



**MAHARAJA AGRASEN COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ORGANIZES

5th INTERDISCIPLINARY NATIONAL CONFERENCE

REGISTER AT <https://bit.ly/2XQzluE>

IN COLLABORATION WITH



JUNE 15-20, 2020

A CONFERENCE IN WEBINAR MODE

INVITED SPEAKERS

 VALEDICTORY SPEAKER PROF. RAJ KUMAR HOD, DEPT. OF ENGLISH UNIVERSITY OF DELHI	 KEYNOTE SPEAKER & GUEST OF HONOUR PROF. ANIL ANEJA, DEPT. OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI	 PROF. RANU VERMA, HOD, DEPT. OF ENGLISH, MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES, UG	 PROF. ANITA GHOSH PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF HUMAN STUDIES, ANANDKAR UNIVERSITY	 MS. NEHA DOYAL, BIBHABAD ARI DANCER ACTRESS	 SHASHI CHANDRA YAGNINATH, DIRECTOR, DEEYAM
 PROF. SHOBI GHOSH, DIRECTOR (DISABILITY) & SALJAD ZAKIR PROFESSOR, AIR VIKAS COMMUNICATION CENTRE, JAWAHAR NAGAR	 DR. SHAMPA SENGUPTA, FOUNDER DIRECTOR, RIGHTS DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTRE	 MR. ARJUN KAPOOR, FOUNDER DIRECTOR, MS CANE FILM FESTIVAL	 MR. VINAY SINGH (MR. SINGH) PARA ATHLETE	 MR. ASHISH SINGH PARA ATHLETE	 MR. JYOTI SALUJA, PARAATHLETE
 MR. PRASHANT RAJAN VEDMA, GENERAL SECRETARY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND	 MR. T.S. CHARYAL, COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PW.D)	 MR. VIKAS BAGAR, PARA ATHLETE	 MR. SANDEEP KUMAR, NORMAN, ASSISTANT TEACHER		

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Abstract Booklet



MAHARAJA AGRASEN COLLEGE

Maharaja Agrasen College, established in 1994 as a constituent college of the University of Delhi has a story to tell...a success story. In the life span of an educational institution, twenty years may be just a tiny ray in the vast spectrum, but for Maharaja Agrasen College, the last two decades have been truly constructive, much like the building blocks. The blocks have been reconfigured time and again from simple structures to more comprehensive ones, in tandem with the emerging paradigms of the techno-savvy world of today. In August 1994, as a constituent college of the University of Delhi, the college was tentatively named Co-Educational College, later to be rechristened as Maharaja Agrasen College, after a great Indian ruler. Catering to the educational demands of the thickly populated East, the College is today attracting the student intelligentsia from various parts of Delhi, particularly the South and East Delhi areas.

'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I Learn.' These words seem to be the echo that resounds in every page of MAC. The veracity of this saying is nowhere better illustrated than in the classrooms of MAC because they are learner-centric. The thrust has always been on two-way communication: a process of building partnerships between the learner and the learned.

The mission of Maharaja Agrasen College is to educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society. We do this through our commitment to the transformative power of higher education in arts, commerce and sciences. Beginning in the classroom with exposure to new ideas, new ways of understanding, and new ways of knowing, students embark on a journey of intellectual transformation. Through a diverse living environment, where students interact with people who are studying different topics, who come from different walks of life and have evolving identities, intellectual transformation is deepened and conditions for social transformation are created.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

I warmly congratulate the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College for organizing a national conference on Representations of the Disabled in Literature and Cinema. Over a period of time, this Department has demonstrated its dynamism and academic excellence through various activities, both within the college and on other platforms. The present conference on a fast-emerging research area is yet another example of the highly research-oriented focus of the Department.

As you may be aware that disability studies, along with its intersections with various other academic disciplines has generated a rich discourse over last three decades. It is a matter of satisfaction that English departments in many universities across the globe have been catalyst in promoting discussions around various dimensions of disability and its representations.

I trust that this national conference will be an important milestone in carrying forward this global dialogue. It is commendable that despite difficult circumstances, the Department of English, MAC, has fulfilled its commitments to the academic community to hold this conference. When it was realized that the event could not be held face-to-face, the conference committee tirelessly worked to ensure that the commitment is kept by holding this conference through the online mode. No doubt, the deliberations and the possible publication arising out of this conference will prove to be scholarly and well received. I wish great success for this conference.

PROF ANIL ANEJA

Chairman, Governing Body
Maharaja Agrasen College
University of Delhi.
Professor, Department of English,
University of Delhi.



FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

It's a matter of immense pleasure to witness this interdisciplinary National Conference in Webinar mode. Topic of this National Conference is very relevant and needs special appreciation. Marginalized and neglected lot in the society is always waiting for some special care and attention. Disability has been a challenge not only to an individual who is suffering but also to the parents and family at large. Here society has an important role to play in order to provide them equal playing ground and equal opportunities.

Literature and cinema are mirrors and reflections of practices, values and moral of the society. Both literatures and cinema play an important role in highlighting the latent shortcomings and challenges. They also suggest ways to contain and arrest the evil practices, discrimination of marginalized, neglected and disables section of society.

Several endeavors were made at international level when 1980s was declared as 'UN Decade of Disable Persons' and in 2006 'the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability' was initiated in UN General Assembly. India being a parliamentary democracy has tried to bring certain changes in the conditions of the disabled persons through various legislative and executive attempts. The incumbent central government had fulfilled its promises and given assent to 'The Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2016'. But these efforts both at international and national levels cannot achieve the desired goals until accepted and supported by the society. Here comes the role of literature and cinema which prepares the ground to provide and facilitate people with disability.

