



Nottingham Trent
University



Building Bridges: An Interdisciplinary Conference

4-7 April 2022



Conference Organisers

Allan Njanji
Bethan Evans
Dani Olver
Margaret Ravenscroft
Purnachandra Naik
Trang Dang
Valentina de Riso



Conference Programme (UTC+1)

Day 1 (4th April)

09:45 – 10:00	Introduction Official Welcome & Opening Remarks
10:00 – 11:00	Keynote Speech Chair: Margaret Ravenscroft (Nottingham Trent University) Professor Avtar Brah (Birkbeck College, University of London) Decolonial Imaginings and Intersectional Conversations and Contestations
12:00 – 13:30	Panel 1: Gender, the Body, and Oppression Chair: Margaret Ravenscroft (Nottingham Trent University) Marietta Kosma (University of Oxford, UK) Decolonisation of the body through Shailja Patel's <i>Migritude</i> Daniel Yaw Fiaveh (University of Cape Coast, Ghana) LGBT Discourses in Ghana: What are the Cultural and Moral Suasions/Nuances? Ndiweteko Jennifer Nghishitende (University of Hull, UK) Living and not only surviving: A decolonial feminist approach to life after modern slavery in the UK Lede E Miki Pohshna (North Eastern Hill University, India) Queer and Ecomasculinity Beyond the West: Ethics and Praxis
14:30 – 16:00	Panel 2: Identity, Diaspora, and Dispossession Chair: Valentina de Riso (Nottingham Trent University) Isabel Arce Zelada (University of Hull, UK) Alienhoods: The Spaces Beyond Citizenship Rajbir Samal & Binod Mishra (IIT Roorkee, India) Reimagining the Kitchen Indians: En/gendering the discourses of Nation, Culture, and Community Ghosun Baaqeel (Taif University, Saudi Arabia & University of York, UK) Unveiling Double Consciousness and Unsettling Hegemonic Economies in Iraqi Free Verse Poetry Victoria V. Chang (The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago) Bonds Beyond Boundaries in Shani Mootoo's <i>He Drown She in the Sea</i>

Day 2 (5th April)

8:45 – 9:00	Introduction Networking & Opening Remarks
9:00 – 10:00	Keynote Speech Chair: Trang Dang (Nottingham Trent University) Dr Sophie Chao (University of Sydney) Decolonising the Field(s): Insights from the Pacific in an Age of Planetary Unravelling
11:00 – 12:30	Panel 3: Resistance, Representation, and Marginalised Communities Chair: Purnachandra Naik (Nottingham Trent University) Shifana P A & Dr Asha Susan Jacob (Mahatma Gandhi University, India) Alternate History: Representation of Indian Partition in Political Cartoons Md Alamgir Hossain (University of Illinois, USA) Neoliberal Development, Environmental Disaster, and Temporal Resistance in Indra Sinha's <i>Animal's People</i> Bianca Cherechés (University of Zaragoza, Spain) Caste, Gender and Resistance: The Evolution of Dalit Women's Identity in Baby Kamble's <i>The Prisons We Broke</i> and Meena Kandasamy's <i>The Gypsy Goddess</i> Chithira James & Dr Reju George Mathew (National Institute of Technology, Calicut, India) Discriminatory Social Orders and Subaltern Assertion: A Comparative Study of Resistance in Selected Dalit and Burakumin Literature
13:30 – 15:00	Panel 4: Environmentalism, Conservation, and Decolonisation Chair: Trang Dang (Nottingham Trent University) Badakynti Nylla langngap (North-Eastern Hill University, India) Re-appropriating Folklore: Identity and Ecological Concerns of Contemporary Khasi Literature Catherine Price (University of Nottingham, UK) Climate Change and Just Futures: A Case Study of Biochar and Soil Dr Md Abu Shahid Abdullah (East West University, Bangladesh) Resisting Environmental Destruction and Fighting Socio-Political Marginalisation in Hawaii in Kiana Davenport's <i>Shark Dialogues</i> Swapnit Pradhan & Dr Nagendra Kumar (IIT Roorkee, India) From Preservation to Persecution: Unbuilding Universal Norms of Environmentalism in Amitav Ghosh's <i>The Hungry Tide</i>

Day 3 (6th April)

09:45 – 10:00	Introduction Networking & Opening Remarks
10:00 – 11:30	Panel 5: Decolonial Research, Knowledge(s), and Pedagogy Chair: Allan Njanji (Nottingham Trent University) Atilio Barreda II (City University of New York, USA) Embedded Humanities in Data Systems Nabeela Musthafa (National Institute of Technology, Calicut, India) Decolonising Early Childhood Educational Curriculum and Pedagogy in India: Initiatives and Challenges Dr Opeloge Ah Sam (Kaitaia Abundant Life School, New Zealand) Decolonising Musical Practices in Music Education: From the Perspective of Pasifika Identity and Music practice and Context Sara Bdeir (Nottingham Trent University, UK) Refugees Linguistic Identity and Social Integration in Creative Writing Groups: A Narrative Inquiry
12:30 – 14:00	Panel 6: Modernity, Higher Education, and Epistemology Chair: Dani Olver (Nottingham Trent University) Lee Clarke (Nottingham Trent University, UK) Wisdom Comes in Many Forms: Towards an Inclusive Conception of Philosophy Annie Treesa Joseph (University of Kerala, India) Decolonial Modernity and Queenship Traditions in Bhopal: The Curious Case of Regency and Regnancy of Nawab Sikander Begum of Bhopal Delso de Cássio Batista Jr. (Nottingham Trent University, UK) Coloniality of Power and Racism Denial: Autoethnographic Reflections on the Portuguese Higher Education Sujoy Banerjee (English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India) Language, Science and 'Our Modernity': An Argument for Diversification of the Language of Science in a Postcolonial World

Day 4 (7th April)

11:15 – 11:30	Introduction Networking & Opening Remarks
11:30 – 12:30	Reading Chair: Bethan Evans (Nottingham Trent University) Leone Ross (British Novelist) <i>This One Sky Day</i>
13:30 – 15:00	Panel 7: Storytelling, Narrativisation, and Form Chair: Bethan Evans (Nottingham Trent University) Carolina Buffoli (University of Edinburgh, UK) Decolonial Readings: Destabilising Eurocentric Frames of Interpretation in Contemporary Criticism of Indigenous Literature. The case of Alexis Wright's <i>Plains of Promise</i> Marine Berthiot (University of Edinburgh, UK) Decolonising Aotearoa New Zealand Young Adult Literature: <i>The Case of Bugs</i> by Whiti Hereaka Dr Rachel Gregory Fox (University of Kent, UK) Hostile and Hospitable Environments in Ali Smith's <i>Seasonal Quartet</i> Dr Yasmin Rioux (Divine Word College, USA) Building Bridges through Interdisciplinary Practice: Creating Inclusive and Shared Places through Narrative Writing in a Distinctively Diverse Intercultural Communication Class
15:30 – 16:30	Closing Roundtable & Networking Everyone is welcome! Closing Remarks & Open Discussion on the Various Themes of the Conference

Abstracts

Day 1 (4th April)

Keynote Speech

Professor Avtar Brah, 'Decolonial Imaginings and Intersectional Conversations and Contestations'

This presentation will be a both theoretical and political engagement with concepts such as 'Decolonial' and 'Intersectionality' and how these concepts assume new meanings through their articulation. It will attend to particular instances in and through which they have mapped the social ground of feminist and egalitarian imaginaries.

Biography

Avtar Brah recently retired as Professor of Sociology at Birkbeck as a specialist in race, gender, and ethnic identity issues. She was awarded an MBE in 2001 in recognition of her research.

Her books include *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities; Hybridity and Its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture* (edited with Annie Coombes); *Thinking Identities: Racism, Ethnicity and Culture* and *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalisation* (both edited with Mary Hickman and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill).

Professor Brah spent 1980–82 as a research associate at Leicester University and then three years as a lecturer with the Open University, before joining Birkbeck in 1985 as lecturer, becoming senior lecturer, Reader then Professor. She spent a year as Visiting Professor at the University of California in 1992 and at Cornell University in 2001 and is a member of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences and the British Sociological Association. She was also admissions tutor for MSc Race and Ethnic Relations, which addresses the centrality of ethnicity to policy and social relations, particularly in the key areas of migration, asylum and citizenship, policing, education, and race relations legislation.

