

CHAPTER 16

ENGLISH

Doctoral Theses

01. HANGZO (Siamlianvung)
Absent Voices: A Study of the Representation of Women and Secular Themes in Pre-Christian and Post-Christian Paite Narratives.
Supervisor: Prof. Raj Kumar
Th 27256

Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate and construct a cogent delineation of the positionalities of women and non-liturgical thematic posturing in the unexplored literatures of the Paite tribe. The putative impressions of a permissive and accommodative tribal worldview which also extends to its narratives belie the gendered Faultline in folklore that is supplemented by thematic restrictions in its print literature. The examination of select proverbs, folktales, folksongs and the historiography of non-liturgical writings within the praxis of feminist, literary anthropology and postcolonial discourses studies the nuances of the socio-cultural constraints which both women and creative literary expressions encounter. The existing academic inquiries attempted so far construct a notion of empowered womanhood and emphasise the profitable nature of Western scholasticism to bolster their estimations of the unique ethnic identity of the Paite. Oral narrativity reveals the anxieties of gendered power imbalance in the apparently liberal indigenous Paite society. Women-centric proverbs confirm the dogmatic adherence to institutionalised frameworks of morality and social conduct. The scant number of folksongs by women similarly amplify their unrepresented status. Folktales as fantastical fictional expressions only reiterate the improbable replication of the agency of women in real life. Their marginality continues in a post-evangelised society where education only equips them with economic progress. The internalisation of their subjugation is nurtured by inheriting socio-cultural strictures and embracing the feminine piety of their new faith. Paite writing which is synonymous with male writing also exhibits a lacuna of thematic pluralities. The monochromatic scriptural themes that dominate Paite print literature attest to the hegemonic and homogenising influence of Christianity. The popular genre of socio political commentaries obfuscates the feeble attempts at fiction writing. The contestation of contemporary positionalities, let alone create new narratives, therefore becomes a challenge for both men and women.

Contents

1. Locating the feminine in paite paunak (proverbs) 2. Gendered echoes in the paite soundscape 3. Women in paite folktales: strategies of agency in myth and lore 4. From the oral to print: interrogating liminalities and marginalities. Conclusion. Bibliography.

02. KANOJIA (Siddharth Narayan)
Dalit Autobiographies: Self- Narratives as Historiography.
 Supervisor: Prof. Raj Kumar
Th 26644

Abstract

This qualitative exploratory research involves a detailed study of the autobiographies of contemporary Hindi Dalit writers from North India. This researcher aims to understand how these autobiographies bring out the pain and suffering of the Dalit existence and how these individual expressions of suffering, struggle, and triumph in each case become the representation of the experience of their community. This study also undertakes to examine how this experience can be translated into a historical record of the predicament of the downtrodden. I have also examined how these autobiographies can be seen as autotelic histories, as social documentation, and as a storehouse of information on the life of an individual and his caste community and its place in Hindu society. I have tried to look at how these autobiographies incorporate the urge of these authors to leave behind an exemplary record of their conditions and those of their community for the benefit of posterity.

Contents

1. The need for dalit history 2. The lack of dalit histories 3. The social history of dalits 4. The economic history of dalits. Conclusion. Works cited

03. KAPOOR (Himani)
Gurudom: Language, Modernity and Charisma.
 Supervisor: Prof. Ira Raja
Th 26648

Abstract

This thesis analyses contemporary religion in the public sphere through a study of two transnational yoga groups led by anglophone gurus, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, of Art of Living Foundation (AOL), and Jaggi Vasudev, of Isha Foundation (IF). It primarily explores the relationship between the print materials circulated by Guru-led faith organizations for a religiously or spiritually motivated anglophone public and their socio-political context, especially with respect to modernity, mediatization, and individualism. The term gurudom, as a “realm” of the modern guru, is not only associated with the power that is traditionally ascribed to the figure of the guru, but also the networks of capital, publicity, geography, and scale. Chapter I discusses the emergence of the transnational anglophone yoga guru in the context of guru devotionism in India. Chapter II introduces the two gurus in detail, and critically examines their promotional brochures. Through a close study of biographies and devotee memoirs, Chapter III discusses the genre of “guruography” as proposed by Stephen Jacobs, and identifies the various common features that are found in the biographies and memoirs of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Jaggi Vasudev. The project also draws on Srinivas Aravamudan’s work on “guru English” to study the language used by gurus to communicate with their audiences. Based on a study of the magazines Rishimukh and Forest Flower published by AOL and IF respectively, Chapter IV examines guru language to gain an understanding of how guru-speak works at the intersection of consumer-culture, modernity and the desire for happiness and wellbeing. Finally, Chapter V uses illustrations from the various books, lectures, and talks published by AOL