In this important National Seminar, the top academic luminaries of the country will discuss and deliberate upon the issues of disability and its representation in literature and cinema. A number of research papers will be presented and I am sure that in due course some of them will be published which definitely enrich the understanding of disability in literature and cinema.

I thank the entire Organizing Committee and especially to the Conference convener Ms. Shilpa Gupta and TIC Dr. Anupama Jaidev for planning, executing and adopting the digital mode in such a short period. I also convey my best wishes for grand success of the National Conference.

Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari

Principal (Offg.)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

The Honours course in English was introduced in 1997 and since then the department has grown from strength to strength in terms of academic excellence, co-curricular and creative activities and student-faculty upgradation programmes. The Department has its own departmental library. It has also established *The Centre for Performing Arts and Cultural Studies* which also has a rich library and a vibrant calendar of activities throughout the year. Since the inception of the College, members of the department have contributed significantly to the design and publication of the College Magazine, Annual Report, NAAC Report, and many other prestigious college documents each year. The faculty members of the Department of English have been active members of important committees like IQAC, Admission, Academic Planning, Extra-curricular, Annual Activity, Sports, NSS, Equal Opportunity Cell, SC/ST Cell, Internal Complaints Committee, Grievance Redressal Committee, etc. we have not only collated and articulated the collective voice of the institution several times but, have also lent our voice literally by anchoring many key events of the College.

The Department of English Co-Curricular Student Society – ACTIVE lives up to its name each year by organizing many well-attended events under the patronage of the teachers. These events include *The Annual Lecture Series*, *Meet the Alumni Series*, *Meet the Author Series*, *Workshops* (Creative Writing, Effective Reading, Visual Communication, Photography), *Excursions* to places of cultural, historical and literary interest like Jaipur Literary Festival, Saattal, Udaipur, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, Amritsar, as well *Heritage Walks* such as Nizamuddin Basti and 1857 uprising sites in Delhi, curating theatre and movie projects along with robust and versatile participation in the organization of conferences. The Department organized its First International Conference on *De-territorializing Diversities: Cultures, Literatures, Languages of the Indigenous* in 2013, Second UGC-sponsored Interdisciplinary National Conference on *City Lives: Spaces and Narratives* in 2016 and Third Interdisciplinary National Conference on *Reading Migrations: Fractured Histories, Forged Narratives* in 2017 and Fourth Interdisciplinary National Conference on *Indian Popular Fiction: Redefining the Canon* in 2019.

Despite the disruption caused by the ongoing global pandemic of Covid 19, the Department in the last academic session (2019-20) had a veritable cornucopia of events. Starting with the *Meet the Alumni Lecture Series* where former students and digital content creators and filmmakers, Ms. Garima Kaul and Ms. Prapti Elizabeth graced the occasion. They discussed on issues like 'Asexuality' and 'Desire' to elaborating on the struggles, joys and triumphs of creative artists. Next event to follow was the *Meet the Author Series*.

Wherein the very young and dynamic freelance journalist, blogger and popular author of books like *Before, and Then After* (2015) and *Cold Feet* (2012), Meenakshi Reddy Madhavan, was invited to interact with the students and faculty. Meenakshi discussed how her writing enables her to re-imagine the representation of women in classical texts like *Mahabharata*. The interaction with Meenakshi Reddy Madhavan ended with fruitful discussions and insightful engagements by students and faculty alike on the significance of myth, nuances and aspects of the nitty-gritty of publishing and on the stylistic content of writing. The Department organized an *English Language Proficiency Workshop* for the B.A. (Prog.) students of all three years. This Workshop was divided into three sections titled: 'Conversing

in English with Confidence', 'Writing with a Purpose' and 'Everyday English' and aimed at creating an environment for the students to improvise and reflect on their language skills from a proficiency and a remedial point of view. The second chapter of the *English Language Course for Professional Success- 2020 (Level 2- Emphasis on Spoken English)* was initiated by the Department of English under the aegis of Abdul Kalam Centre, Maharaja Agrasen College. This 30-hour short term course focused on a counselling of distinct career avenues from a language point of view and through integration of language-based skills.

The central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh was the destination of annual educational tour of the department in the last academic session. The tour included the world heritage sites of Sanchi Stupa and Bhimbetka caves, the beautiful city of Bhopal with its rich cultural life, awe-inspiring museums, massive lakes and fantastic cuisine. Next important activity organized by the Department was the *Annual Lecture Series* where Prof. Nishat Zaidi, HOD, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi delivered a lecture on "*Language Ideologies between English and the Vernacular: Perspectives from Indian Literature*" wherein she discussed about vernacularization in the Western and Indian contexts and their varying trajectories; iconic writers in the subcontinent's syncretic traditions; the politics of orientalist institutions; and their immediate and long-term outfalls. The department began the second chapter of the *Faculty Student Research Seminar Series*, popularly called as *FSRSS* this year, and three sessions of *FSRSS* were organized between September and January. In all the three sessions, there were presentations by one teacher and one student. The first session saw presentations by Dr Anupama Jaidev on 'The Idea of India in Romany Literary Narratives' and Ojaswi Kala, a final year student of the Department, on 'Decoding the Black Sheep'. The next session saw presentations by Dr Prem Kumari Srivastava on 'Understanding Gender Today: Perception and Reality' and Mridula Sharma, a second-year student of the Department on 'Dostoevsky and Rand: Studying the Literary Developments in 19th and 20th Century Russia'. The third session saw Dr Debosmita Paul Lahiri and Souparni Paul, a final year student of the Department, make their presentations on 'Versions of *Thakurmar Jhuli* and the Changing Bengali Society: An analysis through Popular Bangla Children's Tales' and 'Our Mind: The Finest Time Traveller Ever' respectively. With the continuation of the lockdown across the country, the *Annual Student Literary Festival-Literati* had a digital makeover with an emphasis to make sense of these challenging times in a unique blend of literature, culture, politics, history, and imaginative recreations. Two sessions of *FSRSS* also underwent a digital transformation. Dr Gitanjali Chawla presented on 'Bhangra Rap: Polemics of Resistance and Resurgence' and Dr Guntasha Tulsi on 'Language, Identity, and Archives: Sikh Newspapers and Influence of Colonial Modernity'.

