of the trauma on the personal, social and legal front. Finally, the text is used to locate a united form of resistance through sisterhood that overcomes the patriarchal hierarchies between women set forth by internalised patriarchy to pose a challenge to marital rape. In their act of united resistance, the women characters in the series develop their independent identity on their own terms, while also challenging the established norms that silences the trauma. Thus, the paper recognises and establishes marital rape as a form of physical and mental invasion resulting in long-term trauma, while also exploring the resistances to such invasion by addressing the roots of the trauma.

### **The Shangri-la Urge: Interwoven Depictions of Loss, Refugeedom, Resilience and Mysticism in Contemporary Tibetan Novels**

Priyanka D'Rozario (Assistant Professor, DIT University)

Contemporary Tibetan writings in English offer a vital opportunity for the academic community to reassess the implications of deterritorialization and forced migration. These writings provide a unique perspective on the experience of the Tibetan diaspora scattered worldwide. The genre of the novel is a recent development in contemporary Tibetan literature. While poetry and autobiography have long been popular in traditional Tibetan literature, the themes have shifted significantly to exilic motifs since the Tibetan exodus. Beyond the conventional motifs of spirituality and religion, these writings now express the loss of homeland, culture, and identity, earning a place in the canon of exilic literature. However, a familiar narrative of “Mystic Tibet” is seen in the plots of the novels written by contemporary Tibetan authors in exile. The paper analyzes Thubten Samphel’s novel *Copper Mountain* and Tsering Namgyal Khortsa’s novel *The Tibetan*

*Suitcase* to understand how they articulate the loss of homeland, forced displacement, and the traumatic collective memories of the exodus. By using the method of textual analysis in literary research, it probes the problematized re-mystification of Tibet, a discourse that interweaves the contemporary conflicts of politics, history, identity, and territory with the popular pre-exodus themes of Tibetan Buddhism and spirituality revealing the resilience of the Tibetan refugee community.

**Intertextuality as Resistance: Unpacking Agha Shahid Ali's *The Country Without a Post Office* (1997)**

Raafi Ul Islam and Mutqeen Khan (Research Scholars, University of Kashmir)

Intertextuality, as a postmodern concept, rejects the idea of singular meaning and instead examines how texts interact to produce meaning. It acknowledges the diversity and fluidity of meaning, challenging fixed interpretations and authoritative sources. Agha Shahid Ali's poetry exemplifies this resistance to singular discourse and authority. This paper delves into the role of intertextuality in Ali's *The Country Without a Post Office* (1997) examining how it resists fixed meanings and embraces diversity.

Drawing from the insights of Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Harold Bloom, and others, the paper highlights how Ali's deliberate use of intertextuality serves as a powerful tool of resistance, creating space for diverse voices and experiences while challenging monolithic representations. In this collection, Ali brings attention to the politics of erasure, allowing different voices to interact and clash, thereby registering his protest. Ali's work creates an intertextual dialogue that reflects cultural and personal realities, inviting readers to engage with the complexities of human experience across different contexts.

In doing so, the paper contends that Ali's poetic intertextuality functions as an active form of resistance, memorializing trauma while challenging dominant narratives. His poetry creates a space for the interaction of memory and dissent, allowing forgotten or suppressed histories to be heard, and reflecting the poet's protest against both cultural amnesia and political oppression.

Keywords: Agha Shahid Ali, Counter-narrative, Intertextuality, Memory, Resistance, and Trauma

**Women, Victimization, and Resilience: A Study of Select Indian Folktales**

Rajkumar Singh (Research Scholar, Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow)

Folktales are characterized by their profound depth and complexity, offering glimpses into cultural, social, and psychological dimensions of people. They provide insights into perceptions regarding gender and gender roles, shed light on cultural norms that both perpetuate violence and determine women's experiences. This paper reads three folktales "The Tale of Savitri and Satyavan," "The Tale of Tenali Raman and the Clever Queen," and "Birbal and the Queen," to delve into issues of gender-based violence underscoring how these narratives mirror and reinforce societal norms. It illuminates the psychological ramifications of trauma experienced by violated and oppressed women. Through an

examination of women's movements from victimization to resilience and even empowerment, this paper demonstrates how trauma molds their identities and influences their actions within patriarchal structures. Through the examination of these folktales, this paper underscores an understanding of cultural structures that sustain violence, as well as the transformative paths women undertake. The paper employs prisms of trauma theory, feminism, and patriarchy to emphasize the importance of reinterpreting traditional narratives to amplify women's voices and experiences, advocating for a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in cultural storytelling.

Keywords: violence, victimization, resilience, folktales, gender-based violence

### **Exploring Trauma in the Complex Interplay of Colonialism, Race, and War in Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters***

Ravi Kant (Assistant Professor, Sri Aurobindo College (Evening), University of Delhi)

This paper examines the complex intersection of trauma, race, and war in Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Water* (1939) focusing on the complex formation of the colonized subject. By drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Catherine Malabou, it investigates the psychic and corporeal transformations that emerge from the traumatic experiences of colonized soldiers participating in the First World War on behalf of the British. The novel presents a fictionalized account of Indian soldiers at the French front, engaged in a war against German forces—an alien conflict that becomes a site of profound existential crisis for the colonized participants.

Drawing on Catherine Malabou's concept of “destructive plasticity”—an altered form of subjectivity shaped by traumatic encounters—along with Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha's insights into the politics of “othering” in colonial discourse. It argues that the colonized subject's experience of trauma, embedded in both everyday violence and the battlefield, produces a paradoxical form of agency. In these encounters with the ‘other’ and exposure to violence, the colonized subject comes to understand agency, selfhood, and resilience in new ways.

Rather than reducing the subject to a mere instrument of colonial power, this newfound agency allows for a deeper comprehension of the structural hegemony of colonial rule and its limitations. The battlefield, governed by colonial norms, emerges as a chaotic space where sanity, identity, and agency become blurred. The protagonist, suspended between madness and destructive performance, occupies a liminal space—neither fully enslaved by colonial forces nor capable of true autonomy. This liminality challenges the possibility of genuine resilience or resistance in the face of overwhelming trauma.

### **Healing and moving on: Violence and the Everyday**

Reetu Raj Kashyap (Researcher, IIT Delhi)

Even though violence along the ethnolinguistic lines was common throughout the Assam movement (1979-83), the violence of '83 stands out in terms of its scale. While much fiction on the movement concerns this period, this paper engages with a few realistic short stories by two progressive Assamese authors, Syed Abdul Malik and Jehirul

Hussain, which were written against the backdrop of this tumultuous year. While these narratives do dwell upon the toll such violence extracts from its victims, the authors are more concerned with the ways in which the survivors deal with these events, which by then constitute a part of the 'everyday'. 'Resilience', which implies an inward-looking and passive acceptance of trauma, however, is not the keyword here. Neither is 'resistance'. This paper builds upon Suzanne LaLonde's idea of 'post traumatic growth' to argue that these authors, in their ways, demonstrate how these survivors negotiate and navigate this newfound reality where inter and intra-ethnic relationships lie in tatters. While eschewing a liberal-humanist perspective, their narrative hinges on how they crutch onto the relics of the pre-existing social relations as they build their way into a changed reality. Despite the fragmentation, it is the sense of everyday, ordinary interactions within the community (which is more than the protagonist's immediate ethnolinguistic group) that holds the key to healing.

### **Food, Ritual, and Power: Domesticity and the Dynamics of Resistance in Marginalised Spaces**

Rituparna Mondal (PhD Candidate, University of Kent)

This paper investigates the short stories "Dhani Bauri Gets 'Salvation'" (2012) by Sunil Kumar Das and "They Eat Meat" (2017) by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, to analyse how resistance occurs in a marginalised domestic space, which is often marked by poverty, underdevelopment, substandard living conditions, and a lack of access to socio-political and legal rights. In fact, pervasive inaccessibility serves as the very defining feature of these locales. Through a close reading of the selected short stories, this paper explores the intricate linkages between food practices and marginalised identities, to investigate how culinary taboos and ritualistic prohibitions by upper caste Hindus shape Dalit and Adivasi domestic realities. Utilising an interdisciplinary framework, this paper draws on Habermas's notion of private space as "a public sphere constituted by private people" (Habermas 1989, 30) and Michel de Certeau's notion of resistance through the performance of everyday practices, to argue that the marginalised domestic space is a fluid space that is shaped by the tangible realities and events taking place in the public domain. Within such a space, the performance of everyday tasks such as cooking develops into a tactic employed by Dalits and Adivasis to undo cultural erasure and resist the systemic and historic oppression inflicted by the hegemonic, neoliberal forces in Indian society. Overall, this paper utilises the literary investigations to underscore how the marginalised domestic space transforms from a site of confinement to a dynamic space of subversion and resilience.