and IF to explore the theme of self-growth and perfectionism in guru literature, and expands on Evgeny Morozov's concept of technological solutionism in the context of guru-devotionalism. Through a fluid ideology, modern gurus are often able to adapt to the changing demands of a rapidly growing, and upwardly mobile middle-class audience.

Contents

1. Guru devotionalism in India 2. Art of living foundation and isha foundation: an introduction 3. The guru persona: charisma, authority and the guruography 4. Modernity, religion and the language of gurus 5. Guru-discourses and self-actualization. Conclusion. Works cited.

04. LUTHRA (Neelima)

Cultural Politics, Gender and Aesthetics: A Study of Mirabai's Poetry in Translation.

Supervisor: Prof. Anil Aneja

Th 27255

Abstract

The thesis "Cultural Politics, Gender and Aesthetics: A Study of Mirabai's Poetry in Translation" is a reading of Mirabai's padavali in Marwari and Braj Bhasha translated in English. The first chapter commences with a critical inquiry of primary texts of Mira's poetry drawn from oral and written sources. The Dakor manuscript and subsequent editions of Mira's poetry are examined. Hagiographical and biographical details of her life story are compared to reach to decisive conclusions about her dates. The second chapter examines the varieties of English/es used in a postcolonial context in translations of Mirabai's poetry. Theories of language are discussed to understand hybridity, hinglification, Americanization and resistance of Victorian English. The third chapter evaluates the meaning of sacred and bhakti in the context of Indological readings. The chapter underlines the use of erotic in select translations of Mirabai and how they limit the ideas of sringara rasa, madhurya bhava and viraha. The fourth chapter is about gender the limited ways Mira has been contained in the moulds of kulnasi or destroyer of family honour and sadasuhagin or eternally wedded. She resists patriarchy by subverting these stereotypes. Her love poetry is written from a female perspective and questions the genre. The fifth chapter is on Mirabai's poems that belong to the margins as they are not traditionally seen as canonical. They appeal to the populace and to the working classes. There are also poems addressed to the Rana and Jogi that constitute a genre by itself that belong to revolutionary aesthetics. The sixth chapter is about the adaptation and polysemiotic translation of Mirabai's poetry into music. The singing of her poems as bhajans is examined using Parita Mukta's field survey of the Bhajaniks. The cultural industry and its exploitation of Mira's poetry for commercial purposes that limits her aesthetics, is analysed.

Contents

1. Marga and desi traditions: search for the "Original" Mirabai 2. Translating mirabai into English/es 3. Sacred literature: bhakti, Mirabai and the translation industry 4. Women saint poets: the gender question in mirabai 5. Mirabai: revolutionary poetics & aesthetics 6. Orality and performance: padavali in musical rendition. Conclusion. Works cited.

05. MADAN (Ritu)
Gender, Sexuality and Spatiality: Representing Migrant Women from Punjab in Post-Partition Delhi.
 Supervisor: Prof. Anjana Sharma
Th 26646