The Department has consistently provided opportunities to students for interacting with some of the most renowned scholars, critics, authors, intellectuals, and artists. Prof. R.W. Desai, Prof. Harish Trivedi, Prof. Langston Hughes, Prof. Amritjit Singh, Prof. Tabish Khair, Prof. Jonathan Gil Harris, Prof. Madhavi Menon, Prof. Rashmi Doraiswamy, Ms Gitanjali Shree, Prof. Rosemary Marongoly George, Mr Tenzin Tsundae, Mr Vijay Lokapally, Ms Sheela Reddy, Mr Yaseer Usman, Ms Sukrita Paul Kumar, Dr Anjaana Neira Dev, Prof. Marcel Courthiade, Prof Sabrina Dhawan, Prof Savita Singh are some of the glittering names in this chain. The screening of movies and documentaries having a bearing on the curricular content is a regular feature in the department. With the introduction of the CBCS curriculum, the Department has successfully offered Generic Elective and Skill

Enhancement papers in 'Text and Performance', 'Media and Communication Skills', 'Academic Writing', 'Creative Writing', 'Translation Studies', 'Soft Skills' and 'Technical Writing' eliciting keen response of students from various disciplines.

At the University level, the Department has engaged with course revisions, curriculum development, content writing, paper setting, and resource sharing. We have offered the English Language Proficiency Course for consecutive years. Further, the Department is engaged in research and innovation projects in diverse fields and produces papers and other outputs year after year. Four members of the department have earned doctorates in the last two years and one member has also, been the Presidential International Visiting Scholar at Boston University in 2018. The English Department room is abuzz with activity and good cheer at all times. The Department believes in individual and collective enhancement, with room for individuality on the one hand and best practices of academia and intelligentsia on the other.

FACULTY MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ADITYA PREMDEEP

Aditya Premdeep is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He wrote his M.Phil dissertation on Nagarjun. His research interest includes Postcolonial Literature, Literary Theory and Criticism, and Indian English Literature in Translation. His latest research publication is “Revisiting Thoreau: Nature and Natural in the Literary Imagination” published in *Indian Journal of Social Enquiry*.

ANUPAMA JAIDEV KARIR

Anupama Jaidev Karir teaches English at Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. Her research areas are Romani Studies, narratives of the Indian Emergency of 1975 and cultural historiography of itinerant communities in the subcontinent.

CHARU ARYA

Charu Arya has been doing research in Gender Writings, Dalit Writings, Dalit Autobiographies and Folk Culture of Uttarakhand. She has presented papers on Dalit Writings and Gender issues in various national and international conferences and seminars. She has also been a Resource Person in Refresher courses, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. She has studied Linguistics and Phonetics as her main papers and has also been trained as a language teacher. She has worked in the materials team for English Language, Proficiency Course, Intermediate level at ILL, University of Delhi. She has been holding Administrative posts of Liaison Officer SC and ST and Nodal Officer for Scholarships for last few years. Also, she is Coordinator of AKSHAR, NSS project in which free education is imparted to underprivileged children of the vicinity. She has also published papers on Dalit Literature. Her creativity is visible with few creative pieces of poetry and articles that she has written for College magazine.

DEBOSMITA PAUL LAHIRI

Debosmita Paul Lahiri is currently teaching in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. She has completed her PhD titled “The First Partition of Bengal and the Problematic of Indian Nationalism: A Study of Bangla Literature (1905-1916)” from Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, under the supervision of Prof Nishat Zaidi. Her areas of interest are Partition Literature, Indian Writings in English, Indian Literature and Postcolonial Literature. She has published several papers in peer reviewed Indian journals.

GITANJALI CHAWLA

Folklorist, Researcher, Editor and Materials Producer, Gitanjali Chawla is Associate Professor of English with more than twenty-five years of teaching experience. Her research on the folk songs of Punjab and its rap mutants has led to an active participation in several fora, both at the national and international level and has several publications in journals of

repute to her credit. She has also dabbled in translation and is keenly interested in innovative pedagogies in the virtual mode, having prepared several modules for e-learning at ILL, University of Delhi. She is the co-editor of three seminal anthologies, *Cultures of the Indigenous: India and Beyond* (2014), *De-territorialising Diversities: Literatures of the Indigenous and Marginalised* (2014) and *Re-storying the Indigenous and the Popular Imaginary* (2017). She has also been the Presidential International Visiting Scholar 2018, Wheelock College, Boston University, USA where she delivered a public lecture along with lectures in various departments on various aspects of her research area. She is also the Secretary, FORTELL (Forum for Teachers of English Language and Literature) and has edited several issues of the journal, FORTELL.