Panel 1: Gender, the Body, and Oppression

Marietta Kosma, 'Decolonisation of the body through Shailja Patel's *Migritude*'

Abstract

Shailja Patel's *Migritude* focuses on the placement and re-placement of black South East Asian women and diasporic communities in the discourse of international concern through the trope of memory. I demonstrate how Patel through her protest narrative brings to the forefront histories of the subaltern otherwise silenced with the employment of decolonization. I hope to reexamine the implications of their stories told, re-centering the narratives that shape and inform their experiences as individuals within their communities, locally and internationally. This paper consists of a re-conceptualisation of what is considered to be home in terms of the queer imaginary by addressing the silenced discourse of the subaltern. In this space of power conflict there is no ideal sense of the queer self, as the discourse of queerness is challenged by an intricate system of mobility. The female body's queer identification falls into a transgressive dialogue in which identity norms are challenged, as the strictures of traditional normativity are broken by the constant movement of the East African Asian female subject that operates within and outside the framework of the traditional home. The unique experiences of belonging of these female subjects, place them into a new multi-dimensional locus, where a different consciousness of identity arises. Patel's narrative signals towards an innovative recuperation of female diasporic subjectivity that is evidently progressive. The queer female South-East Asian subject becomes the centre of attention and the space it occupies becomes a terrain of possibility. A critique is posed on heteronormativity, in the quest for representation of the voice of the subaltern which has been excluded from dominant discourse. The subaltern's concerns are brought to the forefront, as the reproduction of systemic violence upon its body is questioned

through language. Attentive to the multiplicity of voices, Patel engages with transnational political discourse as she achieves to project a new form of solidarity among the dispossessed, while contesting imperial remains.

Biography

Marietta Kosma is a second year DPhil student in English at the University of Oxford at Lady Margaret Hall. Her academic background includes a master in English from JSU and a master in Ancient Greek Theater from the University of the Aegean. Her research interests lie in twentieth-century American literature, post colonialism and gender studies. Her research has been published internationally in books as well as peer-reviewed journals and magazines. She has been cited in journal articles and books and presented in academic conferences.

Daniel Yaw Fiaveh, 'LGBT Discourses in Ghana: What are the Cultural and Moral Suasions/Nuances?'

Abstract

There has been growing public attention for gender variant lives and the in/visibility of sexual non-conformists in Africa, and this paper presents the ongoing issues around same-sex (LGBT) sexuality in Ghana. The arguments are multifaceted including medical/biological (chromosomes), socio-political, economic, philosophical, and so on. This paper is taken from three perspectives: cultural, religious (the Church), and political. Although what is cultural and moral (sacred and profane) by themselves are political and crystalised by multiple and interwoven, and, sometimes, broad spectrum of contradictory ideas, I focus on three themes, namely cultural scripts and sexuality in Ghana, nuances of religious narratives on same-sex, and LGBT politics on Ghanaian turf. Drawing on views proposing the complexity of structure versus agency and a connection to power dynamics in the local and post/colonial frames of reference to LGBT, I show that while cultural and religious antics remain potent platforms in policing domestic agenda against nonrecognition/phobia of non-binary and gender-variant lives, knowledge offers pathways for inclusion in Ghana. There would be the need to deconstruct colonial frames of reference to LGBT and to promote doctrines that emphasise sympathy/empathy and highlight character strengths (e.g., work ethic, hardworking, philanthropic, honesty) as an alternative narrative to queer identity politics may also push the boundaries and revolutionise Ghanaian queerness and related nuances of West African LGBTQI+ in relation to homo/transphobia and xenophobia.

Biography

Daniel is a Sex sociologist-turned anthropologist with interests in men and sex studies. He focuses on cultural representations of men and boys, sexual preferences/cultures, alcohol and substance mis/use and abuse, sexual health, and queer lives. He also has special interests in sexual relationships and methodologies. Daniel is an alumnus of the University of Ghana, Legon; and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. A Senior Lecturer in anthropology and sociology, University of Cape Coast, he founded the Centre for Men's Health and Sex Studies; and currently editing a special issue in Sociolinguistic Studies to be published in 2022.

Ndiweteko Jennifer Nghishitende, 'Living and not only surviving: A decolonial feminist approach to life after modern slavery in the UK'

Abstract

Women who have left situations of modern slavery face the mammoth task of continuing life after exploitation. This task is, however, inevitably affected by laws and policies often based on colonial legacies, which threaten and sometimes hinder their capabilities to pursue certain activities fundamental to living a good human life. These activities may include, but are not limited to, raising children; earning an income; seeking educational opportunities; engaging in meaningful social interactions and the general capability of determining the direction of one's life. Certain categories of women (those with an insecure immigration status), who are the primary focus of this paper, are especially subjected to oppression, exclusion, and subjugation through the law. With every new measure proposed, it is disturbingly clear that the UK government has no intentions of departing from

the colonial legacies upon which its laws, especially those on immigration are based, that continue to oppress and exclude women and other people in this category. In this paper, I argue that the notion of coloniality is extremely important in analysing contemporary Britain, in as far as the journeys of women with the lived experience of modern slavery are concerned, especially at a time when more energy is devoted to anti-immigration hysteria to the detriment of the needs of women who have exited situations of modern slavery. I forefront decolonial feminism as crucial to the analysis of the effects of these laws and policies (proposed or enacted) on the journeys of women in this regard, as it offers a multidimensional analysis of oppression.

Biography

Ndiweteko Nghishitende is a 2nd year Ph.D. candidate at the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull, and is working under the supervision of Professor Helen Johnston and Dr Alicia Kidd. She is from Namibia, where she worked in the field of women and children's rights before joining the Wilberforce Institute. She holds a master's degree in international human rights law from Queen Mary University of London. Her Ph.D. research is on life after modern slavery, and she aims to understand women's journeys in continuing their lives after exiting situations of modern slavery in the UK. She can be contacted at N.J.NGHISHITENDE-2020@hull.ac.uk.

Lede E Miki Pohshna, 'Queer and Ecomasculinity Beyond the West: Ethics and Praxis'

Abstract

While ecomasculinism can be separate from queer theory, that separation is more convenient within the discursive context of the global North. This paper proposes that in contrast to the macho, hyper masculinity invasion of the 'modern' discourse post the enlightenment, the existence of other forms of masculinity in varied contexts tends to problematise masculinity itself as a postcolonial, capitalist and racial embodiment. In this case masculinity can be read as something that disrupt the western concept of masculinity itself. Ecomasculinism focuses on the aspect of masculinity that is rooted in environmental caring and ethics (Cenamor and Brandt 2019, Miller and Corprew 2021). Such form of masculinity, while essential in creating a socio-ecological justice, still borders on the notion of binary and situated the human and man as a binary opposite of nature. In the global North, ecomasculinism can be seen as a negation of the toxic masculinities traits that are responsible for "colonisation", taming and "civilizing" nature. Against such prevalent reading, however, the ecomasculinism that is expressive within the tribal communities of India not only focuses on the ethics of environmental caring but it also imagines masculinity as something that exists outside the binary of the traditional masculine/feminine and into the non-human. This interpretation of masculinity as inherently ecological tends to queerify such masculinity in itself. This paper will propose to read the tribal stories of marriage as marriages beyond gender and that such masculinity is inherently linked not only with environmental caring but also in the act of recognising that environment is not the other but a part of the self's subjectivity. This reading of ecomasculinism need not be seen as an investment in the redemption of man vis-à-vis nature and environment (Taylor 2007) but is an attempt in understanding how masculinity, once removed from its western colonial/capitalist ideology, is a factor in ecological issues. This is a radical praxis of environmental justice and can be one of the ways to move away from the colonial conception of nature itself. This paper will then try to show how such ecomasculinism is inherently queer in its act of trying to question and disrupt the postcolonial imagination of gender and sex by allowing for the confluence of non-normative relationship into its fold.

Biography

Lede E Miki Pohshna is a doctoral student in the English Department, North Eastern Hill University. His specialization is in queer studies, working on the peculiarity of the South Asian closet and the various modes of identifications of queer subjects. He also focuses on tribal oral literature, postcolonial literature and migration studies.

Panel 2: Identity, Diaspora, and Dispossession

Isabel Arce Zelada, 'Alienhoods: The Spaces Beyond Citizenship'

Abstract

This paper deals with the structure of citizenship and how it is viewed from the perspective of alienhoods.

The study of citizenship often reflects a fascination of the *other*, casting the citizen as default and the rest as anomalies in our nation-state ruled world. Through alienhood (Marciniak, 2006) we find the citizen as an invader of history, one that rewrites territories by disrupting indigenous narratives (Horn, 2005; Kupperman, 2009; Pluymers, 2011; Probasco, 2012) and excluding the majority of people from directing what citizenship should be. Borders then become the violent recreation of the citizenship structure. They are found in our stories, imagination and relationships (Malkki, 1995); and embodied in the way we move, remember and reproduce (Connerton, 1992).

Citizenship is utilised to carve out the human, a human based on a colonial system that gave rights to male colonists to claim lands and establish borders (McClintock, 1993). The reproduction of the ownership, or theft, of those lands and their boundaries then fell onto the women of the colonies, never quite part of the citizenship structure but crucial to its survival (Young, 1996; Alexander, 1997; Mohanty, 1997; Heng, 1997). By carving out the human with rights; rights to reproduce, rights to move, rights to consume, we also see the establishment of the alien, the one without rights (Arendt, 1973). Not as an anomaly but as a direct consequence of the creation of citizenship through the violent establishment of the nation-state.