Abstract

This thesis identifies and addresses a gap in scholarship about the Punjab Partition that pertains to migrant women's occupation of the city of Delhi. It takes into account research on alternative historiographies of Partition, on histories of women's participation in cities, as well as the varied theoretical frameworks for imagining spatiality in general and specifically the spatialities of north-Indian cities in the first half of the twentieth century. Within this consideration of existing research, it locates refugee women and formulates questions about their relationship to urbanity, their labour and their representation. The thesis engages in a close reading of select writing, comprising Yashpal's novel *This is Not That Dawn*, Anis Kidwai's memoir *In Freedom's Shade*, and two short stories, Jyotirmoyee Devi's "That Little Boy" and Suraiya Qasim's "Where Did She Belong?", to see how these writers, within the specific framework of their genres, map post-Partition Delhi, as the space of modernity, improvement and progress, or as an assemblage of possibilities claimed through walking, travelling and occupying spaces, or as an intersection of many peoples and cities separated not by historical but social distance. These different ways of imagining the city allow for different imaginaries of women's place as well as violence. The enquiry is turned towards relations of the urban as they change with the Partition and yet exist independently as foundational to the ways communities are constituted. Simultaneously, the materiality of geographical and architectural spaces as well as of women's movement and appropriation is brought into focus. The thesis extends the understanding of the ways in which women's belonging and citizenship are transacted in everyday geographical spaces like homes and cities and the centrality of women's sexuality in the gendered representation and construction of these spaces.

Contents

1. Introduction – Gendered migration: formulating new questions 2. From refugee to citizen: shaping normative urban femininity in yashpal's *this in not that dawn* 3. Everyday violence and resistance in the city : mapping the intertwined urban journey of the social worker and refugee women in anis kidwai's memoir *in freedom's shade* 4. Marginal migrants and alternative cities: exploring the limits of refugee discourse in jyotirmoyee devi's "that little boy" and suraiya qasim's "where did she belong" 5. Conclusion. Works cited

06. MAITI (Soumava)
Romantic Maladies: Disease, Observation and Medical Explorations.
 Supervisor: Prof. Anjana Sharma
Th 26654

Abstract

The period of transition from the nebulous Dalit socio-political movements in Hindi regions to the emergence of modern Hindi Dalit literature as an autonomous.

Contents

1. Introduction: Rise of exploratory science, planetarity and alternative medical historiography in romantic age 2. Diseases of motion and romantic memory: scurvy nostalgia and Coleridge 3. Late eighteenth –century yellow fever literature and William wordsworth 4. Marked affliction’ : smallpox, rustic observation and romantic vaccination in Edward Jenner, Robert Bloomfield and Robert Southey 5. Transported into Asiatic scenes’: climate and Indian cholera literature; de Quince and the autobiography of exploratory medicine 6. Empire, epidemic, and medical epistemology: plague and oriental anxiety in Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man* 7. Conclusion: medical anthropology, biological worldism and exploratory medicine. Bibliography.

07. NANDA (Shaweta)
Re- Creating the Self: Representations of Black Female Body in Black Women Artists Visual Arena.

Supervisors: Prof. Subarno Chattarji and Tapan Basu

Th 26652

Abstract

My engagement with black studies began with an optional undergraduate course on nineteenth and twentieth-century women’s writings. The fact that black women writers have truly shaken the Eurocentric male canon can be ascertained from the fact that the same course, whose curriculum included the works of two African American women writers, has now been listed as a compulsory course for the student of the English discipline in University of Delhi. Later, the course Literature and the visual arts in Europe in my masters programme introduced me to the idea of text as not being limited to words on a page. It enabled me to explore the “resonances” (Stephen Greenblatt’s term 42) between the visual arts and literature. However, women and/or black subjects and artists were largely conspicuous by their absence in the course. For instance, Rembrandt’s *Two Moors* (1661), a work that features two men of African descent, was not discussed in the classroom. This work is distinctive for two reasons, while it was uncommon for renowned white artists to create works portraying only black subjects, it was all the more rare to depict black people in an unheroic manner, wherein they are not naked, caged and/or pictured in servile roles.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. “Digging” out African American artistic foremothers 3. Peeking beyond the kitchen and nursery: engaging with black domestic help 4. Shifting the gaze: re- frame(ing) the black female sexuality via the black women’s lens 5. The (ink)ing and ink(ing) black girlhood by black women artists. Conclusion.