GUNTASHA TULSI

Guntasha Tulsi has done her B.A. and M.A. in English from Hindu College, University of Delhi and M.Phil and Ph.D from the Centre of English Studies, JNU. Her doctoral work looks at the interaction between colonial modernity and indigenous identity formation, by specifically focusing on education and identity -based issues in Sikh journals, which were in circulation between the years of 1900 to 1920. She has been teaching English Language and Literature since last nine years with experiences of teaching at Delhi University, JNU and Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University. She has also finished Post Graduate Certificate Course in ELT from EFL-U, Hyderabad and Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching English from the same place. She has presented papers at various national and international conferences at prominent forums like Kerala, Tirupati, Hyderabad, Delhi and Punjab. She has published numerous research papers, newspaper articles, book reviews and full-length papers for edited anthologies in prominent journals and newspapers like *The Pioneer*, *Indian Express*, *Indian Journal of Social Enquiry*, *FORTELL*, *ELTAI* and *CIJHAR*. She has co-edited John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Book Age Publishers, Delhi, 2016) while also having authored sections in anthologies on Marquez' *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and Book Age edition on *Women's Writing*. She also has a forthcoming publication in the form of a full -length paper in an upcoming anthology. In addition, she is also experienced in Corporate Training Programmes across MNC's and has also conducted Workshops and short-term courses in English Proficiency and Communication.

INDRANI DAS GUPTA

Indrani Das Gupta is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. She is currently pursuing her Ph. D from Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia in the area of Indian Science Fiction. Her areas of specialization are Science Fiction, Dystopian, Apocalyptic and Utopian literatures, Detective literature, Postmodern British Literature, Modern British Literature, Victorian Literature, British Romantic Literature, Popular Culture and Sports Culture. She has published articles, chapters, reviews in national and international journals and books on themes ranging from sports culture, film studies, SF and fantasy, Renaissance Literature, Dalit Writings, Language Teaching. She has presented papers in several International and National forums. She has also been part of three MHRD sponsored SPARC Course International Research Project Workshop.

MONA SINHA

Mona Sinha is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, where she has been teaching literature, language and cultural studies since 1995. Her varied publications include translations, papers and book chapters on feminist studies, media and culture, besides articles on language proficiency. She has also edited journals such as Creative Forum and FORTELL. She has presented papers at several national and international conferences and is currently researching in the area of television and gender studies.

NABANITA DEKA

Nabanita Deka is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi and pursuing her research in English from Jamia Millia Islamia. She has presented several papers at international and national conferences. Her most recent paper has been published in a UGC Care listed international journal. She has also been part of MHRD sponsored SPARC Course Research Project Workshop in collaboration with University of Witwatersrand, South Africa and Jamia Millia Islamia. Her specific areas of interests include Dystopian and Science Fiction, Memory Studies, Diasporic Studies, Gender Studies, New literature in English, Victorian, Modern British and Postmodern literature, Northeast literature and Indian Writings in English.

PREM KUMARI SRIVASTAVA

Prem Kumari Srivastava, a recipient of several postdoctoral fellowships and awards, with three decades of research and teaching experience at IIT Delhi and University of Delhi, is Associate Professor of English. With more than 85 research publications to her credit, some of her seminal works are *Leslie Fiedler: Critic, Provocateur, Pop Culture Guru* (2014), McFarland & Inc. Publishers, North Carolina USA; three volume series (co-edited) *Cultures of the Indigenous: India and Beyond* (2014), *De-territorialising Diversities: Literatures of the Indigenous and Marginalised* (2014) and *Re-storying the Indigenous and the Popular Imaginary* (2017); *Spiritual Ecology and Sustainability: Practice and Confluence* (co-edited) 2017, Authorpress Publishers, Delhi and *Revisiting American Literature* (co-edited) Macmillan Publishers India (2018). Her research displays an overarching focus on gender, the popular and the indigenous; American Literature and Innovative English Language Materials.

SANGEETA MITTAL

Sangeeta Mittal is Associate Professor in the Department of English. She has over 25 years of experience of teaching English literature, with the Jacobean Age, restoration Literature and the Romantics as her favourite areas. Her dissertation on “Delhi Culture: A Literary Perspective” undertakes an in-depth interdisciplinary analysis of “Delhi Culture” using Urban, Cultural and Memory Studies to encapsulate the historical, topical, material, and urban aspects of this complex and layered phenomenon. She has been extending her research on Delhi through research papers. Having been member of organizing committees,

chair, paper presenter and invited speaker at Interdisciplinary National Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change and City Lives: Spaces and Narratives, she plans to continue her work on city and environment. With passionate interest in institution building, she has courses in educational leadership to her credit. She has contributed extensively to the corporate life of the College by serving in many portfolios and positions. She has taken up new writing papers in CBCS curriculum viz. Creative Writing, Academic Writing, Travel Writing and translation Studies and wishes to strengthen this interest and expertise through resource building and FDPs.

SHILPA GUPTA

Shilpa Gupta is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, where she has been teaching literature, language and cultural studies for more than a decade. She has done her B.A. and M.A. in English from St. Stephens College, University of Delhi and an M.Phil degree in English from the Department of English, University of Delhi. She has also been the teacher-in-charge of Equal Opportunity Cell, Program Officer- NSS and Nodal Officer to monitor the implementation of reservation policies of persons with disabilities in the College. She has presented papers in several national and international conferences. Her areas of interest are Eighteenth Century British Literature, Indian Writings in English, and Indian literature in Translation, Contemporary Literature, and Disability Studies.