Seeing citizenship through the eyes of those beyond citizenship also allows us to see these borders and perhaps even let our imaginations run beyond them.

Biography

Isabel is a PhD student at the University of Hull studying asylum in the UK, particularly the impacts on identity and transmission for those who go through it. Labeled as an alien for 18 years, embodying the border and violence perpetuated throughout Latin America and an heir to displacement, they are comfortable in unbelonging. Isabel has presented two papers previously, *Truth as State Servant in Asylum Court: The Difference Between Citizenship and Hospitality* at the RGS-IBS conference and *Trapped in a Lie: Physical Truth and Temporal Migration in Asylum Cases* at the ISA conference.

Rajbir Samal & Binod Mishra, 'Reimagining the Kitchen Indians: En/gendering the discourses of Nation, Culture, and Community'

Abstract

Despite being banal practices of everyday life, the preparation and consumption of food have far-reaching importance in the subject formation of people. Therefore, when people cross their national boundaries and enter unfamiliar territories, the acts of cooking and eating become one of the most meaningful and frequent exercises. For the diasporic population, these acts are inextricably entangled with their experiences and dilemmas of identity. The geographic displacement of diasporic Indians produces the same anxiety to reproduce the authenticity of 'Indianness' through multifarious culinary performances. The faithful reproduction of this authenticity has an inherently gendered logic that women as the custodians of tradition should preserve the cultural distinctiveness of the national culture through their culinary practices and feminine customs both in the family and the community space. It also emphasises the fact that culinary performances of Indian women in the family kitchens should evoke longing and belonging of the distant 'home'. So, the women of the diaspora are unproblematically assigned with the task of maintaining the national and cultural identities. Mannur observes, "gender roles continue to be implicated in the scripts of women's nationalisms and 'cultural identities, particularly as they take root in the culinary realm" (44). Similarly, the culinary customs of "a community can play an important part in re-constructing the national border of the homeland in the hostland" (Maji 14). As such, family space and community space become synonymous with home and homeland through gastronomic acts.

By taking into account the agentic potential of food, the present paper analyses Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* to give meaning to the Indian diasporic culinary practices. It also tries to explicate how the culinary practices of the Indian diaspora unravel the discursive connection between nation, femininity, and community.

Biography

Rajbir Samal is a Ph.D. Research Scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee, India. He is currently working on his thesis: "Mapping the Culinary: Contesting Food and Identity in Select South Asian Diasporic Fiction."

Binod Mishra is a professor of English at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee, India. He has many research articles and edited volumes to his name. His recently published edited volume *Cuckoo in Crisis* brings together quintessential voices of 25 women poets from India and abroad.

Ghosun Baaqeel, 'Unveiling Double Consciousness and Unsettling Hegemonic Economies in Iraqi Free Verse Poetry'

Abstract

Since the 1958 Revolution that defeated its colonial oppressors, Iraq has continued to struggle to find its own cultural identity. This paper argues that an important effect of the ongoing interference and manipulation of Iraq's national and economic interests by Western hegemonic forces has been a form of Arabic free verse poetry that reveals and critiques a problematic Du Boisian double consciousness as an expression of Iraqi identity. In response to decolonization, the Iraqi poet Badr Shaker al-Sayyāb (1926–1964), one of the key founders of the Arabic Free Verse Movement, wrote the poem "The Blind Prostitute." Through the lens of decolonization read as a form of neo-colonization, as well as its idiosyncratic use of the Arabic language, the poem can be understood as expressing a form of Iraqi double consciousness in ways that critique the tenuous bridges between the lingering invisibility of colonial powers and the neocolonial nation of Iraq. In "The Blind Prostitute," al-Sayyāb places the traditions of Iraqi culture within a Western framework in ways that refract a double consciousness that the poet seeks to use both to unsettle dominant ideologies as well as to replace these with a more authentic, traditional sense of the identity of the Iraqi people. The poem further reveals that the emergence of Iraqi double consciousness is deeply embedded within the effects of global capitalism in ways that unveil invisible colonial economic legacies. Therefore, the effects of global capitalism continue to subordinate the Iraqi nation and oppress the people of Iraq. Thus, the poem's purpose is not only raising awareness, but also as a way of inciting resistance.

Biography

Ghosun Baaqeel holds a Master's degree in English Literature and Postcolonial Studies from the University of Kent in the UK and a Master's degree in Art from Arkansas State University in the US. She has previously worked as an English teacher at several schools in Saudi Arabia and is currently a lecturer in English Literature at Taif University in Saudi Arabia. She is also working on her PhD in English and Related Literature at the University of York in the UK. Her interests and areas of research include globalism, postcolonialism, and double consciousness in Iraqi Poetry.

Victoria V. Chang, 'Bonds Beyond Boundaries in Shani Mootoo's *He Drown She in the Sea*'

Abstract

This paper interrogates notions of space, place and landscape for their impact on and associations with identity formation and articulation in Indo-Trinidadian/Canadian writer Shani Mootoo's *He Drown She in the Sea*. The novel places significant focus on its various settings, but juxtaposed with this is the tension between the social world of the text and the central characters, who are in conflict with this milieu. The very identities they inhabit are positioned as problematic for the lives they wish to lead due to class-based constraints and ethnic tensions – formulated during the colonial era and very much alive in present-day Trinidad and Tobago. Mootoo's literary evocations of

select spaces within the natural world as the only sites of freedom for her characters, creatively suggest the unique dangers afforded to certain identities when these landscapes are decimated. Much like the species whose homes are violently destroyed, so too are violence and “homelessness” accorded to certain subjectivities. Yet it is within these landscapes that a deeper sense of ontological wholeness and belonging are to be found. The potential for ontological reclamation presents itself in the novel, by quietly reimagining new ways of being and belonging for the main characters, both within and apart from their national communities. Yet for all the possibilities that the novel presents through the imaginative crafting of “space” within “place”, there is no avoiding the liminality of the former. As Plumwood explains, “our capacity to gain insight from understanding our social context, to learn from self-critical perspectives on the past and to allow for our own limitations of vision, is still one of our best hopes for creative change and survival” (2002, p. 10). As such, Mootoo crafts these worlds as spaces of possibility, not permanence and in doing so, allow for their characters to find more tangible means of existence elsewhere.

Biography

Victoria V. Chang currently holds a BA and MA in Literatures in English from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. She is a full-time, PhD - Literatures in English candidate at that institution and works as an academic Tutor in the Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies (LCCS) department. Her core research interests pertain to issues of gender, identity, culture and ethnicity, as well as nationhood. Presently, her thesis is under examination and focuses on literary representations of female, Indo-Trinidadian identities in the novel form. She was one of two Caribbean scholarship recipients of the “Other Universals” project, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in the United States.

Day 2 (5th April)

Keynote Speech

Dr Sophie Chao, ‘Decolonising the Field(s): Insights from the Pacific in an Age of Planetary Unravelling’

Abstract

In this talk, Dr Chao will draw on her collaborative research with Samoan scholar and Lefaoali’i (High Talking Chief) Dion Enari to explore how transdisciplinary, experimental, and decolonial imaginaries can help us better understand and address environmental destruction and social injustice in an epoch of planetary undoing. Such imaginaries must account for the perspectives, interests, and existences of both human and beyond-human communities of life. They invite respectful cross-pollination across Indigenous epistemologies, secular scientific paradigms, and transdisciplinary methodologies. In doing so, decolonial imaginaries can help destabilise the prevailing hegemony of secular science over other ways of knowing and being in the world. Central also to these imaginaries are practices of reflexive, radical, relational, and emplaced storytelling, that attend to the interspecies becoming-withs animating our unevenly shared and increasingly vulnerable planet. Finally, Chao will reflect on the structural challenges in decolonising climate change and associated forms of knowledge production in light of past and ongoing thefts of sovereignty over lands, bodies, and ecosystems across the tropics and beyond.

Biography

Dr Sophie Chao is an environmental anthropologist interested in the intersections of capitalism, ecology, Indigeneity, health, and justice in the Pacific. Her theoretical thinking is inspired by interdisciplinary currents including the environmental humanities and Science and Technology Studies, as well as Indigenous, Postcolonial, and Critical Race Studies. She is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Sydney, where she will assume the position of Discovery Early Career Research Award Fellow and Lecturer in Anthropology in March 2022.

Prior to her PhD, she worked for the international Indigenous rights organisation Forest Peoples Programme in the United Kingdom and Indonesia. She has also undertaken consultancies for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the United Nations Working Group on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations. She is currently Secretary on the Executive Committee of the Australian Anthropological Society, Co-Convenor of the Australian Food, Society, and Culture Network, and Co-Convenor of the Multispecies Justice HDR/ECR Collective.

