ABSTRACTS IN ORDER OF PANELS

Wednesday, 11.45-13.15 PANEL 1 Historical Culpability

Having Tea with Indian Aristocrats: Humour as a Dismantling Strategy Against Imperialism
Jairo Adrián-Hernández, Universidad de La Laguna

Postcolonial literature may be briefly defined as the subsequent literary (re)action of former colonies against the remaining loopholes of imperial domination. These textual representations take therefore multiple forms; from academic or political performances to written stories from the inside. Although humour – in its most rudimentary meaning – might sound impertinent to a debate that has, and still is, not only been relevant but necessary; this present study confirms that some Indian authors use, very deftly, irony as a dismantling strategy to humorously challenge binary categories that were established once. It is thus my intention to scrutinise different Indian stock characters from Khushwant Singh’s “Karma” and Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things. These are the resulting products, due to Western indoctrination, of a cultural and imperialistic projection. They consequently represent the pseudoimperialistic sahib or voyeuristic eye which institute, through this colonial gaze, their own narration, that is to say, they re-create the world based on their supposedly vantage position. Needless to say, my primary aim is to analyse, through theory of humour and from a postcolonial angle, the use mimicry as a parody in these two stories to denounce this irreverence towards Indian culture which, in turn, goes hand in hand with the inheritance of the so-called colonial hangover. My findings ultimately suggest that irony works as constitutive vehicle to dismantle totalitarian systems or canonical hierarchies that perpetuate obsolete dualities.

Accounting for Taste: Culinary and Alimentary Re-Configurations in Colonial Bengal
Amitendu Bhattacharya, Birla Institute of Technology and Science

Preparing, sharing, consuming and celebrating food both at individual and communal levels have certain social, cultural, political and, above all, ideological implications and consequences. The food practices of the Bengali Hindu bourgeoisie had been crucial to the shaping of their identity as the bhadralok or gentlefolk in the colonial times. The bhadralok – by no means a homogenous group of individuals – were identifiable as much by their exposure to Western education as by their epicurean inclinations. Eating was an intricate and refined affair which provided them intellectual stimulation and often spurred their creative and artistic pursuits. Bengali haute cuisine therefore, is characterized by class and social distinctions. By reviewing the effects of European eating habits on the gastronomical attitudes of the upper middle class members of the Hindu community, this paper explains how colonialism, food culture, social status and cultural capital helped fashion a new cultural group commonly known by the name of the bhadralok. The paper also considers the ways in which, for the bhadralok, the consumption of particular food items became potent individual acts of defiance as well as of cultural appropriation. In its pressing desire to present itself as a distinctive class, the bourgeoisie sought to separate itself from the other Bengalis and Indians by imbiving ‘Englishness’ through the adoption of certain culinary practices of the colonizers, while simultaneously adhering to their ‘Indianness’ by keeping alive the unique culinary heritage of India, thereby attempting to assert their superiority both over their own extended community and over the White Man who was essentially viewed by them as an ‘outcaste’. The paper will further examine the role played by the housewives, hired cooks and lower classes – persons who were situated at a distance or even at opposite ends of the scale of entitlement to food from the bhadralok, and who helped construct and nurture the idea of a bhadralok as an epicure and, by extension, helped the making of ‘modern’ Indian culture possible – in the prevalent scheme of things.
Righting Colonial Wrongs in Westminster: Dadabhai Naoroji, Member of Parliament in Britain, 1892–95
Teresa Segura-García, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

The Parsi social reformer and businessmen Dadabhai Naoroji (Bombay, 1825–1917), often referred to as the “Grand Old Man of India”, was one of the leading figures of the Indian National Congress. Naoroji's book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1901) brought attention to the idea that India’s wealth was being drained to Britain — an idea that became central to the critique of British colonialism. A lesser known aspect of Naoroji’s decades-long attempt to right colonial wrongs was his involvement with the British Parliament. In 1892, Naoroji became the very first Indian member of parliament in Westminster when he was elected for the Liberal Party in Finsbury, a predominantly working-class constituency in North London. To address this scholarly gap, the paper examines Naoroji’s use of his Finsbury seat to overcome colonial inequalities in India. The paper explores the circumstances than allowed Naoroji to reach Westminster; the unresolvable tensions in his critique of British imperialism from the heart of the metropole; and the reactions his uncomfortable presence as member of parliament elicited among British and Indian political circles. In highlighting Naoroji’s case, the paper brings attention to the complex relationship between colonialism, liberalism and imperial critique in India.

Wednesday, 11.45-13.15 PANEL 2 Dalits

Dalit Muslims? The Dominant Absence in Dalit Discourse
M Asaduddin, Jamia Millia Islamia University

As the Dalit movement in India enters the third phase of enunciation, it needs to examine dispassionately some of its assumptions. One dominant assumption is the notion that the Dalits are at the receiving end of the oppressive caste system prevalent among Hindus, and so automatically, the Dalits have to be Hindu. Dalit ideologues from Baba saheb Ambedkar to Kancha Ilaiah have written eloquently about the inhuman treatment meted out to the *shudras* in the Hindu caste system. It is only now that there are some feeble voices heard among Dalit writers and ideologues who are making tentative gestures towards the underprivileged and deprived sections among Muslims and reflecting on the possibility of bringing these sections, and some sections among Christians, into the fold of Dalit or ‘Dalit bahujan’. Historically, the bulk of Indian Muslims were/are converts from the lower caste of Hindus. The egalitarian principles of Islam provided them a window to escape the oppressive inhuman treatment meted out to them in Hinduism. However, even after conversion they continued to remain in the profession they had been pursuing before their conversion, and these professions (like butchers, scavengers, barbers, washer men, fishermen, oil men etc) had stringent social stigma attached to them. Though they had right to worship in the mosque with upper class Muslims, but the latter would have no social relations with them. Practically speaking, the status of the Muslim Dalits would be only, and just only a notch higher than that of the Hindu Dalits. As the Dalit movement has grown to be more complex over the years, gaining strength but at the same time manifesting internal fissures and dissensions, it should extend its limits and incorporate Muslim Dalits in its fold to build the grand confederation of the Dalits. My paper seeks to explore the possibilities of such a grand alliance. The literature produced on and by the Muslim Dalits calls for an aesthetic that would simultaneously see it in the immediate context of its emergence and in the larger context of the pan-Indian Dalit literature produced in several Indian languages. I have examined specimens of such fiction in 12 Indian languages in my edited anthology, *Image and Representation: Stories of Muslim Lives in India* (Oxford U Press, 2000). For the purpose of the current paper I intend to explore more recent writings produced on/ by Muslim Dalits and examine how they lend themselves to enabling interpretations through a deployment postcolonial strategies.
The Kilvenmani Massacre in Meena Kandasamy’s *The Gypsy Goddess*: Precarity, Violence and Dalit resistance
Cristina María Gámez-Fernández, Universidad de Córdoba