08. NIDA ARIF
Literature of Resistance: A Study of Ghassan Kanafani’s Selected Works.

Supervisor: Prof. Anjana Sharma

Th 26650

Abstract

This thesis is a study of Ghassan Kanafani’s fictional works as “Literature of Resistance”. The category itself was first coined by Ghassan Kanafani in his two studies: “أدب المقاومة في فلسطين المحتلة ١٩٤٨-١٩٦٦” *Adab al-Muqāwama fī Filasṭīn al-Muḥtala*

1948-66 (which translates as Literature of Resistance in the Occupied Palestine 1948-66) and "المقاوم تحت الإحتلال ١٩٤٨-١٩٦٨" الأدب الفلسطيني al-Adab al-Filasṭīnī al-Muqāwama taḥat al-Iḥtilāl 1948-68 (which translates as Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-68). He used it to refer to a form of literature that is written and circulated when a people are under occupation or colonization, and before a national liberation project reaches its completion. The national liberation project that Kanafani was referring to particularly was the Palestinian National Movement. After the Arab defeat in the Arab-Israeli War 1948, majority of Palestinians (like Kanafani) became refugees in the neighboring Arab countries. As a novelist living in exile, Kanafani's literary career was contemporaneous with the rise of Palestinian National/Resistance Movement. Kanafani's literature of resistance thus converges with the Palestinian national narrative. Some of the fundamental tropes of the Palestinian national narrative that signify important events and moments of the Palestinian lives — nakba (or catastrophe), ghourba (alienated exile), thawra (revolution) and awdah (return) figure in Kanafani's works. This thesis is an analysis of these four tropes in four of Kanafani's novellas that were completed and published in his lifetime. The four novellas that are subject of this study are: Rijāl fī al-Shams [Men in the Sun]; Mā tabaqqā lakum [All That's Left to You]; Umm Sa'd; and Ā'ida ila Haifa [Returning/Returnee to Haifa].

Contents

1. Ghassan kanafani: A biographical essay 2. Introduction 3. Literature of resistance: arab critical milieu in the mashriq, kanafani's intervention and later yeara 4. Writing the nakba: Palestinian catastrophe and rijal fi al- shams 5. The Palestinian ghourba: reading Palestinian exile in ma tabaqqā lakum 6. The Palestinian revolution: reading "revolution" in ' umm sa'd 7. "Awdah" : reading loss in 'A ' ida ila Haifa and Palestinian return narratives. Conclusion. Bibliography.

09. OOMMEN (Sreya Ann)

Island Literary Studies, the Anthropocene, and Decoloniality: Islandness and its Expression in Literatures.

Supervisor: Prof. Shormishtha Panja

Th 26649

Abstract

The thesis analyses the expressions of Islandness, the physical, psychological, and metaphorical experience of belonging to an island or an islanded space, in Noontide Toll (2014) by Romesh Gunsekera, Nothing's Mat (2014) by Erna Brodber, and Hag-Seed (2016) by Margaret Atwood. I analyse the selected texts to locate the representation of islands within the preconceived notions about island spaces and examine the texts' significance within Anthropocene and Decolonial Island Literary Studies. The thesis problematises the perception of islands within pre-established frameworks that restrict the authentic representation of the historical, social, and cultural reality of island communities. It also examines the definitions of islands, Islandness, and placeness to conceptualise the analyses of the selected texts within Island Studies. I examine the image of Sri Lanka, as depicted in Noontide Toll by the British Sri Lankan author Romesh Gunsekera, during the period that immediately followed the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004) and Sri Lankan civil war (1983 -2009). The thesis explores the alternative frameworks that the Jamaican author Erna Brodber formulates in Nothing's Mat to comprehend Islandness through the fractal nature of Jamaican familial ties and traditional agricultural practices. I also examine Atwood's Hag-Seed, which repositions the island space in William Shakespeare's The Tempest within a prison

space and study the convergence of physical and metaphorical Islandness in the fictional prison. The thesis looks at selected literary works from and about island spaces, written in the last decade to examine how the represented Islandness negotiates the perceived role of islands, aligns with the pre-established perceptions about island societies, and challenges the neocolonial interests in island nations. Through my analyses, I try to intervene in the interdisciplinary discourse of Island Studies that restructure and reframe the perception of island spaces across the world.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. Islanding Sri Lanka: post-civil war, post – tsunami Sri Lanka islandness in reomesh gunesekera’s noontide toll(2014) 3. Re- engineering blackspace: Jamaican islandness in in erna brodber’s nothing’s mat(2014) 4. “ Some subtleties o’ the isle “ : islandness in Margaret atwood’s Hag-seed (2016) 5. Conclusion. Bibliography.