Panel 3: Resistance, Representation, and Marginalised Communities

Shifana P A, 'Alternate History: Representation of Indian Partition in Political Cartoons'

Abstract

In the history of India, Indo-Pak Partition (1947) was the most significant event, which was followed by migration on both sides of the border. The riots, the victimisation and large scale killing of the people followed the event of Partition. Partition research has generally concentrated on critical readings of literary texts, leaving an evident gap in the genre. The paper intends to supplement the genre of Partition studies by incorporating the medium of political cartoons as popular cultural representations that visualise the dreadful event with a unique combination of language and interpretation. Political cartoons represent a unique model of accessing socio-political events and produces narratives that can be read as both representations of and interventions into its discourses. Historians have long used political cartoons as a source of evidence. This paper will present a historical investigation into the production of political cartoons as an alternate history in the context of communal riots and migration brought about by India's Partition. This is accomplished by viewing cartoons as vital cultural texts, on par with other fictional and non-fictional documentations of Partition.

Biography

Shifana P A is a Doctoral research fellow in the Post Graduate and Research Department of English, St. Thomas College, Kozhencherry, Mahatma Gandhi University. She is currently working on "Alternate History: A Study of Indian Political Cartoons". She holds an MPhil degree in English Language and Literature (Title: "Caricaturing the Political: A Critical Historical Sketch of Indian Editorial Cartoons") and a Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication and Journalism (UGC sponsored). She has been awarded Kerala Government Thonnakkal Kumaranasan National Institute for Culture's 'Prathama Prabandha Puraskaram,' Kerala Government's A R Rajaraja Varma Smaraka Samithi Puraskaram, Thunchathezhuthachan Malayalam University Prabandha Puraskaram, Deshabhimani Weekly Sahityapuraskaram, among others. She has served as Adjunct Faculty of English in various aided colleges. Her research areas include linguistics, cultural studies, media studies, art and history.

Md Alamgir Hossain, 'Neoliberal Development, Environmental Disaster, and Temporal Resistance in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*'

Abstract

My paper examines how Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* engages with the temporal to question and resist neoliberal development that thrives at the cost of humans and the environment. Although critics have challenged and offered alternatives to Western ideologies of development, they have paid little attention to time, an important factor in the conceptualization of Western development. As a result, the possibility of forging strategies to resist capitalist development by engaging with the temporal remains largely unexplored. My work addresses this little explored area. I argue that by situating the personal, and collective past of the environmental subaltern in relation to the present and the future, Sinha creates temporal relationality that exposes the fallacy of neoliberal development and offers the terrain from where the victims can resist the onslaught of neoliberalism.

At the backdrop of Sinha's novel lies the historical Bhopal disaster of 1984. Sinha fictionalises the aftermath of the tragedy, the victims' prolonged struggle to survive the disaster, and the attitude of Union Carbide—the company responsible for the disaster—towards the victims to illustrate how

transnational companies, through pollution trade, capitalise on the environment of the South in the name of development. In Sinha's fiction, "Animal's people" represent the fictionalised survivors of the disaster, and the infamous "Kampani" refers to the US multinational company Union Carbide that did not even care to appear before an Indian court for a hearing. The operation of the US company in India and its response to the disaster require rethinking development and pollution trade by going beyond the traditional notion of pollution trade as transnational shipment of toxic wastes. Sinha draws on the victims' traumatic memory of the Bhopal gas disaster and their present suffering to portray the physical, psychological, economic, and environmental dispossession of the natives brought about by neoliberal development.

Biography

Md Alamgir Hossain is a graduate student in English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is currently working on his dissertation tentatively titled "Neoliberal Development, Environmental Degradation, and Resistance in Contemporary South Asian Anglophone Fiction." His research interests include postcolonial theory and literature, diaspora literature, world literature, and the environmental humanities. His latest article "Muslims in Diaspora: Negotiating Identity in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*" was published in *South Asian Review* in 2020.

Bianca Cherechés, 'Caste, Gender and Resistance: The Evolution of Dalit Women's Identity in Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* and Meena Kandasamy's *The Gypsy Goddess*'

Abstract

Dalit literature articulates the oppressions and exploitations faced by Dalits in a caste ridden society as it records their cultural and social lives before and after India's independence. This cultural revolt that burgeoned in the 1970s has largely been Dalit male-centric in its orientation, adopting paternalistic and patronising tones towards Dalit women. As a consequence, Dalit women remained firmly encapsulated in the patriarchal roles of the silent and agenciless 'mother' and 'the victimised sexual being', perpetuating gendered stereotypes. These accounts failed to properly address Dalit women's predicament and the interlocking oppression of caste and gender and it compelled them to create a distinct space for themselves.

Dalit women writers have traversed a long path over the last four decades. During this time their consciousness of what it means to be a Dalit woman has evolved in many ways as reflected in their writing. Life narratives, such as Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* (2008) and Meena Kandasamy's *The Gypsy Goddess* (2014), have functioned as the locus of enunciation where agency and self-identity are attended and asserted by Dalit women in a particular narrative framework. As social location determines the perception of reality, this paper attempts a look at how these two texts tackle and bring to the centre the gendered nature of caste and the power-relations that still affect Dalit women, from a heterogeneous standpoint. It further analyses how through form, language and subject matter they defy generic conventions, depart from the imposed identities and manage to build up resistance against this enduring double oppression and the forces that attempt to homogenise Dalit women body politics. Uma Chakravarti (1995, 1996, 2003), Gopal Guru (1995) and Sharmila Rege's (1995, 1998, 2000, 2003) ideas and theories on gendered casteism and Dalit feminine consciousness are going to serve as a basis for the analysis.

Biography

Bianca Cherechés is a part-time lecturer at the Department of English and German Philology of the University of Zaragoza (Spain). She graduated in English Philology from the University of Zaragoza and she holds a Master's Degree in English Studies in Secondary Education from the same university. She wrote her PhD thesis on the Dalit community and their representation in Indian literature written in English. She is also a member of the Spanish research project "Literature Of(f) Limits: Pluriversal Cosmologies and Relational Identities in Present-Day Writing in English", granted by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. Her current interests are contemporary Indian fiction, Trauma and Postcolonial Studies.

Chithira James & Dr Reju George Mathew, 'Discriminatory Social Orders and Subaltern Assertion: A Comparative Study of Resistance in Selected Dalit and Burakumin Literature'

Abstract

Dalits of India and Burakumins of Japan have a shared history of caste oppression and untouchability that is rooted in the notion of ritual pollution/purity. The recognition of such shared forms of discrimination has urged these subaltern communities to express political solidarity, a recent instance being the slogan 'Jai Bhim, Jai Burakumin' raised at the Japan Convention in 2018. Dalit and Burakumin literatures show comparable patterns by unravelling the hegemonic structures of oppression, experiences of discrimination as well as resistance to it. While such literary assertions are gaining popularity in contemporary times, as evidenced by the high reception that the recent translation of Kaomu Takamura's *Lady Joker* (1997) received, discrimination against these subaltern groups continues in an unperturbed fashion, making the cross-cultural study of these literatures significant.

Using the framework of subaltern historiography, the proposed paper studies the Burakumin writer Kenji Nakagami's *The Cape and Other Stories from the Japanese Ghetto* (1999) along with the Dalit literary work *The Gypsy Goddess* (2014) by Meena Kandasamy. Set against particular socio-cultural histories, these works narrate and document the lives of Dalit and Burakumin communities and movements of political resistance in feudal India and Japan. The influence of colonial modernity in the lives of these communities, as depicted in the aforementioned works of historical fiction, will also be studied. The paper attempts a transnational and cross-cultural study of caste in these countries.

Biography

Reju George Mathew is an Assistant Professor (English) in the National Institute of Technology Calicut, Kerala, India from May 2018. Prior to this, he has worked in Christ University, Bengaluru; MIT Academy of Engineering, Pune, and SRM University, Amaravati. He has taught various courses in the domain of English Studies- several on English language and communication and few on postcolonial literatures and theory. His PhD research (2014) was undertaken in the Department of Comparative Literature in English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, where he researched on the Dalit engagement with caste, conversions and modernity in Kerala. His research interests include religious studies, colonial modernity, Dalit Christianity and identity formations. He has presented papers in several international conferences in India and abroad, and was a DAAD exchange research student for a semester (2011) in Technische Universitat Dresden, Germany.

Chithira James is a Research Scholar (English) in the National Institute of Technology, Calicut, Kerala, India from December 2019. Prior to this she has undertaken MPhil research in The Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu where she researched on Vegan-Feminist studies and human- animal engagement.