In 1968, 5 old men, 16 women and 23 children, all of them Dalits, were burned to death in a hut in Tamil Nadu. This event, known as the “Kilvenmani massacre”, was politically silenced by the government. Yet the carnage fostered demands to reformulate land ownership schemes in relation to caste. Although it happened almost 50 years ago, or precisely because of this, only in 2014 a new memorial was inaugurated, with 44 pillars representing each of the victims. The memory of the event has never ceased to be the object of cultural attention, from Indira Parthasarathy’s novel *Kurudhippanal* (1977) and the film based on it (1983), the Tamil film *Aravindhan* (1997), the documentary *The Hut of Ramiah* (2006), to the 2014 novel *The Gypsy Goddess* by Meena Kandasamy.

This paper seeks to read Meena Kandasamy’s first novel—she is mostly known by her poetry and her active social and political activism which has already got her into trouble several times—against the historical events of the massacre by analyzing, on the one hand, the political circumstances that preceded and followed the tragedy and, on the other, by dissecting Kandasamy’s exquisite narrative depiction of the wicked relationship between politics and poverty, caste and precarity (in Judith Butler’s understanding of mourning and violence), literature and history.

A Portrait of Untouchability
Bianca Cherechés, Universidad de Zaragoza

This paper attempts to outline and analyse the unique way in which Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* tackles the hurdles of the Hindu caste system and the social oppression endorsed by Hindu history and imposed on the Dalit community. The object of discussion will be some of the most outstanding issues displayed throughout the novel, such as the problem of inter/intra caste inequality, the cyclical and generational oppression, the burden of untouchability, and the idea of escapism from a critical perspective. Moreover, the notion and portrayal of pollution, defilement and contamination, together with the manner in which untouchables identify themselves in society, will also be tackled. Some trauma theories, along with the ideas put forward by some contemporary Dalit writers and critics, will be used as a basis in order to delve into all of these issues and find out to what extent the situation depicted by Anand still persists in nowadays’ India.

*Wednesday, 14.16-15.45 PANEL 3 Rewriting India & Gender(s) 1*

Negotiating un/belonging of a (single) woman’s identity within the conflictive zone as ‘home’ and ‘homeland’: a case study based on Taslima Nasreen’ Novel *French Lover*
Shilpi Gupta, JNU, Delhi

Border beyond its geographical logic became a topic of discussion in the post-colonial and transnational studies in the late 20th century which challenged the established notion of nation-state. The metaphorical rhetoric of Border as cultural “Third Space” of Homi K. Bhabha (1990, 1994) and Anzaldúa’s (1987) feminist “Nueva Conciencia Mestiza” allow to enter into the transnational feminist discourse which problematizes not only the bigger space like ‘Homeland’ but also smaller spaces like ‘Home’ to understand the presence of silent Borders in the transnational women identity.
With this theoretical background, this paper will look into the negotiation of un/belonging of a transnational single woman among ‘homes’ – of Others (father, husband and boyfriend) and questioning preconceived constructed identity, role, body and sexuality of a woman. However, the study focuses on smaller space but at the same time enters into the discussion of her un/belonging to the bigger space as ‘(Home) land’. (Susan Strehle 2008) Understanding the difference of cultures, races, ethnicities, colors, religions and regions etc. among women, this research will meticulously base its study on a particular case through a novel French Lover (2000). The novel written by Taslima Nasreen, a Muslim Bangladeshi diaspora feminist writer, opens a discussion over homeland as well as home though the protagonist of the novel, an Indian middle class married (arranged) to an Indian French man and migrates to live a married life on Other's land.

A Living Archive: Women’s Absences and the Visual (Re)inscriptions of the Gendered Nation
Miranda Imperial, University of Cambridge

In recent years, the idea of the archive has been an ever-increasing notion pointing to a repository for classification, cultural production, and a locus for keeping the records of history, paying tribute to memory, and registering as much what is kept as what is lost. My paper is a work-in-progress, and an exploration of what I am calling a “living archive,” an archive in the making, where I aim at (re)constructing a culturally rich repository of images of Indian women as represented by Indian women artists along the twentieth century, generationally arranged, from Sunayani Devi (1875-1962) and Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941) to Nalini Malani (1946-) and Tarini Sethi (1990-). Women artists in all these cases were privileged and educated, and developed a career in the Fine Arts. They all show a great interest and concern with the role of women in society, and they have portrayed and captured women and women’s relations and work with attention and in most cases, with a feminist or proto-feminist awareness in order to reach large audiences. This paper is an ongoing project for an archive, in the absence of one, where we might say that the experience of women is “immaterial.” We lack the materiality of “archival memory,” but through these canvases (and art pieces) we have access to other kinds of memory.

I will approach issues that have to do with addressing politically women and society at large from the visual format of the canvas both in historical perspective and at present, by showing and discussing how these artists’ work and their valuable repository of images is evidence of significant historical and cultural change.