### **Resilience and Neuroplasticity in the Face of Trauma: Coping Mechanisms in *Future Tense: A Novel* and *The Collaborator***

Roshima Uday (Research Scholar, Government Victoria College, Palakkad, Kerala)

Trauma is 'slippery blurring the boundaries between mind and body, memory and forgetting, speech and silence' (Bond and Craps 2020: 5). The victims are haunted by memories, hallucinations and feelings of detachment and derealisation. The present paper tries to comprehend intersection of trauma, resilience, neuroplasticity, and coping

mechanisms within the context of two contemporary novels: *Future Tense* by Nitasha Kaul and *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed. Both novels depict the dynamic interplay between personal and collective trauma in the Kashmiri context, showing how resilience emerges not only as a psychological response but also as a form of cultural and political resistance. The novels portray trauma as an ongoing process that impacts memory, identity, and community, while neuroplasticity facilitates characters' adaptation to their ever-changing environment. By examining these literary portrayals, this article highlights the interconnections between the two works, emphasizing how trauma in conflict zones shapes both individual and collective identities, and explores the potential for healing and survival in a region scarred by decades of violence. The study also draws linkages between trauma theories of Dominick LaCapra and Cathy Caruth. LaCapra's concepts of acting out and working through further provide insight into how characters in these narratives alternate between reliving their trauma and consciously engaging with it to move towards healing. While some characters are trapped in cycles of reliving their traumatic experiences (acting out), others exhibit the ability to reflect, adapt, and rebuild their lives (working through), embodying resilience. Through this analysis, the study seeks to contribute to broader discussions on the role of resilience, memory, and neuroplastic adaptation in trauma recovery, particularly in the context of Kashmir's prolonged conflict.

### **Creating a Witness: Negotiating Trauma through Cinema**

Saba Mahmood Bashir (Faculty Member, Jamia Millia Islamia)

Cinematic representations of the notion of "trauma" involve a complex interplay of reenactment and reproduction of emotions and patterns through an artistic mode. The representation of personal trauma through cinema is an attempt to create a witness for personal experiences that are repressed or forgotten and require for the person to gather evidence for an event that has escaped representation. This paper aims to understand the intersection of personal trauma and cultural trauma by analysing films by Mahesh Bhatt that deconstruct and address the "wounded" experiences of his life that cannot be readily integrated into life's master narrative.

Films like *Janam* (1985), *Zakhm* (1998), *Aashiqui* (1990), *Arth* (1982), *Phir Teri Kahani Yaad Aayi* (1993) and *Hamari Adhuri Kahani* (2015) offer an insight into how the repressed hidden trauma is rendered visibility and made seen, and thus at the same time rendered to debate and negotiation.

The visualisation of personal trauma through films lends Bhatt a space to transport repressed images upon the consciousness into a certain kind of social discourse where the representation of trauma leads into a journey towards healing and resilience and at the same time offer trauma as a medium of articulation. Using Cathy Caruth's Trauma theory that trauma is realised after the event is long gone, I aim to analyse the distance of representation of trauma from the event itself. Caruth articulates that "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (Caruth 210). I argue that the belated representation of Bhatt's childhood and early youth life experiences through cinema is an attempt at capturing the "missed encounter" through a certain

in/directness of cinema as a medium, and an attempt at gathering witness from the audience for the unspeakable and unrepresentable that begs articulation.

### **A Visual ‘Storying’ of the Partition of 1947**

Sakshi Wason (Assistant Professor, Zakir Husain Delhi College)

My paper proposes to ‘recall’ the unfinished story of the Partition of 1947. It will be a ‘visual’ recall, through an exploration of Vishwajyoti Ghosh’s graphic anthology titled *This Side That Side: Restorying Partition*. As the title suggests, it is an attempt to ‘restory’ the grand narratives of and around the Partition, keeping in sync with the ‘vogue’ to capture first-hand, eye-witness accounts of trauma and horror. This exercise speaks volumes about the realisation that there is a growing need to recall the repressed memories around one of the most horrendous events of human history. My paper will attempt to access these stories and memories through a discussion of two graphic narratives in the anthology. The first one is titled “Know Directions Home?” – visually, it is a digitisation of embroidery, as the narrative depicts the struggles experienced by a close-knit community of knitters and embroiderers, travelling to the ‘other’ side, in the hope of a peaceful existence. In the second graphic narrative, titled “Noor Miyan”, a child-narrator narrates the story of how his grandmother’s favourite kohl-seller stops coming to her and moves across the border, once the Partition is announced. One of the panels dramatizes an abrupt yet visually ambiguous move: we see Noor Miyan’s dark silhouette riding away from us or towards us (a deliberate ambiguity)- a barbed wire fence and a large suitcase is placed next to the bicycle in the frame. The metaphors are quite clear – the barbed wire represents the other side of the border. It is in the context of these two narratives that I will attempt to unravel and problematise pertinent issues of place/displacement, home/away, location/dislocation, mobility/immobility and social/individual trauma/memory.

### **Transfiguration as a Coping Mechanism in Negotiating with Insidious Trauma**

Sania Wahid (Gauhati University)

Resilience in the face of adversity may define man’s indomitable spirit, but the trauma that emanates from violence, especially one of patriarchal oppression, has been a defining force for the very identity of the woman across time and across borders. In the Asian context, the narratives of regulated gendered violence that substantiate the lived experiences of patriarchy induced precarious populations are a source of reviewing the concept of trauma. Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* (2018) and Anupama Mohan’s *Where Mayflies live Forever* (2022) invest the human female body with power drawn from nature, highlighting the interdependence of the two. Robin Wall Kimmerer, in *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013) talks about the Potawatomi concept of *mishkos kenomagwen* that insists on our deontological responsibility towards nature, turning the relationship of the human and the non-human worlds into a mutual care giving dynamic. This imagery is recalled in both Young-Hye and Veni’s ordeals in their resistance to violence and the turning to nature as a means of succour, healing, or negotiating with trauma. The transfiguration that results from the post traumatic coping mechanism furthers the



discussion of body dysmorphia emphasising how trauma catalyses a reconfiguration of the self in a fractured reality.

Nature acts as agency in both instances for the woman entangled in the concepts of sanity and insanity while she navigates the treacherous paths of retaining or returning to normalcy even as she straddles the notion of bio-horror and metamorphoses in this precarity of the Anthropocene. This paper attempts to qualify the trauma sustained from what Cathy Caruth theorises as insidious indicating a “constant lifetime risk of exposure to certain trauma.” (108) Analogy of ecological to human trauma affords a way into considering that the non-human world experiences trauma just as much as humans do.

### **Documenting the Afterlife of Trauma**

Sanjukta Naskar (Faculty Member, Janki Devi Memorial College)

The year 1979 marked a terrifying history of human tragedy of migratory deaths in a small island in the southern tip of West Bengal. Known as Marichjhaapi, later renamed as Netaji Nagar, the island is haunted by one of the darkest moments in Bengal’s already chequered history of partition and prolonged migration in phases. Migration of any kind carries within itself an untold tale of hostility and uncertainty, but the large-scale massacre at Marichjhapi opens up a new chapter on death due to migration and the pointless juggling of fates.

In my paper, I wish to engage with the tragedy of forced migration and coerced remigration, which not only resulted in unaccounted deaths and the indignity in mass murder but also engage with the ways in which dark corners of history are revived to help circumvent the stark memories of horror and indignity.

Recent engagement with the Marichjhapi incident has led to a public revival of the incident once again. Soumya Sankar Bose’s *Where the Birds Never Sing* (2017-2020) is a Photographic Project on the Memories of a Massacre. Baudhayan Mukherji’s cinematic version titled *Marichjhapi* was released on Zoom in 2020. The conscious efforts by filmmakers, novelists and journalists are attempts at revisiting the traumatic pages of history and extending the narrative beyond the written word. Most importantly in recent times is *Deep Halder’s Blood Island* (2019) which is a collection of narratives from among the (now aging) survivors is a seminal text that exposes a plethora of personal journeys of experiential trauma recollected through memory. Jyotirmoy Mondal’s *Sukhchand* is yet another novel which traces the agonies of Partition that finally culminates in *Marichjhapi*. Though late in documenting history due to political reasons, the belated attempts have accomplished a vital function of bringing back to life a crucial piece of history carrying with it a remote desire for reconciliation and acceptance.