Panel 4: Environmentalism, Conservation, and Decolonisation

Badakynti Nylla langngap, 'Re-appropriating Folklore: Identity and Ecological Concerns of Contemporary Khasi Literature'

Abstract

The Khasis, a small tribe from Meghalaya, India, is a community in which the oral tradition still holds cultural importance even today. This is evident from their daily habits, their festivals, as well as their literature. Khasi literature is relatively new as compared to the Indian counterparts but because their oral literature flourished even before the advent of the written, Khasi literature today is rich in its content with the folk tradition making its presence felt from its early genesis till date. Contemporary writers like Esther Syiem, Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih, Janice Pariat, K.K. Kharluki are widely influenced by Khasi folk tradition. The use of the literary elements of the folk by these authors can neither be seen as a romantic idealisation of the past nor a mere recapitulation of an age gone by but should rather be seen as a means of reconnecting to an identity that is almost vanishing because

of the onslaught of a foreign culture brought, firstly by the British, secondly by Indian nationalism and thirdly by globalisation. For authors like Syiem and Kharlukhi, this identity is also deeply embedded with their ecological surroundings. As such the use of folklore by these authors allow them to explore ecological concerns that are pertinent to our day and age. It is in this context that Syiem's *Memoir in Water: Speaks the Wah Umkhrach* (2017) and Kharlukhi's *Tears of the Nymphs* (2015) will be studied in this paper. Their ability to use folklore to mediate on the larger global issues of the environment as well as elevating their indigenous life worlds to delineate the universal truth of man's role in Nature's survival, make their works relevant to the larger framework of ecocriticism. Further these texts show that the relationship of the self (individual and communitarian) with the environment as it is today can re-examine the meaning of decolonisation.

Biography

Badakynti Nylla langgap gained interest in postcolonial studies in her M. A. and M.Phil days in University of Delhi with specific interest in the literature of her own community. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. from the Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. She has also taught in Kalindi College, University of Delhi before moving to Shillong to teach in Synod College.

Dr Catherine Price, 'Climate Change and Just Futures: A Case Study of Biochar and Soil'

Abstract

One approach to tackling anthropogenic climate change is through geoengineering (or climate engineering). Geoengineering encompasses a suite of technological fixes aimed at either cutting the amount of sunlight that reaches the surface of the Earth or removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. One technology which can potentially remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is biochar.

Biochar is applied to soil and acts as a carbon sink and soil conditioner. It also increases the fertility and water holding capacity of soil. Whilst biochar is depicted as a new technology it has a long and complex history. Terra preta soils (Portuguese for black earths) were formed between 2500 and 500 years ago and are found in the Amazon. African Dark Earths are still being formed today. The formation of these soils is a long-term process which relies on indigenous knowledge.

However, when the focus switches to scientific knowledge to provide solutions to problems, innovation and progress emphasises who is leading the way and who must catch-up, rather than who is gaining and losing from new innovations. This scientific focus obscures the inequalities between genders, races, nationalities and the more-than-human. Using biochar as a case study, and drawing on feminist posthuman scholarship, this paper will show how more equitable approaches to addressing climate change can be achieved. Applying posthuman ontologies to knowledge making practices shifts the focus from an anthropocentric perspective and opens up possibilities of equality and justice to the posthuman and more-than-human world in the era of anthropogenic climate change. Thinking with biochar and soil in relation to climate change enables us to reimagine our futures and the transitions to these futures, ensuring they are just, democratic, diverse and sustainable.

Biography

Dr Catherine Price is a Research Fellow in the School of Geography, University of Nottingham. She is currently working on the interdisciplinary Biochar Demonstrator project which is addressing the key deployment barriers of biochar for carbon sequestration. The focus of this work is stakeholder perspectives and deliberative democracy. Her research interests include relationships between humans and the more-than-human world, the environment, agricultural technology adoption, and the social and ethical impacts of agricultural technologies. She has previously held postdoctoral positions at the University of Warwick, the University of East Anglia, and the University of Reading.

Dr Md Abu Shahid Abdullah, 'Resisting Environmental Destruction and Fighting Socio-Political Marginalisation in Hawaii in Kiana Davenport's *Shark Dialogues*'

Abstract

Recent studies of postcolonialism have analysed the intertwined connection between environmental degradation and the victimisation of indigenous people who occupy a particular place. The presentation analyses Kiana Davenport's 1994 novel *Shark Dialogues* and aims to show the way American colonialism in Hawaii turns into ecological imperialism which has widespread consequences on the Hawaiians, displacing them from their ancestral living environment. Davenport attempts to record the initiation of colonisation in Hawaii until the way it is described in the present day by including more recent issues where the vast wealth of Hawaii was considered a mere commodity for the colonisers to be exploited in order to benefit the metropolitan areas. In the novel, Davenport records the story of Hawaii's ecological imperialism in various stages: the establishment of Hawaii as a business point and the imposition of restriction on native customs by Christian missionaries, the changing nature of the scenario from huge plantations to the establishment of many big cities, and the military domination in Hawaii which started during WWII and continued through the Cold War period. The presentation also aims to show the way Davenport emphasises the role of memory in creating alternative realities, restoring the process of cultural memory and thus reconstructing social identity distorted by a colonial rule. By including Hawaiian women with complex identities as having strong role in the history of the nation and describing their participation for the wellbeing of the descendants, Davenport attempts to investigate the colonial and neocolonial history of Hawaii. She also shows female resistance against both patriarchal and colonial systems, thus confirming cultural and environmental unity. By linking bodies, lands and languages, she attempts to establish a relationship of women with social, cultural and political frameworks and resistance against environmental destruction with battle against socio-political marginalisation. Davenport takes a brave and ambitious attempt of redefining Hawaiian history from a Hawaiian, particularly female Hawaiian perspective; it is thus through female voices and bodies that the history of violence on and abuse of women is described. The brutality against Hawaiian women and the destruction of environment, both of which are interrelated, opens up the multiple history of a huge cultural dispossession suffered by Hawaiian people, particularly women. This novel is thus also about the feminisation of Hawaii in the backdrop of native cultural recuperation and identity formation.

Biography

Dr Md Abu Shahid Abdullah completed his MA in English and American Studies and his PhD in English Literature from Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg, Germany. He is currently an Assistant Professor in English at East West University, Bangladesh. His research interests include trauma, alienation, memory, identity, marginalisation, postcolonialism, eroticism and magical realism. He has published articles on Toni Morrison, Salman Rushdie, Saul Bellow, Angela Carter, Gabriel García Márquez, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Walt Whitman in various international journals. His first book *Traumatic Experience and Repressed Memory in Magical Realist Novels: Speaking the Unspeakable* was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2020.

Swapnit Pradhan & Dr Nagendra Kumar, 'From Preservation to Persecution: Unbuilding Universal Norms of Environmentalism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*'

Abstract

Mainstream environmentalism today can be seen as a modern manifestation of American transcendentalist movement which is predominantly engrossed in the discourses of pure, pristine nature and its militant preservation. This Eurocentric vision of environmentalism bases its premises on the glorification of nature's aesthetic value. This outlook upholds natural environment as a place of recluse and ignores the environmental experiences of the Global South where human lives are entangled with ecology and the interactions with nature are chiefly driven by the aims of subsistence and survival. Universal application of Eurocentric nature-conservation models overlooks the diverse ecological experiences and interactions around the globe. In striving to celebrate the untouched glory of nature, the human-ecology mesh is undone and both are alienated, often leading to injustice and

disaster. *The Hungry Tide* (2011) by Amitav Ghosh presents a fictional account of the forcible evacuations of innumerable people from the islands of Sundarbans in the wake of building a 'tiger reserve'. The ecosystem people, for generations, subsisted upon the meagre natural resources at their disposal. They become what Kevin Bale terms 'disposable people' and are treated as expendable beings. Through the textual analysis of this novel, with postcolonial ecocriticism by Ramachandra Guha and Dean Curtin forming the theoretical background, we seek to unmask the inconspicuous colonial environment-conservation policies still pervasive in India which advocate that nature needs to be 'rescued' from indigenous people. We also investigate how regional practices and ethical beliefs are vital in maintaining the sanctity of nature. This paper problematises the universal application of environmental discourses constructed by dominant cultures without giving due consideration to geographical, cultural and socio-political disparities. We also try to build a bridge between bio-centric and anthropo-centric perspectives by arguing that effective environmental conservation practices don't necessarily have to be anti-human in their approaches.

Biography

Swapnit Pradhan (corresponding author) is a research scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee. He has completed his masters in English language and literature from Central University of Orissa. He has been awarded gold medal for securing the highest number of marks in his graduation. The intersections of literature and ecology, cultural studies and Indian literature in English are his areas of interest.

Dr Nagendra Kumar is a professor in the Humanities and Social Sciences department in IIT Roorkee, India. He has an ongoing career as a teacher and mentor lasting over 25 years. Merit scholarship by the Govt of India is one of the many awards he was conferred with. South Asian literature, Modern literature, Contemporary fiction and Critical theories, Indian writing, soft skills, Communication skills, Indian diaspora, Dalit studies, Postcolonial literature are his areas of interest.