SUBODH KUMAR UPADHYAY

Subodh Kumar Upadhyay is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He completed his Masters in English in 2005 from CCS University, Meerut and has been teaching since then at undergraduate level. He was awarded his Ph.D on Khwaja Ahmed Abbas on the topic "Social and Political Aspects in the Major Novels of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas" in 2012 from CCS University, Meerut. His research interests are Postcolonial and Transnational literatures in English.

VINOD VERMA

Vinod Verma is Associate Professor of English, in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, where he has been involved in teaching and researching literature in English, performing and visual arts, including film making for more than three decades. He has presented research papers, screened films and given musical performances in national and international conferences in India, UK, Lebanon, France, Germany, Hungary and Italy. He has also co-edited books titled Individual and Society and Living Literatures for Department of English, University of Delhi.

INVITED SPEAKERS



PROF. ANIL K. ANEJA

Prof. Anil K. Aneja has a long and distinguished career of more than 30 years in academics. Presently, he is working as Professor in the Department of English, University of Delhi. His areas of research include Twentieth Century Fiction, Disability Studies with Reference to Literature and Cinema, Indian Writing in English, Translation Studies and Human Rights Literature. His significant books are: *The Novels of L.H. Myers in Relation to Indian History, Myth and Thought, Human Rights and Volunteerism; Combating Discrimination: Some Path-breaking Initiatives for the Visually-Impaired*, and *A Comparative Study of the Visually-Impaired Children Studying in Special and Inclusive Schools*. In addition, Prof. Aneja is the Officer on Special Duty at the Equal Opportunity Cell, and also, the Nodal Officer as well as Grievance Redressal Officer for Persons with Disabilities, University of Delhi. For nearly 25 years now, Prof. Aneja has been engaged in the disability sector. Currently, he is the Vice President of the All India Confederation of the Blind and the Chair, Rehabilitation Committee, World Blind Union. His achievements have earned him several distinctions from various quarters. Prof. Aneja was conferred the National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities by the President of India in 2014. In 2017, he has been awarded with the Achiever's Award by the Indian Eye International Human Rights Observer. Recently, he was also conferred the State Award in the Category 'Best Individual Working in the field of Social Work' by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi and the prestigious Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwalla Memorial Award 2020 by the National Association for the Blind, Mumbai.



PROF. RAJ KUMAR

Raj Kumar is Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Delhi. He did his M. Phil and Ph. D from Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has been the Fellow of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. Prof. Kumar has researched on issues relating to caste, class, gender, ethnicity, language, and religion concentrating on subjectivity of marginal voices especially in Dalit Literature. He has authored several books, edited journals and volumes, and written for several journals and collections. His representative publications include *Dalit Personal Narratives: reading Caste, Nation and Identity* published by Orient BlackSwan and several articles on caste, marginalization and gender issues. He has also been the editor of journals like *Creative Forums: Journal of Creative and Literary Writings*, and *Language Forum: A Journal of Language and Literature*. He has also worked in several Administrative capacity as member of MA Admission Committee, College Affairs and has been the Convenor of Refresher courses organized by university of Delhi.



PROF. ANITA GHAI

Anita Ghai is Professor in School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi. She was earlier working as Associate Professor in Department of Psychology in Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi. She has been the former President of the Indian Association of Women's Studies. Ghai has been engaged with the field of disability studies for many years and her contribution to the field is considered seminal. Her volume titled *Disability in South Asia: Knowledge and Experience*, is considered a significant step forward and a milestone; the first of its kind in South Asia. In this book, Ghai moves away from clinical, medical or therapeutic perspectives on disability, and explores disability in India as a social, cultural and political phenomenon, arguing that this 'difference' should be accepted as a part of social diversity. She is pushing for disability studies to claim the status of a university discipline. She is also on the editorial board of *Disability and Society*, and *Scandinavian Journal of Disability*. Through her work, she analyses disability, gender and brings thoughtful reflection on identity politics. Ghai who is the author of *(Dis)embodied Form*, writes about the gendered politics of disability and its impact on feminist theory. This book is the first of its kind to address the experiences of being a disabled Indian woman and shows us the ways in which these experiences challenge both disability and feminism in India. She conducts workshops on sexuality and disability, as part of an online course run by feminist organisation, CREA. She is among the few feminists to write about how the PCPNDT Act is harmful to disabled children, since it allows abortion after testing for a foetal anomaly. She recognizes how sometimes feminism and disability are at odds with each other through her writing and research. Accessibility in India is a big issue that Ghai advocates for, including the daily challenges in the lives of people with disabilities due to the lack of ramps and inaccessible public transportation. She considers access as crucial for allowing people with disabilities to secure their proper citizenship rights and has spoken out against the Indian government's token efforts for people with disabilities.



MR. HUSNAIN

Husnain is a differently-able Bharatnatyam dancer. Affected by polio at a very young age, Husnain has refused to allow his talent of dancing to succumb to social and conventional pressures and instead gone on to perform on the wheelchair. He has started a Foundation named 'We are One' in 2016, a platform to create an inclusive environment for other differently-able persons. This platform enables the underprivileged and the differently-able to realize their dreams and actualize their potential. Felicitated by former Presidents of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee and Shri APJ Abdul Kalam and President of Singapore, Halima Yaqoob, Husnain has sought to discover the talents of the differently-able who remain forgotten because they fail to conform to traditional expectations.



MR. JAGSEER SINGH MAHAR

Jagseer Singh Mahar is a Para athlete competing in Men's 100m, 200m, 400m and Long Jump events in the F46 category. In 2010, he was the first and only Indian player to win a gold medal in the first Para Games held in Guangzhou (China).