### **Honour as Trauma: Affective Action in Shivmurti’s Tiriya-charittar (1987)**

Sanyogita Singh (Research Scholar, Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University)

In the wake of social, illegal diktats from khap panchayats, which galvanise honour, a woman’s dwelling, migration, and assimilation—from parayadhan to grihalakshmi—is entangled with trauma. Women’s everyday desires for freedom or frank sexuality are hemmed in, to preserve honour amidst kinship networks. This eventfulness and

situatedness of violence in the everyday of a landscape where western liberal thought and equal rights have shallow roots, prompts a decolonisation of the Western framework of trauma studies. Veena Das' discourse on embeddedness of violence within the texture of ordinary and alternate socialities, along with Sudhir Kakar's insights on permeation of hostility and indifference (motivated by folk narratives) into gender relations, guide this study. This paper examines how Shivmurti's *Tiriyacharittar* (1987) lays bare the mute presence of honour-based violence that pervades a woman's weave of life. Vimli, the protagonist, grinds against the everyday vulnerabilities of patriarchal ideo- and ethnoscaples. All the while, her life is also characterised by displacement, suffering and adapting to a new household. Vimli's lifeworld is punctuated by a violent loss of home that is exacerbated by her father-in-law's brutal violation of her body and self. Within this surplus of signification wrought by trauma, an affective response is generated. Initially forced by convention, and then tricked into submission by a licentious father-in-law, Vimli never contends with extraordinary monsters. There is no "state of exception"; rather there is a "crisis ordinariness", or what Berlant characterises as an impasse. Vimli's momentous response to being raped—the attempt to set her father-in-law ablaze—marks a radical break from the present of the patriarchy towards survival. The paper argues that Vimli's lateral agency and affective adjustment amidst exhaustive trauma acts as a vantage point that shatters the crisis of ordinary through a resonance of alternate realism and materiality.

**Loneliness, Trauma and Old Age: A Study of Pankaj Kapoor's *Dopehri***  
 Saurav Kumar (Assistant Professor of English, Galgotias University)

Dopehri is a Hindi word meaning "afternoon." Originally written in Hindi and translated into English under the same title, Dopehri is a novella that tells the story of Amma Bi, a sixty-five years old widow living alone in a palatial building in Lucknow. Amma Bi often feels lonely. She has a son but he is settled in America along with his wife and son. Amma Bi's loneliness is accentuated by a strange incident that happens with her every afternoon. Everyday, at 3 pm, she hears footsteps and rustling leaves, and sees a shadow standing just outside her room. Stuck in a frenzy of fear, she keeps herself bolted inside the room until the shadow disappears and the state of terror ends up. The incident has had a debilitating impact on her mind. It has become so integral to the daily routine of Amma Bi that the possibility of the barging of the stranger into her house instantly looms over her mind the moment she feels it will be 3 pm soon. This trauma of Amma Bi partly emerges out of her sense of insecurity on account of having an aging, and therefore vulnerable, body, and partly out of her sense of being vulnerable on account of being lonely. According to Kruger, Osler and Roberts, loneliness as a phenomenological experience in psychopathology mainly covers "experiential disturbances of how an individual relates to herself, others, and the wider world". The present paper aims at exploring the relation between loneliness of older adults and trauma in old age through a study of Dopehri using the lenses of literary gerontology and trauma studies.

**Narration of Trauma, Terror and Memory in Sarojkumar Roychoudhury's *Neel Agun* and Hassan Azizul Haq's *Agun Pakhi***

Sayak Moitra (Faculty Member, Centre for Innovation, North Bengal University)

The Radcliffe line which was drawn marking the end of colonial regime stands as an epitome of cultural upheaval across the South Asian region. The act which separated the Indian subcontinent on the basis of religion caused a mass migration from one part to another creating a narration of suffering and traumas. The huge mass migration cannot be just considered as a shift from one cartographic space to another but a challenge imposed over them by disrupting their psychological space. The radical mass migration due to partition and the various predicaments the victims suffer establish a collective trauma holding an ambiguous loop in the “symptom of history” (borrowing the phrase from Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*) while navigating and negotiating past, present and future. Trauma, initially, is a site of challenge to individual identity and essence before it becomes collective cultural trauma. Allen Meek in his book *Trauma and Media: Theories, Histories and Images* finds that trauma may not be consciously analyzed during the happening of the event, but the return of the invasive memories, nightmares, compulsive acting out and flashbacks.

This paper will try to analyze the trauma, terror and identity crisis from the partition fictions of Sarojkumar Roychoudhury's *Neel Agun* and Hassan Azizul Haq's *Agun Pakhi*. The selected novels have in common narrations of losses both individual and collective, of sufferings, and crises at every level. While *Neel Agun* deals with the trauma and victimization of the prime characters after they were forced to leave their native home of Bangladesh, *Agun Pakhi* deals with the story of a Muslim lady, who after Partition, was recommended to leave her own house in Bengal, India. In both the novels we can witness the strange entanglement with memory, connection and trauma of home and own homogeneous space to reflect over self-essence.

**Changing environments, altering livelihoods: Re-imagining “collective memory” and “cultural ecology” through selected novels**

Sayan Mazumder (Research Scholar, Jadavpur University)

In the Anthropocene, rapidly changing landscapes have altered the traditional ways of livelihood. Environmental degradation has forced migration, caused irreparable damage to people and the natural ecosystem. I will look at two novels *Softly Dies a Lake* (2020) by Akkineni Kutumba Rao and *Valli: A Novel* (2022) by Sheela Tomy. The effects of ‘development’, ‘materialistic agenda’ and triumphs of civilization over nature could be witnessed in these novels. *Softly Dies a Lake* talks about the lives of people attached to a freshwater lake. The novel inter-wines collective memory with history, it's a story about paying homage as well as mourning and remorse; to people, to the dying lake, to nature and an almost extinct way of life. *Valli: A Novel* opens up in the Western Ghats, a story of four generations of a family settling down here. The richness of the land brought colonialists, traders, migrants and tourist industries that took advantage of the Indigenous people. The stories of nature and the people, conflicts and resistance, sorrow and contentment mystify the readers.

In this paper I want to look at how these novels depict the changing environment and ecological crisis that forces one to alter their ways of life or migrate, how development does not always benefit everyone and might lead to traumatic circumstances. I will try to analyze the novels through the ideas of “collective memory” (Halbwachs) of the people, the relationship they share with the land, and H. Zapf’s idea of how literature works as a force/medium to self-reflect and self-renew “cultural ecologies”. The aim of this paper is also to understand how literature becomes a site of memorializing trauma and activate resilience and helps in beginning a process of internalizing the contemporary environmental angst and advocate towards “environmental justice”.

**How to Kill a Writer: The Interplay between Art, Society, and Trauma in Salman Rushdie’s *Knife: Meditations after an Attempted Murder***

Seetha Vijayakumar (Assistant Professor, University of Kerala)

Salman Rushdie is a living testament to the resilience of the creative spirit in the face of oppression. His life and work symbolize the power of literature to challenge authority, endure persecution, and provoke thought, showing how art can survive, adapt, and inspire even in the most hostile circumstances. He is the best example of how the interplay between creativity and traumatic societal experiences can fuel profound artistic expression. Rushdie's work, shaped by personal and cultural upheaval, demonstrates how trauma can serve as a source of suffering and a catalyst for bold, boundary-pushing narratives that challenge societal norms. *Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder* (2024) is an autobiographical reflection on Salman Rushdie's survival following the 1989 fatwa and the 2022 stabbing attack. The memoir delves into his psychological and physical recovery, exploring the lasting effects of violence, trauma, and the resilience required to continue creating in the face of existential threats. Rushdie examines the cost of defending free expression in a world fraught with ideological extremism through these reflections. The research paper tries to explore how Rushdie's traumatic experiences, particularly following the fatwa and murder attempt shaped his creativity. The paper also studies how personal and societal traumas converge, influencing artistic expression and the writer's survival within hostile cultural landscapes. Finally, the paper also explores the shift in the field of literature which I would term “How to Kill a Writer” from the previous “Death of an Author” era. “How to Kill a Writer” symbolizes censorship and persecution, targeting outspoken writers who challenge power structures, and highlighting the troubled relationship between creativity and control.