Same-sex desire and gender construction in Amruta Patil’s graphic novel Kari
Raisa Serrano Muñoz, Universidad de Córdoba

The present study analyses the discursive and visual constructions of alternative responses to normative constructions of gender in the graphic novel Kari (2008), written by the Indian author Amruta Patil. The main goal of this paper is to reveal how the author constructs counter-current femininities and masculinities against the dominant nationalist discourse proposed by Hindutva. Textual and visual analyses in the light of feminist theory will be conducted in order to show the complexities of the use of history in constructing feminine and masculine identities that serves the patriarchal state authority.

Deepa Mehta’s Midnight’s Children: trans-modernity and the nation
E. Guillermo Iglesias Díaz, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja

Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children was published in 1981, just when Thatcher and Reagan were setting the context for the neoliberal policies that, we are still told nowadays, were a new turn in the wheel of modernity. Rushdie’s novel dissect the highlights of that modernity, including some of the Grand Narratives (reason, history, progress, nation...) which seem to be as safe and sound now as ever. Mehta’s adaptation of Midnight’s Children is not a faithful adaptation.
It is not just that many of the characters populating the novel have disappeared in the film version, but also the narrative, more linear and less fragmented, is far from the choral structure in the original. And nevertheless, *Midnight Children*, the film, shares with the original a sharp edge when portraying the recent history of India and its construction as the modern nation state it is now, one of the financial key nodes and a world power. Adopting a trans-modern approach, my intention is to focus on Mehta and Rushdie’s critical representation of the processes involved in that construction, founded on colonial myths of origin and authenticity and adopting the European national formations in terms of exclusion and division.

**Regional Trade in the Political Economy of South Asia: A case Study of Indo-Pak Trade-Off**
Reena S. Soherwordi, University of Peshawar

The dream of the South Asian regional integration is yet to materialise. The formation of SAARC in 1985 was meant to achieve a regional trading bloc with an application of David Ricardo’s theory of ‘Comparative Advantage’. As a result, the ultimate objective was free trade in the South Asian region. However, this seems unachievable at the SAARC’s forum. The economic fragmentation has resulted in India’s bilateral and multilateral trade agreements within and without the region. Currently, India is the only country with numerous and trading accords with almost all regional countries except Pakistan. In a way, she succeeded in isolating Pakistan economically. Will this strategy succeed or falter is the question of the questions. With the rise of economic-minded PM Modi in power, isolating a strong and nuclear power with growing GDP country- Pakistan – his policies will prove counterproductive. Moreover, Pakistan will go for checkmate by harming India in the region with its own political maneuvering. This may prove detrimental to India’s dream of becoming an economic giant. In this context, India-Pakistan’s trade competition needs to be examined. India’s bilateral and multilateral agreements are a success. But Pakistan’s countermoves may neutralize her initiatives for an economic power. A South Asia with free trade and ‘comparative advantage’ will be to the advantage of both the countries especially India. This will contribute to South Asian Regional Economic integration- an objective envisaged by the SAARC.

**Righting the subalterns? Neel Mukherjee’s *The Lives of Others* and the Naxalite Movement**
Carlotta Beretta, University of Bologna

*The Lives of Others* (2014) explores one of the most controversial chapters in Bengali history, the Naxalite movement and its subsequent repression by the State. While it features a prominently middle-class perspective, the idea of righting the wrongs committed by society towards the subalterns is among the main themes of the novel. Indeed, it examines the reasons why so many young middle-class students decided to join the movement and the actual impact of their activism. In doing so, it questions Bengali society and the relationship between different social classes. This paper will analyse the social outlook provided by *The Lives of Others* against another renowned account of the Naxalite movement, *Mother of 1084* (1974) by Mahasweta Devi, written right after the events of the 1960s and 1970s. Whereas the latter provides a harrowing yet sympathetic account of the facts, Neel Mukherjee’s novel seems to challenge the Naxalites’ destructive and nihilistic ideology and the actual effects the movement had on rural workers. Indeed, the novel points to the faults in the Naxalites’ existential ideology, which are deemed among the causes of their failure to change Bengali society (Ray 1988).
Chotro: Learning from the Indigenous
Geoffrey Davis, University of RWTH Aachen

The Chotro project was established jointly by the Bhasha Research Centre in Baroda (India) and the European branch of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS). As an NGO, Bhasha had been founded initially to document the linguistic, literary, and artistic heritage of tribal communities in India and to establish an academy for the promotion of tribal languages, literature, arts and culture with a view to initiating formal education for the marginalised adivasis of Gujarat. Chotro emerged from these activities. It aimed to situate the tribal people of India, the adivasis in the context of indigenous peoples across the world with whom they have so much in common but little if any contact. Conceived as a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary forum, Chotro thus sought to ‘bring together’ – for that is what the word means in the Bhil language – indigenous people from India and elsewhere with activists and scholars from many countries working in such diverse fields as anthropology, sociology, literature, linguistics, history, music, museum studies, and human rights. Four Chotro gatherings were convened which addressed issues such as marginalisation, social deprivation, lack of access to education, loss of traditional lands, indigenous knowledge systems, oral traditions, endangered languages, and the representation of the indigenous in performance and visual arts. Chotro illustrated one way in which literary scholars may contribute to social and cultural activism.