MR. JOGINDER SALUJA the heavyweight Para Powerlifting champion of India is the Presidential award winner of 'National Role Model' of India. He is the former brand ambassador of Swacch Bharat Abhiyan and eleven times winner of Mr India title in Para powerlifting events, three times winner of Mr India title at Bodybuilding championships as well as three times winner of Arm-Wrestling

Championships. He has been a professional fitness trainer for the past sixteen years and is the Health and Fitness coach in Fit India Campaign and health consultant at Centre Reserve Police Force. Also, Mr Saluja is part of Salman Khan's famous program @veer campaign and a motivational counsellor at University of Delhi.



MR. MANOJ KUMAR

Manoj Kumar served in IAF as a Corporal for 9 years. After his blindness, he is currently working as an Assistant Teacher in J.P.M Sr. Sec. School for the blind (Govt. Aided), New Delhi. He has written and published two story books titled 'Ghulam Azaadi' published in 2016 and 'Jivan ki Bisat' in 2017 and two novels titled *Ganga Ka Pathar* and *Ghati Ka Grahan* published in 2019. He has attended and presented research papers in several National and International conferences and has twice won 'Best paper presentation' award. He has also been crowned as the Gold medalist in Haryana State Taekwondo Championship, 1988.



MS. MONA SINHA

Mona Sinha is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, where she has been teaching literature, language and cultural studies since 1995. Her varied publications include translations, papers and book chapters on feminist studies, media and culture, besides articles on language proficiency. She has also edited journals such as Creative Forum and FORTELL. She has presented papers at several national and international conferences and is currently researching in the area of television and gender studies.



MS. NIDHI GOYAL

Nidhi Goyal is a disabled feminist activist from India working on disability rights and gender justice. She is committed to changing the lives of persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls. In her 9 years of activism, Nidhi has worked with a range of national and global women's rights, disability rights, and human rights organizations, including Point of View, Human Rights Watch, Sight Savers, and CREA. Her work on disability, gender, diversity and inclusion have made way into many corporate offices and policy spaces. Nidhi's work spans research, writing, training, campaigns, advocacy, and art. She works to raise the profile of issues at the intersection of disability and gender through op-eds, journal articles, and lectures in national and international forums. She influences organizations, systems and structures, policies and human rights discourses to be more inclusive in national and global spaces. Nidhi has been appointed to the UN Women Executive Director's Civil Society Advisory Group, has been invited to the multi-stakeholder steering committee of the Generation equality Forum, sits on the advisory board of VOICE, and has been globally elected to the Board of Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), where she is currently the President. In India, Nidhi has been invited to be a member of the core group on persons with disabilities and elderly persons by the National Human Rights Commission and also has been invited to the diversity and Inclusion task force by FICCI. Nidhi is also India's first female disabled stand-up comedian and uses humor to challenge prevailing notions about disability and gender.

At 15, when Nidhi started losing sight and learning to live a full life with her disability, she promised herself that she would work to extend opportunities for growth to other people with disabilities who did not have access to the family support, resources, and privileges she drew upon for support. *Rising Flame*, an organization of which Ms Goyal is the founder and director, takes this commitment forward.



MR. PRASHANT RANJAN VERMA

Prashant Ranjan Verma is General Secretary at National Association for the Blind Delhi, a premier NGO working for the empowerment of persons with blindness, low vision and multiple disabilities. Mr. Verma is an Independent consultant to the DAISY CONSORTIUM (www.daisy.org) for technical support & software testing. Responsible for conducting trainings in Digital Talking Books production & providing support to libraries and publishers taking up inclusive publishing worldwide. Mr. Verma has conducted face to face trainings on information accessibility from 2003 till date in more than 25 countries like USA, Switzerland, France, Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Botswana, Mauritius, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia and Kazakhstan apart from conducting online training and technical support for many other countries from all continents.

Mr. Verma is a Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC), and a member of International Association of Accessibility Professionals. Mr. Verma is Chairman

of Committee for Sugamya Pustakalaya, the first national level online accessible books distribution portal being developed by DAISY Forum of India. Mr. Verma is credited with several innovations including the Currency Identification Device for India and Mauritius and Bank Cheque Printing Templates for the blind. He has launched www.GoodFoodTalks.in, India's first accessible restaurant finder and menu reading app in 2016. He has written several books and manuals on computer training and use of technology for the visually impaired. An experienced Accessibility and Usability evangelist, Mr Verma has provided accessibility testing services to numerous companies and organizations like UNDP, Microsoft, UNESCO, UNICEF, Dolphin Computers, RNIB UK and more.



PROF. RANU UNIYAL

Ranu Uniyal is Professor and Head of the Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow. She worked as Director, Institute of Women's Studies, University of Lucknow, and is currently member of the Research Committee, Department of English, Kumaon University, Nainital, member of the Syllabus Committee, Department of English, DDU Gorakhpur University and the member of the Board of Studies, Department of English, CSJMU Kanpur University. She did her doctorate from Hull University, UK and her M. Phil from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has been awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship for Ph.D and nominated for Commonwealth Post-Doctoral Fellowship by UGC and also, has been awarded the UGC Visiting Associate Award. She has published articles, reviews, chapters in books, authored and edited books and journals. Her few publications include *Women in Indian Writing: From Difference to Diversity*, co-edited *Raja Rao's Kanthapura: A Critical Study*, *Poems: Across the Divide*, *Women and Landscape: The Fiction of Margaret Drabble and Anita Desai*. A prolific poet, Dr Uniyal has published several anthologies of her poems titled *The Day We Went Strawberry Picking in Scarborough*, poems in *The Enchanting Verses Literary Review*, *Suvarnarekha*, *Dance of the Peacocks: An Anthology of Contemporary Indian Poets in English*.