Key Words: Creativity, Trauma, Salman Rushdie, Society, Art, Censorship

**Archival Bildungsromane: Twisted Family Histories, Nostalgia, and the Partition**  
Sharmista Sen Gupta (Student, Department of English, University of Delhi)

The vast corpus of Partition literature, ranging from Manto’s gruesome short stories “Toba Tek” Singh and “Khol Do” to Bhisham Sahni’s “Tamas” which chronicles the exodus of Hindu and Sikh families from present-day Pakistan to India, has predominantly concerned itself with the gory description of communal violence, political turmoil, and,

the emotional connection between an individual and their homeland. Certain texts, however, adopt a bottom-up approach and delve deeper into how the personal is political by thoroughly examining the ways in which the body politic shapes the contours of human lives and leaves an indelible mark in their psyche. Two such works, Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988), exhibit literary brilliance in representing the confluence of individual life with political turbulence through a coming-of-age narrative. While the setting of Hossain's feminist heroine, Laila, in an opulent Lucknawi Ashraf family, is markedly different from the middle-class upbringing of Ghosh's unnamed narrator in Kolkata; both of the young protagonists become exceptional historiographers in documenting their respective family histories because their youthfulness allows them to be more receptive and open to ideas. This paper seeks to analyze how the genre of the 'bildungsroman' becomes an important archival resource in the South-Asian context, allowing readers to understand the regular lives of people and how the Partition led to colossal changes with long-term consequences. Furthermore, the problems associated with the spaces occupied by the two protagonists become the medium of clasp onto the memories of the past, before or in the aftermath of the Partition, is a central concern in the paper. The concept of the 'Proust Effect', or how the senses induce nostalgia will also be discussed in relation to the characters.

**Writing Trauma and Role of Gender and Culture in Trafficking Narratives: A Comparative Study of Patricia McCormick's *Sold* and Corban Addison's *A Walk Across the Sun***

Sheetal Kumari (Research Scholar, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee)

This study aims at understanding and situating the author's gender, culture, and linguistic boundaries in narrating traumatic experiences of sexually abused and trafficked children. Gender and culture play significant roles in interpreting literary narratives. The gender, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the author and the narrator have a substantial impact on the interpretation of literary themes, metaphors, and meanings. The study contrasts Patricia McCormick's *Sold*, which takes place in Nepal and eastern India, with Corban Addison's *A Walk Across the Sun*, which includes southern and western India, France, and the United States. The narrative advocates victims of South Asian backgrounds who have different linguistic, gender, and cultural agency from the authors, which complicates the interpretation of traumatic experiences. Through consulting the concepts of how the author's gender shapes the narrating structures, the study explains the role that gender plays in narrating traumatic experiences. Trauma and cultural theories advocate that storytelling structures (while narrating traumatic experiences) need to be shaped by extratextual components and interact with the underlying sociocultural contexts. As the notions of trauma are still in flux and vary in terms of nationality, culture, and language, the paper consults trauma theorists to understand the cultural and institutional conceptualization of trauma narratives in the contexts of their emergence. The experiences of a female child and young adults include distinct feelings and perceptions of reality from those of women and men. Moreover, children, women, and men do not share the same sexual social constructs, which explains the varying encounters of the victims as well as the different authorial interpretations of sexual abuse.

The study delves into the American culture and gender of the writers to analyze how their language retells the traumatic experiences of female victims from South Asian countries.

**Voice of the Silence: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Trauma in Shashi Deshpande's  
That Long Silence**

Shefali Kohli (Student, University of Delhi)

Tracing the labyrinthine structure of the human psyche has been a constant factor in understanding and determining the formation of an individual's self and identity. However, this self becomes psychologically paralysed when there is a constant flux between the ideal image constructed by society and the image one desires to achieve. This flux leads to experiencing perpetual trauma specifically in women's lives. To conform to the ideal image of being a wife and mother assigned by society, women often suppress their emotions and sufferings and resort to silence. The metaphor of silence as well as the perpetual flux of constructing a concrete selfhood is expressed in Shashi Deshpande's Sahitya Academy winner novel, *That Long Silence*. The protagonist, Jaya, a middle-class woman married to Mohan for seventeen years, is often silenced since childhood and continues to be silenced in marriage. While trying to remain silent and conform to her role as an 'ideal wife' with an 'ideal home and marriage', memories constantly plague Jaya's psyche, merging the past with the present, in the forms of dreams, nightmares, hallucinations, insomnia and feelings of detachment and alienation. The traumatic memories particularly resurface when Mohan's job is in danger which opens the possibility of her carefully constructed 'safe' home to be shattered into bits.

This paper focuses on understanding the intersectional relationship between feminism and psychoanalytic trauma through Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, with a particular focus on neurosis that originates from the resurfacing of traumatic experiences and memories. Though these memories provide psychological insight into the human mind and society, they also act as a source of catharsis and healing. In Deshpande's novel, employing the stream-of-consciousness technique, Jaya breaks all self-deceptions and artificialities imposed on her by society and is determined towards the end to reclaim her broken self and silenced voice.

**Memory and Trauma: A Study of Counter-Narratives and Activism in Select Dalit  
Writings**

Shibangi Dash (PhD Scholar, University of Delhi)

This paper will explore the intertwining nature of trauma and memory. Discussions of trauma frequently focus on issues such as war and environmental crises, often overlooking or marginalizing the pre-existing systemic inequalities within South Asian societies. This paper will look into the scarring traumatic memories of caste violence. It will delve into the lived experiences of caste to examine how individual and collective Dalit memories are shaped. It will also focus on how counter narratives are created as artistic self expression to engage in the process of healing and resilience. Drawing from Paulo Freire's idea that reflection by the oppressed can lead to engagement in their struggle for liberation, the research will examine how Dalit memories are mobilized to construct an alternative Dalit personhood. The paper will focus on Odia Dalit literature

and particularly examine the writings of Akhila Naik and Basudev Sunani. This paper will explore Greg Forter's idea of "structural" or "insidious" trauma which is persistent and often related to enduring societal pressures to understand caste violence in India. Writing serves as a cathartic process and a vital space of resistance, particularly in the context of Dalit narratives. It becomes a means through which the personal and collective traumas of Dalit communities are not only remembered but also articulated and made describable. In this way, Dalit trauma is not merely remembered as an individual or collective memory but becomes a force for activism and social change through its expression in literature. Finally, the paper will explore what makes literary narrative especially suited for communicating trauma and how Dalit literature conveys and is shaped by trauma, influencing both the structure and content of these narratives.

### **Illness as a Traumatic Experience: Reading Sangeetha Srinivasan's *Acid***

Shivam Kundu (Research Scholar, University of Lucknow)

Fictional narratives of trauma allow for the novel expression of traumatic events. While such narratives keep an aesthetic distance from the events, they nevertheless go a long way in making traumatic experiences a part of mainstream conversation. They also allow for an exploration of the means of resilience in the face of such events. A tragic accident that leads to disability, the sense of abandonment and the loss of one's family, Sangeetha Srinivasan's *Acid* voices many layers of trauma. In an honest portrayal of the effects of such occurrences, Srinivasan presents a narrative in which the characters' traumatic experiences and their personal journey of resilience. The novel further provides a view of the trauma of illness and disability and explores the challenges of caregiving. The proposed paper aims to elaborate the various manifestations of trauma in the novel. It further seeks to posit illness and disability as events of trauma and to elaborate on their experience in the novel.

### **Trauma in the Wake of Ecological Crises: Memory and Representation in Uttarakhand's Environmental Disaster(s)**

Shivangi Nautiyal (Research Scholar, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad)

Ecological disasters, induced by both natural and anthropogenic influences, have historically been sources of profound trauma for the impacted populations. This paper will examine the intricate relationship between ecological disasters and trauma, with a focus on the Indian Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, which has emerged as a paradigm of escalating ecological degradation in recent years, reflected in the increasing frequency and intensity of these tragedies. The catastrophic flash floods of June 2013 stand as a particularly destructive episode, alongside numerous other recurring instances of torrential rain and landslides, have caused not only widespread devastation but also left long-lasting psychological and social impacts.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1999) delineates how the chain of evils initiated by "man's assaults upon the environment" is "in living tissues for the most part irreversible." This paper will build upon Carson's argument, probing politics of trauma across both human and human-other spheres, contending how trauma could operate as a cause as well as an effect of ecological crises.