Wednesday, 16.15-17.45 PANEL 6 Literary Rewritings 1

Healing and Repossession of the Body in Meena Kandasamy’s Touch and Ms. Militancy
Jorge Diego Sánchez, Universidad de Salamanca

A patriarchal and colonial endeavour has been conquering the bodies and lands of India for centuries. The male control of the female body, the religious spread of fear, the caste system and the political control of language have proven to be the political and social means that still keep India divided. It is in this stage where the rise of a writer and activist such as Meena Kandasamy (1984) proves remarkable to understand and repair the old and new entrenched systems of corruption, violence and lack of women’s rights. Accordingly, this paper traces how Kandasamy heals the private and public wounds imposed on her literary persona in terms of language, nation, gender and caste in her two collections of poetry, Touch (2006) and Ms. Militancy (2010). It is under this notion of healing that I will explain how Kandasamy repossesses her own intimate world in the verses of Touch as well as I will study how she unveils and recuperates from the discriminatory practises imposed upon her social identity in Ms Militancy. Drawing elements from affect theorisers such as Sarah Ahmed (2004) or Purnima Mankekar (2015) and from postcolonial and feminist thinkers like Urvashi Butalia (2006, 2000), Susie Tharu (2014) or Susie Tharu and K. Lalita (1993), I will analyse how Meena Kandasamy heals her private body and social identity in these two poetry collections by reconfiguring private and public spaces from where to transcend the gender, caste and nation restrictions that have been imposed upon her individual and community identity from various interlocking systems of domination based upon gender, class and caste.

Political mimicry in Naipaul’s Magic Seeds
Karmele Díez de Olarte Cabada, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

As a postcolonial writer, Naipaul’s literature is deeply concerned with the exploration of the nature of the colony from a cultural and a political perspective. Being from Indian descent and brought up in the Caribbean, an interest to ponder
on Indian history and to understand its cultural identity is central to his fiction. In *Magic Seeds* Naipaul moves from the colonial India under British rule where the protagonist, Willie Chandran, was born, to a post-independence rural India besieged by a Maoist revolutionary group inspired in the Naxalite movement, an insurgent group that claimed to fight poverty and be trusted by poor villagers. Drawing from Bhabha’s concept of mimicry which holds that the colonized seeks to copy the colonizer thus producing a subject who is ‘almost the same, but not quite’, this paper seeks to reflect on Naipaul’s vision of revolutionary discourse in India as an example of ideological mimicry. Following Willie Chandran’s trials and tribulations as a member of a Maoist guerrilla in India, Naipaul dissects the divorce between foreign political ideological discourse and Indian cultural heritage. In so doing, Willie Chandran acts both like an agent and a victim of a pointless and self-imposed mission, in a metaphorical tableau of Indian politics.

**Transgenerational Traumas after the Partition in India: Second-generation Bengali Life Narratives**  
Dolors Ortega, Universitat de Barcelona

The field of trauma studies emerged in the early 1990s (Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman, Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub) as an attempt to construct an ethical response to forms of human suffering and their cultural and artistic representation. Born out of the confluence between deconstructive and psychoanalytic criticism and the study of Holocaust literature, from its outset trauma theory’s mission was to bear witness to traumatic histories in such a way as to attend to the suffering of the other. In 2008 a number of influential critiques by Gert Beulens and Stef Craps, Michael Rothberg, and Roger Luckhurst added to the voices calling for a radical re-routing of the field. These new voices point at the Eurocentric bias of trauma theory and set out the challenges to be met in constructing the decolonisation of trauma theory for postcolonial cultural and literary studies. What has been undisputed from Caruth’s approach to trauma is her focus on the impossibility of exact and “ultimate” knowing which does not oppose or contradict the notion that narrative is curative, and that trauma victims may come to terms with their traumatic experiences. Without negating the lasting, profound impact of trauma, postcolonial trauma narratives often also demonstrate that resilience and growth are possible in the aftermath of traumatic wounding; a turn towards life and a turning away from melancholia and stasis. The following paper aims to explore second-generation life narratives of members of the Bengali community, which can be representative of transgenerational traumas after the Partition of India.

**“The last word belongs to you”: remembrance and representation of a national crisis. The case of The Ayodhya Cantos**  
Rosalia Martinez de Miguel, Universidad de Valladolid

Rukmini Bhaya Nair (2009) defends the power of poetry as a weapon against terror and silencing, as the “preferred voice of anguish” and so as the right linguistic mode to deal with a national trauma. From this perennial site of resistance that poetry offers, she publishes The Ayodhya Cantos some years after the destruction of the Babri Masjid. It is a highly aestheticized and sophisticated collection of poems, drawing from the tradition of the great epics, including the Ramayana, The Divine Comedy and Spencer’s Faerie Queene. This multilayered and multicultural “comi-tragic” national allegory bravely addresses identity, political and religious issues. The author takes a political stance, reminds the reader of a shared Indian past of syncretism, mysticism and rebellion and conveys the history/story of Ayodhya up to 6th December 1992. Its main and central part is focused on the development of the “Ayodhya debate” and the long process that culminated in the destruction of the Babri Masjid and the subsequent wave of communal hate across the subcontinent. This paper aims to identify and understand the literary tools used in the collection to represent crisis and violence as well as to analyse the various aspects that differentiate the poetic outlook.
Conflict Resolution Strategies and the issue of Kashmir: Contextualizing Peace in the post-colonial era in South Asia
Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, University of Peshawar

Resolution of international conflicts and promotion of peace has been a long cherished desire in South Asia. The disparaged relations between India and Pakistan due to Kashmir with a colonial legacy have kept the entire region starved of peace. Conflict (in case of Pakistan) or no conflict (in case of India by not accepting Kashmir as a disputed territory) is a foregone issue. Now the resolution strategies for Kashmir, adopted by India and Pakistan have further intricated the already complex issue. Moreover, lack of communication enhances a conflict. Both countries have failed in keeping communication to reach to a common point to begin the resolution of conflict- Kashmir. Thus in a time, when both countries are not interacting cooperatively, their engagement in conflict resolution strategies will muster remedy of Kashmir. By suggesting assortment of strategies of the regional dispute, South Asia may experience peace in the foreseeable future.

Education in Medieval Bengal: An Account of Two Systems
Mohammad Abul Kawser, University of Dhaka

In the medieval Bengal, Hindus and Muslims lived in a society where religion controlled foremost aspects of life. As a consequence, both the communities differed from each other in many respects. In this social context, Hindus and Muslims developed two distinct education systems. This paper provides an outline of both Hindu and Muslim education in medieval Bengal and examines how did they interact despite having clear distinctions between the systems. Reviewing primary and secondary sources, this article shows that there was peaceful co-existence with various interactions among them such as inter institutional roaming of teachers and students. In the context of religious militancy in Indian subcontinent this paper offers historical evidences of religious harmony in the past.