MR. SATISH KAPOOR

Satish Kapoor, the Acharya Vinobha Bhave National Volunteer Awardee (Constituted by UNDP and National Foundation of India), is the Founder Director-Brotherhood and We Care Film Festival on disability issues. He is also the Founder and Convener of Global Inclusive Education Network (GIEN) to promote and support schools in inclusive education practices (www.gien.in). Mr Kapoor has co-Authored book on *Quality Indicators for Inclusive Education* along with Prof. N K Jangira. This book has been published in both English and Hindi. This book is being used by more than 100 schools across India helping in improving the inclusive education practices. He has further published four books on Inclusive Education.

Mr Kapoor has conceptualized and produced Indian National Anthem in Indian Sign Language featuring Mr. Amitabh Bachchan and Children with Disabilities. He has also produced documentaries on disability issues. He was the pioneer in organizing *We Care Film Festival* in 2003 in India in collaboration with its founding partners the United Nations and

UNESCO. He has organized film at 190 venues across India and other countries including France (Paris), Mauritius, Dubai (UAE), China, UK, Iran (Tehran). He has produced approximately 1200 short films and documentaries on various disability issues ranging from 1 to 90 minutes from approximately 150 countries. Presently, the 17th edition of We Care Film Festival is running. Further, he has organized several conferences and more than 10 workshops on inclusive education and documentation of inclusive education practices across India in collaboration with Centre for Disability Studies and Action, TISS, Mumbai. And he has initiated a festival titled 'Rays of Colours' Festival to showcase talent of Artists with disabilities.



MS. SHAMPA SENGUPTA

Shampa Sengupta is an activist working on disability and gender issues for last 25years. She is the Founder-Director of Sruti Disability Rights Centre, a non-funded advocacy group that works on disability and gender rights. She started her work-life by organising Kolkata's first ever parents' group of intellectually disabled children. She later worked with Crisis Intervention Centre for Women and also worked as Principal of Computer Training Centre for the Visually Impaired. She is at present actively involved in state level networks of women's groups and Paschim Banga Rajya Pratibandhi Sammelani, the largest DPO of West Bengal. Though trained in special education, Shampa worked for inclusion of children with disabilities. She has several research papers as well as published articles. She has experiences of working with National Commission for Women on different studies – she is associated with Women's Studies Centre at Jadavpur University and Calcutta University and a life member of Indian Association of Women's Studies. Presently her focus is on policy level changes on women with disabilities and has been working on making Indian laws and policies on women pertinent to lives of disabled women.



PROF. SHOHINI GHOSH

Shohini Ghosh is Director (Officiating) and Sajjad Zaheer Professor at the AJK Mass Communication Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is the director of *Tales of the Night Fairies* (2002) a documentary about the Sex Workers Rights movement in Calcutta and the author *Fire: A Queer Classic* (2010) published by Arsenal Pulp Press, Vancouver /Orient Publishing (2011), New Delhi. Ghosh has been Visiting Professor in a number of universities within and outside India and has had a long association with CREA's *Sexuality, Gender and Rights Program*. Ghosh writes on contemporary media, speech and censorship, popular cinema, visual cultures, documentary and issues of gender and sexuality. She is currently working on a book titled *Violence and the Spectral Muslim: Action, Affect and Bombay Cinema at the Turn of the 21st Century*.



MR. SUBHASH CHANDRA VASHISHTH

Subhash Chandra Vashishth is passionately engaged in advocacy for human rights particularly, inclusion of seniors and persons with disabilities in the mainstream through policy reforms, formulation of standards on accessibility, accessibility assessment of built environment and services, legal intervention for disability justice & promoting physical accessibility in public infrastructure, ICT & transportation systems. He is an Expert Member (Accessibility) of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Committee on National Building Code of India 2016 and has extensively contributed to accessibility provisions in the recently revised building code. He was also on the Core Committee of Ministry of Urban Development, Govt of India for drafting “Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-free Built Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons” which stands notified under Section 15 of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules 2017 as the standard for built environment. He is also a member on the BIS Committee on Smart Cities (CED 59). Mr. Vashishth is also on the Jury Panel of "We Care Film Festival" —an organization which has been showcasing short films to raise awareness on disability issues, from around the world for over fifteen years. He has been an Expert member on the Advisory Committee to the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Delhi. He is also on the Committee of Experts constituted by University Grants Commission for Guidelines on Accessibility for Students of Universities/Colleges.

Mr. Vashishth is empaneled with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India as an Access Audit Trainer under Accessible India Campaign. He is a visiting Faculty to School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, CEPT University, Ahmedabad. He has also been a visiting faculty at the National CPWD Academy, India for training of newly inducted officers (engineers and architects) and for promotional training of officers of Central Public Works Department, India. He is Member, Standing Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility (AME 50) of Transportation Research Board of National Academies, USA representing Svayam.

Besides a professional degree in Law, Mr. Vashishth holds a Masters Degrees in Industrial Relations & Personnel Management, Economics, Social Work & a PG Diploma in Developmental Therapy (Cerebral Palsy & Other Neurologically Disabling Conditions). He has also completed a course on "Universal Design & Accessibility Planning: an interdisciplinary approach to inclusive environments" from the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee.