Foregrounding the environmental hazards in Uttarakhand, this paper will explore how trauma manifests on individual and collective levels. Select literary and media depictions of the same will be analyzed to understand how these events are represented and remembered. It will also argue how oral narratives have fostered resilience to cope with trauma during calamities, and post-disaster literature reveals the multi-faceted dimensions of survivors' trauma. Central to this discussion will be a textual analysis of Hridayesh Joshi's *Rage of the River* (2016) and *Tum Chup Kyun Rahe Kedar* (2023). These works provide critical insights into the interplay of memory, forgetting, emotionality, materiality, and social positioning in relation to trauma and recovery within the context of the aforementioned ecological disaster of Uttarakhand.

**"Bondage of Me to Me for Me": Body, Violence and Trauma in Tinna Hongngam's *A Girl of November - A Multimedia Art Exhibit***

Shivangi Rani (Postgraduate student, Miranda House, University of Delhi)

While making a case for transcending the universalisms inherent to the bulk of literature on trauma theory that, since its inception, has acquired a Western paradigm, Stef Craps argues in *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* that one of the issues in the field of trauma studies is the fixation on "the traditional event-based model of trauma" that understands trauma as a consequence of a "single, extraordinary, catastrophic event". Building on Craps' insights, this paper argues that such a model usually fails to acknowledge the staccato effects of quotidian violence on the body, of the various domestic brutalities that get absorbed into and become ossified as ordinary, everyday experiences of an individual. The repercussions of such a paradigm, then, is a 'double-neglect' in trauma theory. Not only is the subjectivity of an individual, situated in one of the many milieus that constitute what Carl Oglesby termed as the 'Global South,' subsumed into gross generalizations, but also the microscopic, recurring site of traumatic memory, the body, is overlooked. In this paper, I attempt to explore the notion of 'body memory,' its relationship with trauma stemming from domestic violence within the cultural specificity of Thai society, and the problematics of perpetrator-victim duality inherent in such instances of violence through the semi-autobiographical, mixed media (photographs and fabrics) artworks of Thai visual artist, Tinna Hongngam. Furthermore, I also analyze the technical and compositional modality of Hongngam's art to understand how its essential and material aspects reveal a subject's repetitive negotiations with trauma to achieve a therapeutic suspension.

Keywords: subjectivity, body memory, domestic violence, mixed media, Thai

**Narrating Public Trauma: A Study of Han Kang's *Human Acts***

Shobha M (Professor, Bangalore University)

This paper focuses on the narrative reconstruction of public trauma in the novel, *Human Acts* (2016) by South Korea's Nobel Prize winner, Han Kang. The novel explores the aftermath of one of the darkest chapters in South Korean history—Gwangju Uprising in 1980. Han Kang reconstructs the cruelty and viciousness perpetrated on the young students during the 10-day insurgency on Gwangju. The paper examines the way in



which Kang unravels the psychological, spiritual and political repercussions of the public trauma through individual memories that become the haunting testimonies to the suffering of a self and a community. It investigates the way we memorialize past wrongs that create layers of trauma which are painful and disturbing, and haunt individual/public conscience. It argues that Han Kang's narrative technique of making "the living talking to the dead, and the dead speaking back" offers a nuanced and insightful portrayal of the characters' struggle with historical violence and its profound effects on their sense of self. The paper intends to use relevant concepts from the trauma theories of Cathy Caruth and Dominick La Capra along with Marianne Hirsch's views on "post memory" in its attempt to understand the complex dynamics of survivors' response to traumatic events in history.

Keywords: public trauma, memory, historical violence

### **Partition Trauma: A Depiction Through Visual Art**

Shubhangi Shrinivas Rao (Faculty Member, Parul University)

The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 stays as a pivotal event in the history which has affected the lives of many and it still is. It resulted in mass migration, violence, deaths, murders, rapes and trauma that continues to haunt people and communities even today. The research explores how this trauma is represented in visual arts, particularly paintings focusing on the cultural and psychological effects of a historical incident of partition as a disaster rather than a mere relocation that is based on religion. The research studies the traumatic scars of partition through paintings by artists like Pran Nath Mago, Jimmy Engineer and Satish Gujral. The paintings explore the themes of loss, identity, trauma, separation and grief. These paintings reflect the agony, pain, and mourning of the refugees and mass migration with a feeling of dislocation and fears of death and offers emotional turmoil of the mass migration. The paintings not only serve as a reflection of personal grief but are powerful social commentaries on lasting impacts of partition. The research analyzes the paintings to understand the role of art in depicting traumatic histories. Painters translate the emotions into visual form to understand the impact of partition in contemporary society. The research explores the trauma that revolves around partition and how the trauma is depicted through the medium of visual art.

### **Memory and Trauma: Picture Books and Portraits of Tibetan Exile**

Shweta Sharma ( Ph.D. Research Scholar , University of Delhi)

India is home to several Tibetans living in exile. Though there are considerable novels depicting trauma and resilience of the Tibetan refugees who escaped the Chinese-controlled Tibet, there are only a handful of visual narratives on the same. Even fewer are the representation of experiences and psychological distress of Tibetans in children's literature. This paper looks at exile induced trauma and memory in a three-part nonfiction picture book series by writer and illustrator Aaniya Asrani which depict the collective memory of Tibetans in exile through the visual medium.

*Homebound, Homeland and Homecoming* (2018) are part of the Tibetan exile picture book series by Asrani that depict the lived experiences of three Tibetans living in exile in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, one of the main Tibetan settlements in India. Picture

books serve as “mirrors and windows” (Bishop) to children as they not only reflect the world we live in but also provide the child an entry point into this world. It is the need of the hour that children’s literature represents the lived experiences of children belonging to different cultures and ethnicities. The depiction of trauma and collective memory in picture books serve two-fold purpose. Firstly, it educates children about the resistance, survival and resilience of the people of Tibet. Secondly, they provide Tibetan children with positive role models.

In my paper I explore how the visual medium serves as an entry point depiction of memory and trauma of Tibetans through the use of maps, topography, and traditional Tibetan artefacts.

### **Unpacking Gendered Trauma in Jean Sasson’s *For the Love of a Son***

Sindhu J (Faculty Member, Bangalore University)

The focus of this paper is on the representations of gendered trauma in Jean Sasson’s *For the Love of a Son: One Afghan Woman’s Quest for her Stolen Child*, published in 2010. The figure of the Afghan woman has been more or less crystallised in Western feminist scholarship as an always-already constant victim of war as well as the fundamentalist ideologies, tribalism and feudalism that underpin Afghan patriarchy. At first glance, it would seem that Sasson’s work joins a long list of real-life accounts and fictional work constructed by Western authors which underscore this image of silent and helpless victimhood. However, this work emanates from Sasson’s personal interaction with the real-life Afghan woman victim Maryam Khail, after having heard her story and with her consent. The work employs a first person narrative of Khail’s personal trauma, emerging as a survivor testimony (albeit mediated) that also records intergenerational gendered trauma. Tracing Khail’s birth, childhood and youth against the immediate background of her country’s turbulent political history, the narrative focuses on her personal trauma located in the experience of war, a violent marriage and the kidnapping and subsequent loss of her first child. The most prominent faultline in the narrative is located in the socio-cultural fabric that enshrouds and invisibilises her experiences, with a patriarchally encrypted non-recognition/erasure of trauma at the personal/individual level. Through an examination of the deeply gendered nature of Maryam Khail’s personal trauma, the paper attempts to establish that her individual experience is linked in intricate and complex ways to the collective gendered traumatic experience of Afghan womanhood, illustrated in specific contexts within her narrative. Thus the paper attempts to suggest that this work aligns itself with and reflects the pluralistic texture of trauma that is characteristic of South Asian trauma narratives.