India, just Heat, Dust and Tea? Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Nicole C. Vosseler
Alejandra Moreno Álvarez, Universidad de Oviedo

The novels Heat and Dust (Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, 1975), and Der Himmel über Darjeeling (Nicole C. Vosseler, 2006) recreate current western stereotypes when approaching romance and India; both topics are analysed by two European authors: Jhabvala, German-born British and American, and Vosseler, German. Heat and Dust won the Booker Prize in 1975, and, with it, great success—it was also made into a film in 1983 (Dir. J. Ivory)—, while Der Himmel über Darjeeling is a best seller which, due to its commercial profit, has been translated into seven languages to date (El cielo sobre Darjeeling, 2012). It is my purpose to study the exotic trope these authoresses use when dealing with India, where, as included in the titles, heat, dust and tea are part of the semantic field employed to define India. Both works place a European woman in India during the first half of the twentieth century, where history and landscape are similar. I will analyse if within the scope of thirty years—Heat and Dust was published in 1975 and Der Himmel über Darjeeling in 2006—, the exotic trope varies or if it is still used to “sell” India and, with it, to keep on inscribing India, to the European readers, as the Other.

India from the sea: Amitav Ghosh’s ‘The Town by the Sea’ and other oceanic perspectives
Charne Lavery, University of Cape Town
“Annamalai” or The Dalit Gardener of R. K. Narayan
Cruz Bonilla, Universidad de Granada

“Annamalai” is the portrait of the socially excluded, the degenerate perceptions of the native constructed by the (neo)coloniser’s discourse, which “justify conquest” and removal of those natives in order to “establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha), designed for the workforces’ economic exploitation. The narrator’s intellectual slant reflects on the Indian past and present, where ethnic minorities and caste-marked subjects would find a respectful niche in modern India. Masked by its apparently humorous tone, “Annamalai” shows some of the conflicts that arise from a traditional/tribal Indian economy – extremely poor and conditioned by social prejudices and superstitions. It also portrays the homogenising effects of glocalisation on ancient beliefs (Robertson), and more specifically, on the Indian joint family system. Annamalai suffers a semi-slave regime of labour exploitation where he falls prey to the kangani system of recruitment. This system manipulates illiterate workers in such a way that they remained permanently indebted. As Annamalai’s resilience prevails over hardships, he is able to rebuild a profile of free labourer in a different space. Nevertheless, the open end of the text forces the reader to choose an interpretation of the contextual intricacies that the narrator’s subtly spreads over the symbolism of the short story.

Thursday, 11.30-13 PANEL 9 Rewriting India & Gender(s) 2

Re-Wri(gh)ting Masculinity in the Post 9/11 Context: Racist Stereotyping in the War on Terror
Belén Martín Lucas, Universidade de Vigo

This paper offers an intersectional feminist analysis of diasporic author Shauna Singh Baldwin’s short story collection We are not in Pakistan (2007), focusing on her contestation of racist stereotypes of South Asian men in North America. Inspired by Mona Baker’s critique of the metanarrative of the war on terror, and following Sara Ahmed’s, Judith Butler’s and Jasbir Puar’s influential work on the mobilization of fear and anger at the core of that metanarrative, I will examine Baldwin’s re-wri(gh)ting of the figure of ‘the raghead’, together with the wide range of both hegemonic and alternative masculinities her stories showcase. I will read Baldwin’s narratives as a form of political intervention in public discourse, a contribution towards social justice in a violent neo-colonial context.

The Confluence of Mysteries: Myth, Mathematics and the Multiverse in Short Fiction by Vandana Singh
Sara Martín, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

One of the wrongs committed against India was the supposition that it could not generate a science fiction of its own that could have, besides, a world-wide impact. The recent publication of the monographic issue on Indian SF in the American journal Science Fiction Studies (November 2016) is a fundamental step in redressing this wrong. Among the Indian SF writers celebrated in that issue, and generally in the SF Anglophone community of readers, is Vandana Singh (b. New Delhi). She is a bilingual Hindi/English speculative writer fiction who publishes regularly science fiction, fantasy and children’s books. Singh is also Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Physics and Earth Science at Framingham State University in Massachusetts. As a scientist, a woman, and an Indian speculative fiction writer Singh occupies, then, a singular position from which to produce fiction which is, in particular in the field of SF, original and innovative. Singh specialises in writing short fiction. As it usually happens in similar cases, it is certainly difficult to keep track of her production which, apart from the volume The Woman Who Believed She Was a Planet (2008) and her two novellas Distances (2008) and Of Love and Monsters (2007), is scattered in a variety of anthologies and magazines. It seems, however, feasible to claim that in her work she fuses in a wonderfully productive way ancient Indian myth, Indian science, Indian actuality and her scientific concern with the concept of the multiverse. I explore here these themes mainly in relation to her short story “Somadeva: A Sky River Sutra” (2010).
Abjection to decode sexism, nationalism and homophobia in Anglo-Indian fiction.
Antonia Navarro-Tejero, Universidad de Córdoba

Thursday, 14.15-15.45 PANEL 10 Rethinking Contemporary India

La MARCA: reflexiones sobre la obsesión por rentabilizar la cultura como producto en España e India
Víctor Vélez García, Universidad de Huelva

La sociedad globalizada del siglo XXI tiende a homogeneizar los mercados pero también a la propia sociedad. La escena internacional en algunos países comienza a plantear la singularidad de sus rasgos más identificativos como una herramienta de marketing. Ante la normalización de los estándares de calidad, algunos países están diseñando estrategias basadas en lo singular de "su producto". La Marca-País responde a ese intento por exhibir la calidad y las bondades de ese país con la intención de atraer empresas, mejorar la imagen internacional y ofrecerse como algo diferente. En cuanto a la cultura, qué es lo que se pretende, qué se convierte en Marca, qué efecto tiene. Se propone reflexionar sobre la necesidad de transformar una cultura compleja en un producto de consumo.