10. PAYAL (A.P.)
Feminist Visuality and Tarot in the Late Twentieth Century: Politics and Legacy.
 Supervisor: Prof. Christel R. Devadawson
Th 26645

Abstract

At the close of this thesis, we are already conversant with how the tarot houses layers of meaning within its palimpsest-like form. We have seen that although the tarot may be used as a means to magic, even enchantment, it is extremely adept at housing and expressing emotional and political disenchantments. I will begin my concluding remarks by addressing notions of dissidence attributed to goddess worship and the tarot. Next, I will express how each chapter of my thesis contributes towards the vision of my thesis. I will then proceed to illustrate how the feminist tarot can move beyond the moment of its inception towards becoming more inclusive and how it can be used as a powerful medium for telling stories. I will conclude my thesis with a discussion of affect, emotion, and politics to further theorise the materiality of the tarot.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. A return to the divine drawing board: the feminist spirituality movement in America 3. A manifestation of manifestos: the call for a feminist tarot 4. Knowing the past, imagining the future: the feminist mythopoesis in daughters of the moon tarot 5. The commercial and ‘creative visualisation’ of the mother peace tarot 6. The housewives tarot and the afterlife of the cold war in post-9/11 America 7. Locating power and play: the yoginis’ oracle. Conclusion:

11. SINGH (Amrita)
Graphic life Narratives as Critical Interventions in the 21st Century.
 Supervisor: Prof. Christel R. Devadawson
Th 26647

Abstract

This work focuses on how contemporary graphic life narratives intervene in the representation of contemporary cultures, straddling pre- and post-millennial

themes and politics. Graphic life narratives in the twenty-first century signpost the changing demography of life narration, the changes in form of graphic representation, and the location and circulation of texts. Graphic life narratives about individuals (or communities) coming from diverse contexts have the potential to fulfil a need in the development of a cosmopolitan society, with explicit appeals for supranational human rights advocacy and transnational humanitarian action. The study argues that graphic life narratives circulate as “soft weapons” to create a critical awareness of contemporary issues and conflicts. They provide a verbal-visual and critical literacy to both veteran and newer audiences to debate and engage with the experiences represented, even as they may be co-optable or culturally translatable. The major ways in which they operate as soft weapons in this study include politics of collaboration and aesthetics of solidarity, production of graphic knowledge through a study of graphicality, assemblage and diverse multimodal storytelling, re-imagining the global/local/cosmopolitan, and the possible transformation of readers and the reading-viewing process. The “Introduction” details the aims, objectives and broad categories around which the analysis is built. The first chapter, looks at how a graphic life narrative responds to cultures and sites of unrest in the world via a reading of Malik Sajad’s *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir* (2015), to argue how comics storytelling is capable of challenging the documentary-style historical memoirs/reportage of lives in conflict zones. Chapter two, reads Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival* (2006) as a graphic response to understanding the experience of migration, especially in the contemporary world, by remediating comics storytelling in excluding verbal language. In chapter three, the collage-like assemblage of Mira Jacob’s memoir *Good Talk* (2019) breaks away from the conventional modes of visual storytelling to problematize how emigrant communities constitute diasporic populations in the “First World”, often resulting in complex assemblage-like identities. Chapter four, probes how cross-cultural conversations through collaborative and transnational practices can offer innovative ways of reimagining social movements by studying Arthur Flowers, Manu Chitrakar, (and Guglielmo Rossi)’s *I See the Promised Land* (2013), a griot-patua biography of Martin Luther King Jr. Chapter five, looks at Phoolan Devi: *Rebel Queen* (2020) to probe the challenges of transmediating oral testimony into a graphic biography, especially when it represents the life of a controversial icon at the intersection of caste, class and gender.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. Graphic knowledge and situated reading: comicitous form and the autographical narrative 3. Silent storytelling: remediating the graphic narrative and the migrant experience 4. Graphic assemblage: negotiating family, race and identity in the diaspora 5. Image, icon and graphic biography: forging communities of sentiment and aesthetics of solidarity 6. Graphic auto/biography and the subaltern: woman, outlaw, icon. Conclusion. Works cited. Appendix.