Day 3 (6th April)

Panel 5: Decolonial Research, Knowledge(s), and Pedagogy

Atilio Barreda II, 'Embedded Humanities in Data Systems'

Abstract

I compare data management practices of contemporary, cloud-distributed, global culture to those of pre-Columbian societies to tease out their respective embedded humanities. By embedded humanities, I refer to social or philosophical judgments which have been naturalised to the point of axiomisation.

A khipu is a data recording device made of strings and knots used by indigenous Andean cultures. The Inca Empire, as it expanded, used the khipu to organise finances and pioneered the use of hierarchical, distributed khipu systems to ensure accuracy. While the knot arrangements have been shown to represent a decimal counting system, other attributes, such as string colour and ply direction are less understood. There are reports of khipus being able to store narrative and categorical data.

Contemporary culture also faces data challenges. The rise of NoSQL databases is one response to the challenge of complex and distributed data. NoSQL refers to the class of database technologies which depart from the traditional relational database model (in which data is carefully arranged into predefined tables with rows and columns) in favour of a more 'user-friendly' and dynamic approach. This departure came as web technologies proliferated, and the diversity and volume of data increased with it. As data becomes more diverse and distributed, NoSQL rises to the challenge of how to turn everything into data.

These systems, one tactile, one digital, interpellate users, or subjects, into different modes of being. Khipu requires a network of educated bureaucrats to maintain the string-based database and keep it up-to-date, whereas NoSQL can be viewed as a software developer friendly way to work with

increasing data diversity. By comparing the embedded humanities of the khipu and of NoSQL databases in terms of data management and computation techniques, my paper attempts to encourage discourse on non-Western philosophies and theories of computation within Postcolonial and Critical Data studies.

Biography

Atilio Barreda II is a Peruvian software developer, an MSc student in Data Analysis and Visualization at the City University of New York's Graduate Center, and an adjunct lecturer in Computer Systems Technology at the New York City College of Technology. His research includes network science, machine learning, critical data studies, and postcolonial studies. He hopes to combine what he learned in the tech industry with postcolonial scholarship and indigenous perspectives to elevate indigenous knowledges and information systems.

Nabeela Musthafa, 'Decolonising Early Childhood Educational Curriculum and Pedagogy in India: Initiatives and Challenges'

Abstract

As far as Early childhood education is concerned, Western philosophies and theories have influenced the curriculum and pedagogy adopted for young learners across the world. The very notion of teacher education itself was brought into India by the Europeans and so they were mostly based on European standards. However, as an attempt to intentionally break free from colonial influences in early childhood education, few schools in India provide alternative education practices which rejects Western influenced curriculum and assessment and instead replaces it with learning and assessment particular to the Indian context. In order to reconceptualise childhood in postcolonial India and to contribute to the process of decolonising the Indian system of education, it is vital to begin by breaking away from early childhood education which is still dependent on Western curriculum and pedagogical approaches like the ones based on Maria Montessori, Howard Gardener etc. The National Education Policy on Education (NEP) 2020 has also emphasised the significance of Early Childhood Care and Education as well as recommended strategies for revamping education for young learners keeping in mind Indian culture, traditions, language, philosophy etc. The National Education Policy 2020 also aims to redesign curriculum and pedagogy from the foundational stage onwards by drawing from indigenous and traditional ways of learning which could also be considered as a decolonising attempt. Therefore, this study aims to point out the decolonising strategies of the National Education Policy 2020 and the alternative educational practices in the field of Early Childhood Education in India and analyse its efficacy.

Biography

Nabeela Musthafa is a second-year doctoral student at the National Institute of Technology, Calicut, India researching under Dr Preeti Navaneeth. Her research explores innovative methods in Early childhood education and also attempts to address issues faced by marginalised children with respect to accessibility to quality Early childhood education. She served as a Contract Faculty at the School of Distance Education at University of Calicut before joining for her doctoral program, prior to which she worked as a Skill Development Executive for higher secondary school students under a Kerala government project. She can be contacted at nabeela_p200111ms@nitc.ac.in.

Dr Opeloge Ah Sam, 'Decolonising Musical Practices in Music Education: From the Perspective of Pasifika Identity and Music practice and Context'

Abstract

To truly teach and engage students who are our future practitioners of Music Performance and Education in a way that is socially and culturally responsive, we must break down some of the core colonialist practices that still exist in Music today.

From the value we place on certain musical styles and cultures over others, to the way we engage fusion and musical collaboration to ensure that we continue to breakdown the practice of tokenism in the way we teach composition and perform new music compositions.

As musicians and music educators, we must first breakdown the existing systems that continue to perpetuate colonial practices. These are based on the notion that we are all the same or practice the same cultural elements and values that assumes us to be a Social Imaginary as explored by Charles Taylor (2002) and Benedict Anderson (2016).

We must negotiate and navigate the system and in doing so redefining the collective values that embraces modern cultural diversity and social setting. To do this, I will present real life cases that have required a process of decolonising the values and old practices behind it and the steps taken by all parties involved to create a new approach more relevant to current educational landscape in New Zealand.

How can we critically reflect on our own positionality and practices within musical imaginaries and educational contexts so that we may contribute positively to the progress and moving forward that is needed. What is the role of knowing one's Identity in understanding and decolonising both the way we receive and express ourselves musically?

We are the important and influential players in the system that can affect change. We must first change ourselves and those things immediately in our power before we can start to influence the changes that decolonise our musical practices.

Biography

Dr Opeloge Ah Sam is a Music teacher and currently a Dean at Kaitaia College. He is a proud Samoan man who holds the chief title 'Matatumua' and was Chairman of the 'Te Hiku Pasifika Trust' established in 2019 in the beautiful Far North, New Zealand. Opeloge completed a PhD in Music Composition exploring how Samoan Identity is expressed through Musical Composition and Performance. Opeloge has given several guest lectures around Pacific region on Pasifika Music & Compositional Identity. He composed and conducted "We are Pasifika" in 2013 (first ever Orchestral concert of original and arranged Pasifika music in the world). Opeloge was awarded the CreativeNZ Artist-in-Residence at NUS in 2017 and the 2021 Research Fellow Grant with the University of Victoria. Opeloge considers his compositional voice to be the reconciliation of his Samoan identity and the Western Music context he exists in. He is also passionate about the power of music to heal and bring communities together.

Sara Bdeir, 'Refugees Linguistic Identity and Social Integration in Creative Writing Groups: A Narrative Inquiry'

Abstract

My research project concerns the role of the linguistic identities of refugees in their social integration within the context of creative writing groups. My project addresses three main questions: (1) What insight do creative writing groups give to our understanding of refugees' linguistic identities? (2) How do refugees express their linguistic identities in creative writing groups? (3) What role do linguistic identities play in the social integration of refugees participating in creative writing groups? To the researcher's knowledge, there is a dearth of studies investigating the relationship between refugees' linguistic identities and social integration in the context of creative writing groups.

This project is qualitative as it explores the perceptions of a target group of participants. Following a narrative approach to inquiry, I am looking to interview ten participants who are all adult refugees and members of a creative writing group. Data collection involves three stages: (1) Pre-writing interviews: members of the group would be invited to discuss linguistic identity and social integration. (2) Poetic inquiry: an art-based research method in which poetry is considered as research data. Poetic inquiry has more than one type and this study will only focus on the participant-voiced poems. The poems will be collected from the writing workshops delivered by the group organisers and selected by the participants themselves. (3) post-writing interviews: participants will discuss their writing and reflect on their use of language and themes emerging from their writing.

By focusing on linguistic identities, this project will spot a light on an integral part of refugees' social integration. The research finding might encourage refugees to join art groups, and motivate workshop leaders to develop their sources and understanding of refugees' linguistic identities and social integration.

Biography

Sara Bdeir is a second-year PhD candidate in Education at Nottingham Trent University. She is interested in non-formal education for refugees especially creative art projects. Her doctoral work explores the role of the linguistics identities of refugees in their social integration within creative writing groups. Sara holds an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Warwick (Distinction), and a BA in Applied Linguistics (first Hons.). Her research is supported by the Vice Chancellor scholarship scheme. She can be contacted at: sara.bdeir2019@my.ntu.ac.uk.

Panel 6: Modernity, Higher Education, and Epistemology

Lee Clarke, 'Wisdom Comes in Many Forms: Towards an Inclusive Conception of Philosophy'

Abstract

The paper I will present at the conference derives from my main PhD thesis which is attempting to bring Eastern and Western philosophy closer together in understanding. Being inspired by Post-Colonial thought, especially that of Edward Said, in my paper, I seek to challenge Eurocentric conceptions of philosophy and begin to forge an equal place at the table for both Non-Western and Western thought.