Decolonialidad: las Semillas en la India
Subhas Yadav, Universidad de Hyderabad y Universidad de Extremadura

El pensador y semiótico argentino Walter Mignolo traza el concepto latinoamericano decolonialidad hacia la conferencia de Bandung, que fue precursor de luego nacido como el Bloque no Aliado, en el que India jugó un papel muy importante, gracias a la visión del primer ministro Jawaharlal Nehru, discípulo de Gandhi. Aunque no muy bien explorado, los pensamientos de Gandhi dirigen hacia el proceso de decolonialidad del saber junto con lo del poder. Lo que precisamente el mesiánico proyecto de los pensadores latinoamericanos; Enrique Dussel, Mignolo, Guijano etc. pretende lograr. En esta ponencia me gustaría explorar el concepto de decolonialidad en cuatro de los importantes fundadores del pensamiento moderno indiano; Jawaharlal Nehru, Tagore, Ambedkar y Gandhi. Aunque parezca que Gandhi era un mero activista político, sería un fallo pensar así, porque igual actuaba como un guru o santón espiritual de sus seguidores, ejercía como reformador social, y como se sabe, sin ser un indiano dogmático en cualquier manera. Enuncia “quiero que las culturas de todos los pueblos pasen por mis casas pero no me rindo a nadie.” Estas enunciación encaja el secreto de su lucha incansable, y no solo al nivel físico sino al nivel mental y más hondo, al nivel cultural y espiritual o epistemológico. Este meollo fluye en la mayoría de los fundadores de la India moderna, y lo que va surgiendo a su natural velocidad hacia una emancipación total.

Exploring the Hindu/Muslim Divide as Colonial Legacy: The Partition of Bengal
Maurice O'Connor, University of Cádiz

In this paper we shall explore the role that colonialism played in the creating of religious identities in Bengal for expedient ends. Our analysis shall commence at the turn of the twentieth century and we shall discuss salient political events that led to the partition of Bengal. Our aim is to shed light upon the shift from localised identities to politicised identities in Bengali society and how religious affiliation became a central consideration within this shift. Here, we shall specifically examine the 1932 Communal Award, itself the outcome of the 1909 Morley-Minto Administration Reformation Act, which established a separate versus joint elections and thus cemented the separation between Hindus and Muslims by splitting of the Indian electorate primarily upon religious/ethnic grounds. Having established the historicity of this colonial subterfuge, we shall turn to the more intimate questions of cultural differences within the Bengali context, and we shall question if colonialism is solely responsible for the construction of communal identities.
In this context, we shall turn to Bengali literary fiction, translated into English, as a means to deliver a nuanced reading of the so-called Hindu-Muslim divide.

Thursday, 14.15-15.45  PANEL 11  Arte y música

Formas de puritanización en la recuperación del arte indio del pasado: el caso de la Escuela de Bengala y los lenguajes de la escultura
Sergio Román Aliste, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Esta comunicación aborda el modo en que la recuperación del arte indio del pasado en las décadas previas a la Independencia (aproximadamente 1900-1940) conllevó una tergiversación de los cánones plásticos tradicionales en su adaptación contemporánea. En concreto, esta comunicación aborda los modos de amansamiento de la carnalidad y sensualidad de las formas que tradicionalmente habían sido asociadas con la escultura india. En las manifestaciones artísticas del pasado, especialmente las ligadas al hinduismo, budismo y jainismo la plástica escultórica jugaba un papel central, hasta el punto de condicionar el funcionamiento volumétrico bidimensional y tridimensional de las manifestaciones restantes. En el caso de la Escuela de Bengala (tanto en su desarrollo estrictamente bengalí como en su proyección a las escuelas de arte coloniales del resto del territorio indio) esta adaptación plástica modernizada, que esta comunicación entiende como necesariamente puritana, conllevó la preferencia por otros lenguajes artísticos, como la acuarela, el gouache o la tinta, en vez de formas de expresión volumétrica contundente, a pesar de la abierta identificación con el arte del pasado. Esta intervención explora, por tanto, el sustrato ideológico y estético imperante en la Escuela de Bengala y en sus principales protagonistas, siempre en relación al tema propuesto, así como su traducción técnica y plástica en las obras artísticas del periodo preindependiente.

El complejo budista de Sāñci: la decoración escultórica como fuente documental de su tiempo
Francesc-Josep de Rueda Roigé y Núria Ribas Valls, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

El complejo de Sāñci, a 46 quilómetros al nordeste de Bhopal, en Madhya Pradesh, se erige como uno de los recintos budistas conservados más antiguos construidos en territorio indio. Fundado ya en el siglo III aC por el emperador Aśoka, perteneciente a la dinastía Maurya, se mantuvo activo hasta el siglo XIII dC. Los protagonistas de este conjunto monástico son los stūpas, monumentos funerarios de peregrinación, de gran tamaño, que no sólo organizan el espacio, sino que están decorados con relieves de carácter esencialmente didáctico. Mientras que muchos de ellos consisten en narraciones que relatan al visitante los nacimientos anteriores de Buda (jātakas) o su vida histórica, otros exhiben figuras antropomorfas, zoomorfas o elementos trascendentales dentro de la tradición budista primitiva. Estos relieves poseen un valor inestimable, pues constituyen una fuente de primer orden para documentar la vida cotidiana, las costumbres, el vestuario, el peinado y otros pormenores acaecidos en el norte de India durante los primeros siglos de nuestra era. En consecuencia, analizaremos la iconografía presente en la decoración escultórica y su relación con la realidad del momento, para conocer mejor la cultura coetánea. Pese a que el complejo budista de Sāñci posea un valor histórico-artístico incuestionable y que, en 1989, la UNESCO lo declarase como Patrimonio de la Humanidad, su ubicación, algo alejada de las rutas turísticas habituales, provoca que no se encuentre entre los monumentos más visitados del país y se mantenga al margen de los circuitos más populares. Este trabajo contribuirá a divulgar y enfatizar la importancia que tiene este conjunto.