### **The Pressure of the Real: A Study of Two South Asian Trauma Memoirs**

Somya Charan Pahadi (PhD Scholar, Jamia Millia Islamia)

Cathy Caruth in her seminal work on Trauma theory in the 1990s contends that theorizing and narrativizing trauma, a phenomenon which simultaneously defies and demands our witness, is only possible in a language which is somehow literary. Recently, there has been a boom in the publication of the ‘Trauma Memoir’- a genre both literary and autobiographical. The aim of the trauma memoir is the affective transmissibility of

trauma. As Leigh Gilmore notes in her work, *The Limits of Autobiography* (2001), ‘The age of memoir and the age of trauma may have coincided.’ In my paper, I analyse two Trauma memoirs- Farah Bashir’s *Rumours of Spring: A Girlhood in Kashmir* (2021) and Manjiri Indurkar’s *It’s all in your head, M* (2020). In an interview with the channel *SheThePeople*, available on YouTube, Bashir talks about the evolution of the genre of her book. Ten years before publication, the book started out as a fictional narrative but she soon realized that the story demanded more. Subsequently, she published the book in the form of a memoir. This might be owed to what Roger Luckhurst calls “the pressure of the real” (*The Trauma Question*, 2008, pp.118). The trauma memoir, as explicated in these two works, is a genre most suited for the purpose of giving testimony to the suffering of a self and a community. While autobiography is considered as a complete account, the trauma memoir is considered as a lowly fragment. However, narrative reconstruction of traumatic experience is a cathartic process geared towards integrating traumatic memories and unveiling trauma-informed patterns in the survivor’s story. The dynamics of selective remembering, forgetting and use of pseudonyms are conscious choices of the author. My paper thus analyses the trauma memoir, which is although considered a fragment, but is complete and totalizable, as a resilient literary form in its own right.

### **War Trauma and Secondary Trauma in the novels of Anuk Arudpragasam**

Sowmya A (Associate Professor, Sri. D. Devaraja Urs Govt. First Grade College Hunsur)

This paper expounds on trauma impacting the direct victims of war and secondary trauma experienced by people not directly involved in war. It draws its arguments from Anuk Arudpragasam's two novels, *A Story of a Brief Marriage* and *A Passage North*. If his first novel, *A Story of a Brief Marriage*, captures first-hand experiences of victims in the Sri Lankan Civil War, and engendered responses to trauma, *A Passage North* chronicles the lingering impacts of war violence and nuances of trauma. Both novels portray the impact of war on the human body and psyche.

Trauma, the overshadowing effect of war, impedes the normal resuming of life. Trauma or shell shock was described as the product of womanish, homosexual, or childish impulses in men (Showalter). Janice Haaken, in “Cultural Amnesia: Memory, Trauma, and War”, remarks, “Traumatic events overwhelm existing meaning systems.” Dinesh in *A Story of a Brief Marriage* retracts to body-level activities like a tortoise retracting into its shell to preserve his sanity. Krishan, in *A Passage North*, experiencing intense survivor’s guilt reflects on the existential question of living in a war-torn world. This paper explores war-induced trauma in the protagonists of the novels, the polarization of mind and body as a trauma response, the gruelling realities of war, and the psychological impasse of victims.

### **‘En Route to Bangladesh’: Traumatic Memory and Violence in the Conflicting Narratives of ‘Birangonas’ in Tarfia Faizullah’s *Seam***

Srijeeta Adhikary (Research Scholar, Kalyani University, West Bengal)

1971 was a significant year in the history of South Asia. For the subcontinent, this included the India-Pakistan conflict and the birth of Bangladesh. For the newly emerged nation, freedom would come at a price and manifest as intergenerational trauma. My

paper explores the different facets of intergenerational trauma, found in the specific form of wartime sexual violence and experienced by women rape victims of the Bangladesh Liberation War, also known as 'Birangona'. The genocide and the targeted sexual violence during the 'Muktijuddho' were perpetrated by the Pakistani army and their local collaborators, called Razakars. The paper examines by looking at Tarfia Faizullah's anthology *Seam*, which recounts the harrowing experiences of the 'Birangonas' during and after 1971, their personal loss, grief, and the intergenerational trauma they endured as witnesses to the atrocities. *Seam* emphasizes that trauma spawned out of sexual violence is majorly disregarded in public and official memory and attempts to restore the voice and social status of many of the 'Birangonas' who also took an active part in the conflict. It is interesting to observe the intricate and misconstrued social identities of war heroines from being martyrs to being subjects of violence, as retained in the individual and collective memory of the victims. Thus, Faizullah weaves a profound yet fragile 'seam' to intertwine her personal grief with the collective pain and agony of the 'Birangonas'. Drawing on Dr Judith Herman's trauma recovery theory (1992), this paper further argues that the troubled histories we inherit are received into memory through acts of resilience and acceptance. I take this dynamic of memory to delve into the turbulent and variegated socio-political history of 'Birangonas'.

**Performing 'Reclamations': Resurgence of the 'Roots' in Kanhailal's Theatre**  
 Subhayu Chatterjee (Student, Jadavpur University)

Comparative praxis allows one to understand the performative tradition as a viable method of reading texts and their circulations across media and genres. The dynamism inherent in orality facilitates the formation of newer epistemes which cannot be encapsulated within fixed registers of meaning, stringently placed within the logocentric knowledge system. The story of Pebet originates from the repository of phūngā wārī or fire side stories told to the children by their grandmothers in Manipur. But Heisnam Kanhailal and Kalakshetra Manipur in their quest to figure out their Meithei identity, had formulated a renewed perspective to view this oral tale within the performative space. In this attempt, they were found to subvert the oral narrative for addressing the contemporary political situation and contesting the overarching indoctrination of nationalism and religion. In this context, an oral tale is found to traverse the spatiotemporal boundaries and propagate the emergence of a new language, responding to its renewed context. We find Kalakshetra Manipur reclaiming their cultural identity from within the performative space by falling back on the creative process of storytelling rooted in the ethos of their community. But how does one critically engage with the construction of such "archives of expressive resources"? This is the primary question that the proposed paper would engage with. I would try to analyse Kanhailal's treatment of the oral tale as an effective and ethical attempt to go beyond what Ngugi Wa Thiong'o terms as "aesthetic feudalism". In the course of the paper, I would also like to propose Diana Taylor's notion of the "repertoire" as the alternate archive which encapsulates within itself creative expressions like that of Kanhailal, which often reside in flux.

## **Museum Representation and Visitor Perception of Trauma: An Analysis of the Partition Museums in Amritsar and Delhi**

Suchandrima Das (Doctoral Scholar, Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani)

This paper analyses the representation of the trauma experienced by women during the partition of India in 1947 in the two partition museums in Amritsar and Delhi. Both these museums strive to be the repository of the people's memories of partition by showcasing their trauma through the objects donated by the survivors and their families, and their oral histories. The representation of women's experiences will be analysed by examining various exhibits in these two museums. Such an analysis will help in understanding the extent of a visitor's empathy and, in this case, my perception as a museum visitor.

The partition of India in 1947 has generated a huge quantity of primary sources and secondary literature. However, such literature is often written from diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives, which makes it inaccessible to people outside academia. But, public history can educate the people about the trauma of partition. Museums, as a form of public history, can be an effective site for this. The first partition museum was opened in 2017 by The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust in Amritsar. In 2023, another partition museum was opened in Delhi by the same trust. This paper is based on two separate visits to these two museums.

## **Political Trauma of 'powerpolis' : Reading The Graphic (Re)-Imagination Of Emergency In Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *Delhi Calm***

Sukriti Bhukkal (Assistant Professor, English, Department of Higher Education, Haryana)

Vishwajyoti Ghosh's graphic narrative *Delhi Calm* (2010) captures one of the most grave episodes in the history of India, in the graphic narrative form, a traditionally non-serious medium. The state of Emergency in India imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977 led to a political trauma that is two-fold; the first one being the trauma of abandonment and second being the trauma of revelation. The current paper proposes to study Ghosh's political sketches as representatives of the trauma faced by the people of Delhi. Portraying Delhi as 'Powerpolis' and Indira Gandhi as 'Mother Moon', the novel explores the period that apart from the repeal of fundamental rights, also witnessed an autocratic rule by state-aided machinery. While the representation of violence remains central to the narrative, Ghosh's text exhibits the looming threat in the lives of Delhi's citizens, through its documentation of the everyday life of the city and those who live at its margins. *Delhi Calm* begins by locating the individual at the center of political tensions. The paper shall examine how unlike the conventional modes of representation of historical events, the graphic medium recognises and highlights the 'constructed' and mediated character of the narrative, thereby accentuating the author's role in the representative process. Furthermore, by contextualizing Ghosh's text within the history of the graphic protests of the Emergency period, the paper shall also demonstrate how the graphic novel reinvents itself to narrate the history, not only of the period, but also of the cultural discourse that played a crucial role in investigating the Emergency and the subjectivities of its leaders and citizens.