Specifically, my paper will challenge two widely held misconceptions about Eastern Philosophy. The first is the idea that philosophy is solely Western in origin. My paper will mention recent scholarship that says that Greek thinkers, as well as influencing others with their own ideas, were also influenced themselves by ideas from places such as Babylonia, Persia, Egypt and India, as well as my own comments. The second common idea that I aim to refute is that Western philosophy is exclusively based on 'reason' and 'logic' whereas Non-Western philosophy, by contrast, is based off of 'religion', 'myth' and 'irrationality' and thus cannot be called 'philosophy'. I will do this by mentioning some examples of Non-Western philosophy in my paper to show that it is worthy of study and being taken seriously. In addition to this, I will be arguing that traditions of philosophy such as Muslim and Jewish traditions, should be placed within 'The West' in intellectual terms, along with some examples of Western thought that were more 'religious' then some care to admit to show that the distinction people make between the two types of philosophy is much too simplistic.

These ideas in my opinion date back to the colonial era when both Near and Far East, the Americas and Africa was judged as 'inferior' to the West. Thus, my attempt to increase concord between the two by showing that Non-Western schools of thought are just as sophisticated and worthy of attention as Western ones, is an attempt to 'decolonise the curriculum'. I want to raise awareness of the need to teach more Non-Western philosophical traditions alongside Western ones. Given that we live in an increasingly interconnected world, the need is ever-more pressing to understand diverse systems of thought and life. The exclusion of entire philosophical traditions is therefore becoming increasingly untenable and presents a problem that needs to be addressed.

Biography

Lee Clarke is currently in the third year of his PhD scheduled to finish in September 2023. The issues of Postcolonialism feature in his research prominently and he is very interested in them. He wrote an article for *The Psychologist* in 2020 called 'Our Life is Shaped by Our Mind' comparing Buddhism and modern Western Psychology. He wrote another about Buddhist schools of philosophy, making a case for a further inclusion and awareness of Eastern thought for the magazine and journal *The Philosopher* 1923 due to be published in 2022.

Annie Treesa Joseph, 'Decolonial Modernity and Queenship Traditions in Bhopal: The Curious Case of Regency and Regnancy of Nawab Sikander Begum of Bhopal'

Abstract

Colonial India witnessed, among many things, a thorough revamping of its kingship traditions. Despite the rhetoric and discourse on Indian women's upliftment, one of the crucial casualties of the British Paramountcy was the royal women and their agency. In this political context where gendered

headship practices began to register their 'precedence' in official records, I venture to study the reign of Nawab Sikander Begum as regent and regnant Begum of Princely state of Bhopal. For creating precedence on their own was Native princes' way of 'epistemic reconstitution' and resistance in that period of high imperialism. Bhopal state is unique in its history of the reign of the Begums of Bhopal from 1819-1926. This paper analyses how Sikander Begum negotiated with sovereignty in theory and praxis. I argue that her poignant political acumen to arbitrate with the Ulema and the Paramountcy was a classic case of decoloniality. This paper incorporates Louise Olga Fradenburg's concept of 'Sovereign Plasticity' to delineate how this Begum transgressed and transcended the colonial value system about headship. Besides the theoretical premise of decoloniality as the 'epistemic delinking' and dismantling of the 'colonial matrix of power,' I argue that decoloniality is also about a disclosure that coloniality was not the only force that shaped the colonial world. Decolonial modernism, as evidenced in the life of Sikander Begum I contend, is closely tied to paramodernity. In that case, my paper suggests that passive resistance that held sway over colonial epistemologies helped shape queenship traditions in colonial Bhopal.

Biography

Annie Treasa Joseph is a PhD scholar at the Institute of English, University of Kerala. Her doctoral research is an interdisciplinary study on rituals of queenship in colonial India. Annie is interested in colonial historiography and its points of intersection with gender, sovereignty, mobility, and spatiality. Annie has published four papers in different journals and books. Annie also hosts a YouTube channel, 'Theory Talkies,' where she explains theoretical concepts.

Delso de Cássio Batista Jr., 'Coloniality of Power and Racism Denial: Autoethnographic Reflections on the Portuguese Higher Education'

Abstract

Even though European Western imperial expansion has largely come to an end as a political-economic model, it still echoes globally through what is referred to as coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). Coloniality of power is a concept developed by Quijano (2000) to refer to the profound colonial consequences in the modern days. The exploitation project conducted by European colonisation, undermined the existence of indigenous and black people, thus rendering the concept of race a key category in the foundation of coloniality of power. Within Portuguese society, a myth of Portuguese colonial benevolence and aspiration to racial democracy rose in the form of lusotropicalism (Freyre, 2003), which functions to maintain hegemonic structures and old/new forms of racism. It has been argued that these are reproduced in spaces like universities (Doutor, Marques, & Ambrósio, 2018; Cabecinhas & Macedo, 2019). Methodologically, this proposal is based on a retrospective autoethnography (Bell et al, 2020), a critical and reflexive approach for questioning and understanding experiences in relation to cultures crossed by oppressive social dynamics. Thus, through the analysis of my personal experiences as a racialised queer migrant student in the Portuguese higher education context, this paper aims to reveal the implications of the coloniality of power through lived experiences of epistemological violence, linguistic prejudice, and racism denial. This, I argue, allows the understanding that coloniality and racism in the Portuguese university function to control racialised people through language, practices of silencing knowledge, and denial of racism. Finally, I argue that coloniality and racism still produce wounds in the context of Portuguese higher education and that personal stories and reflections can reveal and provide an understanding of this reality.

Biography

Delso Batista (His/Him) is Brazilian-Portuguese Ph.D. Candidate in Psychology and Researcher at the Psychology Department at Nottingham Trent University. He is the author of the poetry book 'Posso the tratar por tu?'. He is a registered EuroPsy Psychologist and holds a master's degree in psychology, psychotherapy, and counselling.

Sujoy Banerjee, 'Language, Science and 'Our Modernity': An Argument for Diversification of the Language of Science in a Postcolonial World'

Abstract

It is a truth postcolonially acknowledged that European colonisers in possession of Eurocentric Enlightenment values have shaped the modern world. In the era of globalisation modernity has become, almost ubiquitously, the white whale of cultures. But it is not a homogeneous concept. Different cultures through different temporal periods have claimed modernity with their own peculiarities. Since scientific progression and technological prowess is a significant aspect of modernity, drawing on the works of Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty I will argue that if any culture is to self-determine its unique modern condition it must contribute in its own language to the global scientific discourse. As an inevitable result of imperialism the language of scientific discourse is hegemonised by European languages such as English or Spanish. For example, in third-world countries like India, a strong understanding of English is a necessary requirement to enter the field of advanced scientific studies. This centralisation of the medium of modern scientific thinking evinces that the realisation of the different unique modernities is still very much rooted in the colonial past. While it does contribute to amount of exposure received in a global setting and ease of accessing research materials, it comes at the cost of self-determination. Niels Bohr famously raised the issue of language in science and David Bohm later expanded on this idea. Two scientists from the pre-independence Bengal province Satyendra Nath Bose and Jagadish Chandra Bose also articulated their concern about the importance of a well-equipped scientific community operating in their native language. In this paper, focusing on the works of these scientists and critics, I aim to show that a pluralistic approach in the developing of proper scientific vocabulary in different native languages of post-colonial cultures is a necessary complication in the postcolonial modern world.

Biography

Sujoy Banerjee is currently a first-year student in the M.A. Cafeteria program pursuing a degree in English Literature at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. His areas of interest include but are not limited to Nation and Nationality, Marxism, Subaltern studies, Dalit literature, graphic novels, and digital humanities.

Day 4 (7th April)

Reading

Leone Ross, Reading from *This One Sky Day*

Leone Ross will read from her new novel, *This One Sky Day*, and will talk to Bethan Evans and the audience about her writing process and decolonisation.

Biography

Leone Ross is a novelist, short story writer, editor/copy-editor, reviewer, and teacher of fiction writing. She was born in Coventry England, and when she was six years old migrated with her mother to Jamaica, where she was raised and educated. After graduating from the University of the West Indies in 1990, Ross returned to England to do her master's degree in International Journalism at City University, in London, where she now lives.

Come Let Us Sing Anyway was nominated for the V.S. Pritchett Prize, Salt Publishing's Scott Prize, the Jhalak Prize and was shortlisted for the 2018 Edge Hill Prize. It was named runner-up Best Collection in the public-voted Saboteur Awards.

Her latest novel, *This One Sky Day*, is published by Faber & Faber in the UK and as *Popisho* in the USA with Farrar, Straus & Giroux. It will be out in paperback in 2022 (with Picador USA and Faber). *This One Sky Day* is presently shortlisted for the Goldsmiths Prize and Ross is described by *The New Statesman* as "one of the six most cutting-edge novelists" writing today.