Las secuencias musicales en el cine indio y su traducción
Taniya Gupta, Universidad de Jaume I

Una de las características más marcadas del cine comercial de India, como señalan múltiples expertos (Dudrah 2006, Colm Hogan 2008, Ganti 2013), es el uso prolífico de secuencias musicales. El uso de la fonemática y las danzas coreografiadas ha sido objeto de consternación entre muchos críticos y estudiosos tanto dentro del país como afuera.
Intentos de estudiar la inclusión de estas secuencias desde un marco teórico donde predominaba la representación “realista” favorecida por muchos otros cines del mundo contrastaban desfavorablemente su estética recargada, su aparente desconexión con la narrativa fílmica y la mezcla de espacios y elementos diegéticos y no diegéticos, para tacharlas de mero escapismo y por lo tanto no siempre dignas de consideración sería. Sin embargo, las últimas décadas han sido testigos de un auge en la cantidad de estudios académicos que analizan la estética formal del cine comercial indio. Esta presentación interdisciplinaria une el trabajo realizado por estos expertos y las teorías sobre la traducción de canciones (Franzon 2008, Kaindi 2005, Susam-Sarajeva 2008) para explorar el papel de estas secuencias en el cine indio y sus traducciones en las versiones subtituladas al español desde una perspectiva narrativa y contextual.

La interpretación del yoga moderno de la tradición filosófica de la India
Xavier Riutort Heredia, UNED

Muchas personas hoy en día acceden a las tradiciones sapienciales y filosóficas indias a través del Yoga Moderno, mediante clases de yoga donde se incorporan conceptos, ideas y símbolos de estas tradiciones, libros de autoayuda de conocidos gurus, así como webs y artículos diseminados por la red. La interpretación que el Yoga Moderno tiene de estas tradiciones es fruto de la modernidad y de la globalización, pudiéndose encontrar una gran influencia del New Age y del Neovedanta. En nuestra comunicación intentaremos abordar esta interpretación, alejándonos del binomio “auténtico/no-auténtico”, u “original/no-original” para comprender qué tienen de diferente estas interpretaciones actuales y modernas. En contraposición a una hermenéutica propia de la India pre-moderna (en el cual consideramos que ya no nos podemos situar, en tanto occidentales), o de una hermenéutica moderna del yoga actual o del Neovedanta, propondremos una hermenéutica postmoderna, o transmoderna, inspirada en la hermenéutica occidental del siglo XX, para releer, repensar y reinterpretar las tradiciones indias desde un punto de vista otro, pero sobre todo para contribuir a la construcción de un yoga que esté a la altura de los tiempos, que haga honor a su espíritu.

El loco de los gatos: el Sr. Baumgartner, Anita Desai y la lucha por la representación en la literatura de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en Bombay
Edgar Tello García, Investigador no adscrito

El trabajo pretende estudiar lo que Anita Desai conoce como “el azar de la maldad”. Para ello analizaremos la novela Baumgartner’s Bombay (1989), protagonizada por el judío homónimo Hugo Baumgartner, quien ha terminado alojado en un apartamento cerca del Taj Hotel de Bombay, tras huir milagrosamente de los nazis, para acabar dedicado a la cuida de sus gatos. El texto presenta la intersección entre la figura del judío errante y las familias desquiciadas y hambrientas acampadas cerca del alojamiento de Baumgartner. Nos interesa el papel de cliente con el Baumgartner se disfraza para pasar desapercibido en una sociedad empobrecida. Al no tener una identidad definida, Baumgartner elige el papel europeo del flâneur, en lucha por no degradarse al vagabundo del mendigo. Veremos si la dignidad con la que acepta las sobras para sus gatos no es un ejemplo de los diferentes status de ciudadanía existentes durante la posguerra en Bombay. Pretendemos estudiar la intersección entre culturas reprimidas para valorar el peso de la representación en este texto (y en la literatura postcolonial en general) de hindúes y judíos. Para ello utilizaremos la crítica materialista de Walter Benjamin y su concepción del historiador como coleccionista del lumpen (trapos, desechos). La filosofía de Reyes Mate, y su comprensión de las “piedras desechadas” y del “resto”, también serán pilares teóricos de este trabajo. No violento (ahimsa) hasta las últimas consecuencias filosóficas.
Una lectura del budismo primitivo desde la Praxis filosófica
Teresa Gaztelu González-Camino, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid

Este trabajo propone una nueva consideración del budismo del suttapitaka. Es bien sabido que el budismo primitivo ofrece unos sólidos fundamentos metafísicos, antropológicos, epistemológicos, éticos y psicológicos desde una perspectiva experiencial que añade, en un mismo gesto, teoría y práctica. Dicho enfoque vivencial, así como el amor incondicional a la realidad y el afán terapéutico son compartidos por la Praxis filosófica (PF): movimiento reciente que busca rescatar la filosofía concebida como ars vitae y cumplir su vocación universal de servicio. La PF sigue el principio socrático de examinar la propia vida y hacerse dueño de ella. Toma la forma de una serie de diálogos entre un filósofo y quien a él acude, y sus ejes metodológicos son la elénctica (o arte de refutación) y la mayéutica (o arte de hacer emergir un conocimiento latente). Ello se complementa con la realización de ejercicios filosóficos. La tesis que se plantea es que la PF constituye un marco adecuado para reavivar la filosofía budista y ponerla al servicio de nuestra sociedad; no sólo sus prácticas concretas de meditación, sino más generalmente su forma de ver y de vivir. Se propone, en suma, leer y aplicar el budismo desde y en el contexto de la PF.