## **Fragmented Flesh: Manto's Women and the Grievous Survival in Partition's Shadows**

Suneeta Chura (Research Scholar, Maharaja Ganga Singh University, Bikaner)

A significant trauma was caused in South Asian history by the Partition of India in 1947. It broke communities, displacing one and many. Amid this commotion, women's experiences were always kept in corners and under the rug. Burning with violence and societal uproar, their frames were always the field of bloodshed and battles, drawing cuts and scars of a nation with divisions. Trauma exhibits not only bodily violence but also leads to a lasting psychological abrasion. Sadat Hasan Manto (1922-1955) with his bitter and plain-spoken narratives, specifically "Thanda Ghost" and "Khol Do," reveal the most significant impact of the splitting of the nation on the female population. It foregrounds the strife and crusades just to exist in the landscape of relentlessness. Moreover, His writings are quite significant to understand gender discourse, art as activism, trauma as a shared experience, bodies as battlegrounds and to bring in light those stories which are always going to bring change to the nation. This paper contends that Manto is integral to the study of women and trauma in partition. It is about how it is so focused on the experiences of the marginalized and how important it is for them to "get their stories back" in the sense of South Asian literature, and how the partition never really ended; it just continues to the next generation.

## **Ineffable complexities in the reconstruction of human rights violation: a study of the corporeal-verbal language in Mauricio Pešutić's *The Barking of the Butterflies***

Surendra Singh Negi (English and Foreign Languages University)

How can a survivor articulate trauma in an easy, direct, and understandable language in the post-dictatorship context where the traumatic experience turns out to be a wound not yet fully discovered, investigated, or understood and when s/he is not even fully aware of her/his past or present? How can one narrate that traumatic experience where the corporeal-verbal language is full of gaps, inexplicable incomprehensibilities, and ineffable complexities? How can a traumatic memory be elaborated that, even after several years have passed, is difficult for the survivor to process in the present? Is it essential that the language of this narration of the recent traumatic past be conventional or can a new aesthetics be explored to achieve it? What happens when traumatic episodes are narrated in a not-so-defined or definitive way? This article aims to problematize some of these questions through a study of the corporeal-verbal language of *The Barking of the Butterflies*, a poetic play by Mauricio Pešutić to argue that the dramatized reconstruction of the human rights violation committed during a dictatorship can still prove to be a very complex task.

Keywords: dramatized reconstruction, corporeal-verbal language, human rights violation, traumatic memory

**Disenchanted Tales from the Old Home in *Qissa: A Tale of a Lonely Ghost***  
Sushmita Banerji (Assistant Professor, IIIT Hyderabad)

The temporal fixity of the event of Independence/Partition in nationalist historiography has allowed generations of Indians to imagine the Partition and the accompanying genocide as restricted to the year and event of 1947, and yet continue to repeat its violence in an attempt to complete the task of securing religious identities to their assigned national spaces. Just as the political histories of the nations created by the Partition continue to live with the spectres of its violence through repeated wars, so do citizen-subjects spawned by the new nations live in the shadows of old identities. This paper proposes that Singh's *Qissa: A Tale of a Lonely Ghost* presents the viewer with the spectre of a partition that never ended. This paper shall explore the function of memory in Anup Singh's 2013 feature *Qissa: A Tale of a Lonely Ghost* in producing and de-stabilizing gender, communal and familial identities, and real and imaginary histories.

The paper shall look at specific stylistic choices of the film's form to suggest that this historic cleavage the film populates with an indeterminacy of the corporal/non-corporal body, of the tentative presence of a ghost of days past, and the dead who didn't stay buried. The site of memory here is inhabited by fluid bodies that lie between genders, in between the past, present and the future, and ultimately in between the living and the dead. Memory here serves as an imaginary history.

**Matter, Memory and Cognition: A Material Historiography of the 1947 Partition**  
Swatee Sinha (Assistant Professor, West Bengal College Service Commission)

The paper aims to offer a more humane account of the 1947 Partition of the Indian sub-continent by supplementing a traditional historiography of the 1947 Partition as a geopolitical rupture with more intimate memoryscapes encrypted in personal memorabilia. By closely engaging with a material and cultural taxonomy of memory it recognises memory's socially embedded nature. Snippets of memory do not exist in an insular, discrete form but are infused with social and material traces which makes the very act of remembering a composite process narrated through family heirlooms and a trail of cultural relics transported across the border. Although comprehensive research has been undertaken in this field by ethnographers, cultural scholars and historiographers like Anchal Malhotra and Ananya Jahanara Kabir, in terms of signposting oral narratives through a host of objects, artefacts, and historical remnants, not much research has been undertaken in terms of investigating the role of these material traces in the reconstitution of memory as a process of neural mapmaking, necessitating a complex act of coordination between neural, bodily, interpersonal, artifactual, habitual and institutional aspects of memory as a cognitive act. What role do these objects play in facilitating the process of rehabilitation and offering a kind of refuge following the violent rupture and trauma of uprootment? How can these remnants of a lost homeland act as prosthetic aids to the act of mnemonic reconstitution thereby bridging the gap between declarative/explicit and non-declarative/implicit aspects of memory. Memory as a process of neural mapmaking or autobiographical memory unfolds as a social process drawing on a specific cultural context; the paper looks at the entanglement of the "embodied,

cognitive, affective, and cultural dimensions of remembering” (John Sutton) through oral narratives and anecdotes.

**The Religious and the Mythical in processing Collective Trauma: An Enquiry into Shehan Karunatilaka’s *Chats with the Dead***

Swathimuthu K B (PhD Student, Department of Cultural Studies, EFLU, Hyderabad)

Contemporary nationalistic politics in South Asia has taken a religio-ethnic turn. This involves a game of memory — framing and subsuming the past within a nationalistic myth through institutionalised re-narration. This process consolidates the values, symbols, and ideas of the majoritarian religion as a normalised part of the nation’s narrative. This phenomenon is observed in Sri Lanka with the centering of the Sinhala Buddhist foundation myth as the only legitimate expression of State power. The end of the civil war and the subsequent memory project of the Sri Lankan State have rationalised the State’s defeat of the LTTE as a righteous Buddhist struggle against terror. What are the available means of counter-memory against such a dominant religio-nationalistic narrative? This paper argues that literature acts as a significant agent of remembering and reinterpreting the past along with reframing the religious myths to counter-narrate as a means of resistance. This paper will look into Shehan Karunatilaka’s *Chats with the Dead* that uses Buddhist and Hindu mythological elements to narrate a story of one of the most violent times of the nation. It will argue that the same tropes used to communicate nationalistic significance are employed to de-centre the narrative and provide alternative ways of dealing with the past. It will then look into the instances of haunting, dreaming, and magical dealings present in the novel to understand how it expresses the collective psyche of traumatised Sri Lanka. Lastly, the analysis will illustrate how the novel is not an exception but is simply symptomatic of the popular modes of processing violent pasts in Sri Lanka – through the use of spiritual practices, fantastical narratives, and creative remembering. Such counternarratives offer communities a means of remembering and coping with trauma that transcends the constraints of state-sanctioned memory.

**Unaddressed Postcards: Looking at Tarun Bhartiya’s *Niam/Faith/Hynñiewtrep* as a Curation of Colonialism, Christianity, Faith, and the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya**  
Sweta Kumar Gaur (Phd Scholar, The English and Foreign Languages University)

This paper studies Tarun Bhartiya’s collection *Niam/Faith/Hynñiewtrep: Unaddressed Postcards from Khasi-Jaintia Hills*, a series of postcards that was begun in 2006 which explores ‘faith, religion and conversion among the Khasi-Pnar community’ to understand the ways in which these postcards negotiate with the complex history and the unique geo-political position of these hills in the “Northeast”. Juxtaposed with each image is often some text in the postcard, some quoting from the Uttar Pradesh government’s anti-conversion bill, some quoting literature from and about the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. This mediates the contextual control between the site of their production, where the photographs are captured and processed, and the site of their consumption. It is in these two sites that the discursive form of the content allows for a negotiation of the ever-evolving Khasi-Jaintia “identity” to show the possible, multiple ways of being a Khasi/Jaintia in these hills, which also highlights the responsibility of the storyteller in



how to report these stories. Thus, this collection becomes an attempt to address issues of identity that “emerge from the lived space of intercultural and interethnic conflicts, but [do] not evolve into a paradigm of conflict resolution” (noted by Sukalpa Bhattacharjee and Rajesh Dev in Ethno-narratives) and of the negative, stereotyped representation of the region. It does this by inviting viewers to engage with visual narratives of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills to understand the spatial dynamics that shape identities and cultures, and to reflect on historical and contemporary forces that continue to influence how we see what we see.