Panel 7: Storytelling, Narrativisation, and Form

Carolina Buffoli, 'Decolonial Readings: Destabilising Eurocentric Frames of Interpretation in Contemporary Criticism of Indigenous Literature. The case of Alexis Wright's *Plains of Promise*'

Abstract

The critical shift from the 1990s towards reading literature in relation to the notion of 'world literatures' has created new audiences for Indigenous writing and, consequently, additional ways of understanding these texts, new reading challenges and often problematic scholarly reception. This paper foregrounds a critique of the internalisation of Eurocentric theoretical categories, treading in the footsteps of Spivak's work confronting how we can investigate any global text knowing that our categories and framing are so deeply Eurocentric. It addresses the tendency in contemporary literary and scholarly criticism of making Indigenous voices digestible to Western mainstream readership by absorbing them into Eurocentric explanatory models. This is especially evident in the scholarly investigations of the Indigenous novels' decided turn away from Western realism. Adopting as case study the existing scholarship on *Plains of Promise* (1997) by the Aboriginal writer Alexis Wright, this paper examines how the critics' interpretations emerge as strategies to 'fix' the narrative, using Western genre categorisations to safely encapsulate the novel's engagement with the supernatural within long-established forms (the gothic and magical realism) known to mainstream readership, thus providing a shared code of textual accessibility. As a white European critic coming to Indigenous texts, I am not just interested in what these narratives are doing, but also in the role and function of criticism as well as in how my interventions can effectively unsettle the complicity of violence implicit in the incorporation of Indigenous writing into Western schemes of interpretation. Reflecting on this metacritical issue, this paper emphasises the need to deconstruct the use of Eurocentric frames of interpretation as universal and simultaneously contends that the Indigenous text denies Western readers full access, forcing us to come to terms with our inability to negotiate meaning in narratives consciously positioning themselves in *another* epistemology.

Biography

Carolina Buffoli is a PhD student and tutor of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interest focuses on contemporary Anglophone literatures, trauma studies and the Gothic. Her doctoral project addresses the comparative analysis of how contemporary postcolonial and Scottish writing engage with the Gothic discourse to confront the legacies of colonialism, foregrounding issues around narrative, cultural memory, silences and (social) shame.

Marine Berthiot, 'Decolonising Aotearoa New Zealand Young Adult Literature: *The Case of Bugs* by Whiti Hereaka'

Abstract

Aotearoa New Zealand Literature is often criticised for being the realm of Pākehā (that is to say of British descent) male authors, limiting the literary representativity of women and girls in general, and of ethnic minorities in particular, especially in non-fiction genres and children's literature (Freegard 2017; Heritage 2018). Whiti Hereaka (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Te Arawa) is an award-winning author whose novels *Bugs* and *Legacy* respectively received the 2013 New Zealand Book Honour Award and the 2019 New Zealand Book Award for Young Adult Fiction. *Bugs* can be read as a crossover text (Falconer 2004) as its targeted audience is aged between 15 and 30 (and more), and as it questions the intercultural relationships between Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa New Zealand. Readers are indeed invited to follow a teenage Māori anti-heroine during her last year of high school, thus experiencing racial, sexist, and classist discriminations through her eyes.

In this context, I intend to answer this question: to what extent does Whiti Hereaka decolonise Aotearoa New Zealand YA Literature in *Bugs*? First, I will study *Bugs* as the coming-of-age story of a seventeen-year-old Māori high school girl from Taupō. Then, I will focus on Hereaka's construction of a dual address to her readers, applying Clare Bradford's narrative theory as it is developed in "Reading Indigeneity". Finally, I will analyse the way Māori and Pākehā literary traditions

intermingle in the text to leave space for Māori teenagers to build a fairer society in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Biography

Marine Berthiot is a third-year PhD Student in Aotearoa New Zealand Literature at The University of Edinburgh. Her research, supervised by Professor Michelle Keown and Professor David Farrier, deals with the representations of girlhood trauma in Aotearoa New Zealand written by women. She participated in the International Symposium, “Sugar, Spice, and the Not So Nice: Comics Picturing Girlhood”, organised by The University of Ghent in April 2021 with a paper on Mophead by Samoan New Zealander poet Selina Tusitala Marsh, and in the International Conference “Past and Present: Unfolding Narratives in the Pacific” organised by The University of Le Havre in September 2021 with a paper on *These Two Hands: A Memoir* by Māori author Renée. She has also delivered a paper on “Recollecting Childhood Memories in Kiwi Asian poetry” at The Free University of Brussels in December 2021. She will participate in the NEMLA Conference in Baltimore in March 2022 with a paper on childhood trauma in the young adult novel *The 10 p.m. Question* by Pākehā writer Kate de Goldi. She has also published an article in Forum entitled “Growing Up During the Great Depression in Aotearoa New Zealand. A Comparative Study of Shonagh Koea’s *The Kindness of Strangers: A Kitchen Memoir* (2007) and Renée’s *These Two Hands: A Memoir* (2017).”

Dr Rachel Gregory Fox, ‘Hostile and Hospitable Environments in Ali Smith’s *Seasonal Quartet*’

Abstract

With *Autumn*, the first instalment of Ali Smith’s seasonal quartet, arriving on the heels of the EU Referendum in 2016, Smith firmly situates her series of networked novels within the present political moment in the UK. This paper will consider how Smith’s quartet (*Autumn*, *Winter*, *Spring*, and *Summer*), published between 2016-20, responds to the UK’s Hostile Environment, which becomes intricately intertwined with the everyday lives of the books’ disparate cast of characters. More specifically, the paper seeks to address how Smith narrativises—and challenges—notions of national identity, othering, and exclusion, and, in particular, how these pertain to populist politics and the topic of migration. In doing so, the paper intends to trace the various hostile and hospitable environments that emerge over the course of this literary quartet.

In his discussion of *Summer*, and the narrative threads, characters, and relationships that surface and resurface throughout these networked novels, Ivan Callus describes how Smith’s writing manifests ‘a principle and *ethic* of connection’ (2020: 228). It is this notion of the ethic of connection that this paper draws from, in thinking about our connections to the past (and present); our connections to each other; and the connections we can discover through creative (inter-)action. In its application of an ethics of reading and writing (see: Mrovlje 2019; Stonebridge 2021; Toth 2021), this paper argues that the act of storytelling is, ultimately, generative, and has the capacity to extend a gesture of welcome. Written in the midst of the UK’s Hostile Environment, Smith’s seasonal quartet, I argue, charges us to consider what possible futures might lie around the corner, if only we can learn to be more hospitable.

Biography

Dr Rachel Gregory Fox is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Kent whose research project focuses on migration, the UK’s Hostile Environment, and the ethics of storytelling. Her monograph, *(Re)Framing Women in Post-Millennial Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran: Remediated Witnessing in Literary, Visual, and Digital Media*, will be published with Routledge in March 2022. Her co-edited collection, *Post-Millennial Palestine: Literature, Memory, Resistance*, with Ahmad Qabaha, was published with Liverpool University Press in 2021. Contact: r.gregory-fox@kent.ac.uk.

Dr Yasmin Rioux, 'Building Bridges through Interdisciplinary Practice: Creating Inclusive and Shared Places through Narrative Writing in a Distinctively Diverse Intercultural Communication Class'

Abstract

In order to provide my international students with a shared safe space where meaning-making can take place collectively, where shared stories become central to the maintenance of a shared space, and where my international students can grapple with questions of identity while trying to combine prior knowledge with content knowledge, I have implemented narrative writing into my Intercultural Communication class (Blitz & Hurlbert, 1998). I aim at creating an inclusive space – a physical and symbolic space that exists within and beyond the classroom – that encourages my diverse student group to share and foreground their prior knowledge and experiences and to move their ways of knowing from the margins to the center of our collectively negotiated and shared meaning making processes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In my presentation, I examine how the shared experience of narrative writing can act as a foundation for a collective physical and symbolic space where students find ways to combine prior knowledge and experiences with new information. Writing is a “mode of enquiry” (Park, 2013, p. 338) that offers student writers a way to not only reflect on new information, content, and related material but also to recognise their responses to the experience of engaging with subject matter, and realise individual reflections and perceptions that can then be expressed through self-produced texts (Park, 2013; Ivanic, 1998).

Using narrative writing as a way to engage and draw out the students' discursive selves allows international students to examine their multilingual, multifaceted, multi-geographical, and interdisciplinary identities through the act of textual production in a shared and collectively maintained commonplace that emphasises inclusion and equality. Considering student empowerment, inclusivity, and the elimination of discriminating factors, writing about their prior knowledge coupled with reflections on the presently shared spaces, allows international students to “develop the authority to identify themselves as the author of their texts” (Park, 2013, p. 339), which can be conducive to establishing a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Biography

Yasmin Rioux received her Ph.D. in English Composition & Applied Linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2017. She has published several academic articles and presented her research on writing at national conferences. Her primary research interests are Ecomposition, multilingual writers and writing, narrative writing, environmental writing, interdisciplinary writing, and multigenre work. She has taught ESL, English, and Communication at the college level since 2011. Aside of engaging in her passion for teaching and writing, Dr. Rioux loves spending time outdoors with her family.