The voice of an Indian trans woman: a hijra autobiography
Regiane Corrêa de Oliveira Ramos, Faculdade de Tecnologia (Fatec), Brazil

The aim of this paper is to bring transsexuality in India and hijra community to the gender discussion through the autobiography The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story (2015) by A. Revathi. The hijra literature in English is gaining space, albeit small, in the literary milieu with its main character, a trans woman, who narrates her story troubling the heteronormative world. Not bending to gender norms, Revathi sought her place in the world, becoming not only a hijra, but also a political agent in her community. Her writing reveals the bruises and wounds of a body violated by a patriarchal and caste society. Writing/telling gives her visibility, despite being made invisible by many. In order to understand the hijras community, which Revathi belongs to, I will approach Gayatri Reddy’s ethnography, which seeks to understand the construction of the hijras identity through the intersectionality of social markers, gender, race, class, generation, region, sexuality, caste and kinship, interacting at multiple and often simultaneous levels. Moreover, as Gayatri argues, one must think of the terms izzat (respect) and asli (real), that permeate the discourse of the hijras in their self-identification and the discourse of the Indians, to comprehend these categories.

Hajj Narratives: Necessity of Righting and Positing the Alternate History of Mappilas of Malabar
Muhamed Riyaz, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

Scholars who engage with history has to deal with religion. Almost in the history, religion is not given a discussable category and history takes route according to the power structure a nation entertains. Preferring the material productivity over the spiritual thrust of religion while articulating history, historians are at fault for creating a single minded historical approach. In terms of Malabar, history of Indian Ocean, Hajj narratives should be seen as relating the alternate history of the Mappila community In terms of Islam. There is a need to revive the old Hajj literatures to excavate to know the ‘supressed history’ of colonial struggle and encounters in their journey en route to Mecca. After a reformist movement in Kerala, these narratives have been taken down from the society in the pretext of promotion of ‘civilized system’. Absence of the histories around Hajj in Malabar questions the foundations of constructed history of India. Hajj and related sufi encounters between two regions of Mecca and Malabar have to be analyzed thoroghly to understand hte history of the time. One way of doing this is by bringing in the discussion of Sufism, for example, out of
the Islamic Studies methodology and into the center of the historical method. It is not possible to understand the history of a region without knowing the Sufism and history which leads to know the hajj and its narratives from Malabar.

South Africa: cataloguing the nation’s majority and minority autobiographical writing (the Indian diaspora)
Juan Zarandona, Universidad de Valladolid

The recent Columbia Guide to South African Literature in English Since 1945 (2010) has definitely proved that both biography and, especially, autobiography have always been a very effective medium of expression for a great number of South African writers. Due to their very special historical circumstances, discrimination- and inequality-prone, individuals from all the nation’s communities seem to have felt an unstoppable urge to tell the world what is it about to grow up and live in South Africa, about presenting their own unique existences combined with those of the communities to which they belong to, or about their need to write about themselves in order to be able to do something to right the colonial and postcolonial wrongs of the past. Consequently, the number of autobiographies is extremely abundant, and an autobiography, The Long Road to Freedom (1994) by Nelson Mandela, is the most popular South African text ever published. This paper with make an effort to compile, catalogue and classify as many representative data—writers and works—as possible, taken from all these South African autobiographies coming from all the diverse population groups living in the country. However, it will focus its attention on the diasporic Indian community of the nation and the characteristics of its own autobiographical output.

Like a Broken Pebble from the Pavement — Two Readings on Subalternity and the Woman Condition in Saadat Hasan Manto’s “The Insult” (1948)
Clara Ballart, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Manto’s writings are hardly as controversial and ground-breaking as his series of short stories about Bombay’s prostitutes and the world surrounding them. My paper aims to give at least two readings on the story of Saugandhi, a dark-skinned woman, and “the insult” she receives when being rejected by a client. Her burst of pent-up rage, helpless but terrible, can be interpreted as a positive act of realisation of her own condition or as a reaffirmation of powerlessness in the face of the dominant. Using the tools of the most canonic and instrumental concept of the subaltern, with Guha (1982) and Spivak (1985) delimiting its oppressed (non)identity, Saugandhi’s difference from the élite and her being conscious of it becomes the voice which the subaltern cannot utter. Manto's essays (1955) show a major concern on the desperate state of sexual workers, and it is through his feminism that this paper will discard the abstract notion of subalternity and highlight how gender makes “the woman who didn't have a father's shelter, had no education, ...a broken pebble from the pavement” (Manto, 2014: 204). The short story is not, as it may seem in abstract terms, empowering; it is a wretched cry that ends in silence—there is nothing to be done.

Revisiting Partition Poetry under the Lens of Environmental Memory
Juan Ignacio Oliva, Universidad de La Laguna
The year 2017, is the 70th anniversary of the partition of India in 1947. Due to its far-reaching result and lingering effects, the partition of India is one of the most significant and controversial chapters of Indian history. Because of the partition, there has been a major change in social-cultural political-economic life and demography of the Indian subcontinent. Apart from historical investigations of the tragic event, mournful memories of cruelty and chaos at the time of partition have been widely recorded in Indian literature and visual arts. A large number of novels, short stories, dramas, poems and paintings have been created and films have been produced in which the trauma, sufferings and sorrow of the affected communities are well depicted. These creations have definitely impacted the people’s mind. Nevertheless, hate and hostility resulting from the partition have not been overcome even today. Tension persists at the Line of Control between India and Pakistan. The killing of soldiers from both sides and counter allegations between the two militaries have become day-to-day phenomena. The potential of devastating conflicts in the future may not be ruled out. There should be every possible effort to prevent these. The concern of this paper is to disseminate harmony through highlighting the sensitivity of the literature in general and Hindi novels in particular, especially Tamas, a most celebrated Hindi novel on the topic.