12. VANDANA

Power, Politics and Praxis: Translating Dalit Literature.

Supervisor: Prof. Raj Kumar

Th 26651

Abstract

This thesis has attempted to analyze how translations facilitate the spread and circulation of opinions and experiences across the world. The first chapter discusses where translated Dalit literature stands within the global literary canon of World literature, alongside a discussion of the major premises of World literature

and contemporary approaches to Translation Studies. Furthermore, what English as a language signifies to the Dalits in the midst of politics of language standardization in India is duly analysed. The role of the publication houses in publishing translated Dalit literature is deliberated and discoursed in the second chapter. The third chapter discusses the role of ethics in contemporary approaches to Translation Studies because the problem of 'who' translates 'what' and 'how' becomes even more important in the context of pervading social (caste-based) hierarchies and linguistic inequality. The fourth chapter analyzes how Dalit novels violate conventions, subvert traditional presumptions about art and aesthetics, and characterize surprise and affront to readers of mainstream literature. The fifth chapter undertakes a close study of four translated Dalit novels, the features of each of its original vernacular dialect, and the process of translation into English as disclosed by the translators. The basic proposition of the thesis, nonetheless, is to understand how English translations can help construct a monolingual premise of Dalit historiography in a plurilingual, multicultural country like India.

Contents

1. Introduction- 2. Dalit writings in English translation as world literature 3. The publishing market and dalit writings in English and English translation 4. Caste and cultural 'others': understanding the ethics of translation and representation 5. Translating the literary and the linguistic: do translations complement dalit experimental aesthetics 6. The emergence of the dalit novel: some aspects of translating the genre. Conclusion. Bibliography.

13. VERMA (Nidhi)

Representations of Domestic Workers in Popular Culture in Contemporary Urban India.

Supervisor: Prof. Shormishtha Panja

Th 26653

Abstract

The thesis investigates the representation of domestic workers in various forms of popular culture—both literary and cinematic—in the context of contemporary urban India. The research examines how the genres of autobiography, fiction and cinema evoke this figure within their narrative and address certain poignant aspects of their contemporary socio-cultural and political context. Sociological texts discussing the figure of the domestic workers often evaluate the factors that construct a hegemony which causes subjugation and oppression of domestic workers by those who are economically and socially privileged. The literary and cinematic representations, however, seem to explore several other ways in which this figure could be interpreted. Through these representations, the study attempts to assess issues regarding both the honesty of depiction as well as the impact of social prototypes while constructing the image of the domestic worker in literary and cinematic texts. This approach of the research thus enables one to critically analyse the various ways in which the popularly stereotyped figure of the domestic worker can be imagined. The representation of the figure of the domestic worker hints towards an unexplored dimension to the image created in sociological studies. Ideas of class, caste and gender play an important role in determining the position of the domestic worker in the household. Their dreams and aspirations are often crushed in their attempt to make a decent living. A comparative analysis of the sociological studies on the study of domestic workers juxtaposed with their own narratives and representations brings out interesting parallels that can be drawn between the real and fictional worlds. The thesis concludes that the intersection of

diverse social dynamics, such as class, gender, caste, culture, race or religion, creates unique challenges for domestic workers, which are normalised and celebrated in the literary representations.

Contents

1. Introduction 2. Seeking the true 'self': studying the construction of identity in the autobiographical narratives of baby Halder and Amin sheikh 3. Speaking for the subaltern: deciphering fictional representations of domestic workers 4. Under the cinematic lens: analysing representation of domestic workers in films. Conclusion. Glossary. Bibliography.