### **Culinary Memory as Resistance: Interplay of trauma and resilience through Gastronomic Identity in Esther David’s *Book of Rachel***

Tanya Sharma (Research Scholar, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar)

This paper examines how gastronomic identity functions as a form of resistance in Esther David’s *Book of Rachel*. The novel centers on a Jewish woman named Rachel, from India’s fading Bene Israel community, who develops food as means to preserve her cultural identity without any conscious attempt. As her community diminishes, she clings to traditional Jewish culinary practices as a way to keep alive the memory of her people.

Drawing from trauma and memory studies, this paper explores how a Jewish woman’s relationship with food becomes a means of resilience amidst loss of her heritage. The preparation and sharing of traditional Jewish dishes mirrors how tradition at times can be subjective too. Food, in this context, becomes a key repository of memory, connecting past traditions with present realities. This way, food becomes a flexible means of cultural continuity. In the context of migration, where identity is constantly in flux, gastronomic practices act as adaptable symbols that allow individuals and communities to remain connected to their roots especially when their community faces erasure.

The flexibility of gastronomic identity with that of tales of resilience is particularly evident in stories of migration, where food bridges the gap between the past and present, and between the homeland and the host country. This paper captures how food actively shapes memory as it is being experienced, turning each meal a part of the fabric of personal history. In *Book of Rachel*, this flexibility lies in Rachel’s efforts to adapt her culinary practices to the new social and cultural landscape around her. Her cooking becomes her way of fighting against her surroundings. This paper, thus, shall explore how trauma and resilience can find agency through culinary motifs.

### **Frames of Resilience: Narratives of Violence and Traumatic Memory in *Munnu* and *Kashmir Pending***

Tiasa Bal (Faculty Member, National Institute of Technology Calicut)

This paper engages in a comparative analysis of two graphic novels—Malik Sajad’s *Munnu* and Naseer Ahmed and Saurabh Singh’s *Kashmir Pending*—to explore how violence and trauma shape the collective memory and identity of the Kashmiri people. Set against a backdrop where brutal torture, mass killings, sexual violence, and disappearances have become part of daily life, both graphic novels offer distinct textual and visual portrayals of these realities. While *Munnu* employs a personal narrative of the

author to illustrate the impact of violence on individual and cultural identity, *Kashmir Pending* focuses on the trauma that has shaped the region's socio-political landscape. The narratives embody an act of resistance against the suppression of traumatic memory, while grappling with the fragmented collective memory left by decades of violence. The paper seeks to underscore the role of graphic storytelling in documenting and resisting the ongoing conflict in Kashmir.

The study examines the roles played by militarization and militancy as major reasons for the pervasive culture of violence that impacts the social fabric of Kashmir. This also reinforces the gendered nature of violence as a crucial part of the Kashmiri experience. Through the lens of these graphic narratives, which weave together themes of suffering and resilience, the paper aims to shed light on the broader discourse of violence and the enduring resistance of the Kashmiri people, emphasizing how memory continues to be shaped by the persistent reality of conflict.

### **Traumatic Imagination as a Site of Healing and Counter-Memory in Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida***

Vagesh Nandini (Student, Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur)

“There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses” (Foucault, 1978). The relationship between memory and history is inherently convoluted; as the state determines what is deemed memorable, subjective memories which counter hegemonic discourses are usually silenced and dismissed as delusions. In order to resist the imposition of silence, it is essential, as Foucault suggests, to interrogate history and construct a counter-memory that “opposes history as knowledge”. In this paper, I argue that Shehan Karunatilaka's novel *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* employs the tool of magic realism to establish a counter-hegemonic account of the Sri Lankan Civil War. The novel wittily uses magic realism to depict a vision of after-life in which the deceased, rather than fading into oblivion, awakens to inhabit and influence the happenings of Colombo - the city where they were silenced through an early death. By privileging the memories and narratives of the departed over those of living, as well as questioning the veracity of human thoughts by presenting them as whispers from the dead, the novelist restores the agency back to the deceased, which had been previously denied by the state. Drawing on insights from Eugene Arva's concept of ‘traumatic imagination’ - which proposes that magical realist writing style becomes a tool through which both author and reader “act out and/or work through trauma” - the paper contends that Karunatilaka, by envisioning an after-life where the deceased can revisit their memories from their previous life, eventually facilitates a pathway for healing from past traumas.

### **Caste, Moustache, and Resilience through *Moustache: A Novel***

Ved Prakash (Assistant Professor, Central University of Rajasthan)

When it comes to decoloniality, examining the power dynamics that may not be visible within the dominion of the public sphere becomes important. In such a case, it becomes essential to claim the public sphere and question the structural, ideological, cultural, social, and political knowledge productions that do not render equal visibility to

everyone. Moustache as a signifier is embedded in multiple meanings and contexts. From bravery, beauty, power, hierarchy, masculinity, caste, etc., the moustache has always had multiple connotations. The moustache is both personal and public. For instance, when keeping a moustache becomes a cause for one's death and trauma, it no longer remains a personal entity. In India, Savarna Hindus claim to have autonomy over the moustache, which makes them attack Dalits when they decide to keep the same. Smitha R., in the article "Why keeping a moustache continues to be deadly for some Dalits", argues that a moustache is often associated with virility and masculinity in many cultures. Perhaps, in the eyes of the Savarna Hindus, the mundane moustache becomes a signifier of supremacy and authority.

Within the theoretical framework of "Savarna Hindu Capitalist Patriarchy", the proposed paper will look into the issues of moustache, caste, and resilience through S. Hareesh's *Moustache: A Novel*. Set in Kuttanad, Kerala, the novel deals with the issue of caste conflict over moustache through the protagonist, Vavachan, a Pulayan. Coming from a community where people were traditionally banned from growing facial hair, Vavachan refuses to comply with the Savarna conditions of being and decides to subvert against the powerful hegemonic structures in his own ways.

### **Tea Garden labourers of Assam and Historical Erasure of their Trauma: A Feminist overview of Arupa Patangia Kalita's *Josnar Jhitas***

Violina Borah (Faculty Member, Daulat Ram College)

The far-famed Assam tea has an equally infamous and violent history. The East India Company planted the first tea garden in 1839, and since then, these estates have been a traumatic site of extreme marginalisation on the socio-economic and sexual front. With the first tea garden, the end of feudal rule in Assam began, and colonial rule spread its roots under 'Assam Company'. This led to the forced migration of people from the Chotanagpur plateau to be used as labourers in the tea gardens under a licenced 'Sardari system'. While the official record shows around thirty-three lakh migrant labourers, it is assumed that the number must have been much higher than that by the time India got independence. Currently, there are around one crore tea garden/ex-tea garden labourers in Assam who contribute to its socio-economic-cultural growth.

This paper aims to critically examine the recent novel by Arupa Patangia Kalita titled *Josnar Jhitas*, where she writes about a 'desi mem' from the tea garden community named Durgi Bhumij. The bonded, generational labour of this community still faces socio-economic marginalisation, and their representation in literature or films has been romanticised in an unrealistic manner. Kalita's novel moves away from the romantic view of the life of a tea garden labourer to an intersectional margin-to-centre feminist view. Along with the struggles of this community, Kalita has highlighted the rise of Durgi from a grieving widow, to a kept woman of a British officer to her involvement in the Indian freedom struggle as a spy. The paper will try to problematise the forgotten 'Minis' from the tea gardens and how history at present too considers them as just another political 'problem'. The generational trauma carried forward by Durgi and passed on to her children with different skin colours mark the 'unfree' status still attached to the tea garden labourers.

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