MR. T.D. DHARIYAL

Shri T. D. Dhariyal joined as the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Govt. of NCT of Delhi. He was Advisor, Disability Inclusion and Mainstreaming in CBM, a Germany based disability and development organization of more than 100 years’ standing. He holds Masters’ degrees in Economics and Business Administration from University of Hull, UK. Shri Dhariyal worked as a Civil Servant for more than 3 decades in the Ministries of Defence, Home, Shipping and Social Justice and

Empowerment. He was Deputy Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in Government of India for over 13 years till 2014. Working for persons with disabilities is his passion. He has been actively working to help persons with disabilities to secure their rights and entitlements and the organizations to implement laws and policies for empowerment of persons with disabilities. Shri Dhariyal has contributed articles and presented papers on inclusive education, employment, mainstreaming disability, barrier free environment, community based inclusive development, etc. He also compiled a book titled *Judgments on Disability Issues* and contributed in bringing out a Compendium on International and National Human Rights Regime for Persons with Disabilities; Disabled Friendly Sports Facilities; Guide book on Accessible Tourist Places in Delhi.

He has also been/is the Guest Faculty and trainer on a variety of disability issues in premier Training Institutes like Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, Institute of Secretariat Training and Management, New Delhi, IIPA, New Delhi, UTCS, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, State Administrative Training Institutes, CSIR, ISRO, IOCL, NTPC, Oil India, Institute of Public Administration, Bengaluru, etc. Shri Dhariyal has also been/is a member of various expert committees in the Government, UGC, Universities, NIOS, corporate sectors, NGOs/INGOs.



MR. VARUN SINGH BHATI

Varun Singh Bhati is the youngest recipient to receive the Arjuna award at the age of 22 for his outstanding performance in Para Athletics. He has won several medals in global and national events. He has won the Bronze Medal for Our Country in Rio Paralympic in 2016, Bronze Medal in World Championship 2017 in London, Silver Medal in Para Asian Games 2018 held in Jakarta, Bronze medal in International Paralympic Grand Prix Game 2019 held in Paris, Silver Medal in International Paralympics Grand Prix, Berlin, Gold Medal in Asia – Oceania Championship at Dubai in 2016, Gold Medal in the 2nd China Open Para Athletic Championship, Beijing, 2014 and several other national awards.



MR. VIKAS DAGAR

Vikas Dagar is a teacher and an International sportsperson. He has won twenty-two International medals, twelve national medals, and ten State medals. Mr Dagar is the National record holder in Long Jump. He has been awarded Rajiv Gandhi Sports Award by Delhi Govt and is also, the brand Ambassador of South west Delhi election Commission.

CONCEPT NOTE

*Has he ever
been able
to see
thus far...*

The above lines are a description of the blind ruler Dhritarashtra in Dharamvir Bharati's play *Andha Yug* (Age of the Blind). Here, Dhritarashtra's disability – his blindness – becomes the metaphor of his incapability as a ruler and his uncompromising love for his sons. Shakespeare's Richard III, R.L. Stevenson's Long John Silver in *Treasure Island* (1883), Well's blind inhabitants in *The Country of the Blind* (1904), Benjy Johnson in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), McCuller's deaf John Singer in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), Achebe's stuttering Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Rohinton Mistry's Tehmul Lungraa in *Such a Long Journey* (1991), indicate that disability appears in every literary epoch and tradition. Like literature, films too have variedly portrayed characters with disability. Classic Hindi films like *Dosti* (1964), *Aadmi* (1968), *Koshish* (1972), *Anurag* (1972), *Shor* (1972); contemporary Hindi films like *Black* (2005), *Guzaarish* (2010), *Kaabil* (2017), *Andhadhun* (2018), *Hichki* (2018), and *Chhapaak* (2019); Hollywood movies like Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* (1931), Walt Disney's *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *Gattaca* (1997), Medoff's *Children of a Lesser God* (1979) are a few examples of films with disabled characters. The representation of these characters in both literature and cinema, therefore, varies from wretched to comic to evil to symbolic.

Such a gamut of disabled characters in literature and cinema prompted Disability Studies, as an academic discipline, to examine the representation of disabled characters in the canonical work by non-disabled authors. It has gone on to discover disabled writing as well as revisit the works of writers like John Milton or Alexander Pope whose lives were significantly impacted by disability. There is also available today a sizeable collection of life-writing from the disabled community.

Disability Studies began to develop in West in the late twentieth century as a result of the success of the Disability Rights movements, the work of distinguished scholars like Erving Goffman, Michel Foucault, Leslie Fiedler etc. and emergence of inter-disciplinary approaches. Identity-based approaches like Queer Studies, Feminist Studies, and Race Studies provided a voice to disabled people in the academia and beyond and to explore hitherto hidden recesses of variegated humanity and social justice. Disability studies have diverted attention from the "medical model of disability" to the "social model" – away from the "different" body to how the society treats disability. The "social model" allowed people with very disparate type of disabilities to see themselves as a group unified by socio-political circumstances, holders of rights, activists for greater access, inclusion and protection and deserving care not just from healthcare professionals but the world generally. Apart from the "social model", the "cultural model of disability" extends the ambit further to "complex embodiment" which is central to the field of Disability Studies. The theory of complex embodiment raises awareness of the effects of living with disability, but it also highlights secondary conditions accompanying disability, such as chronic pain, fragile health, and premature aging. The theory situates disability within the kaleidoscope of human diversity and views the transactions inherent in

the social representations of the body not as unidimensional as in the social model, or absent as in the medical model, but as reciprocal. Disability writes itself from a unique location and there is increasingly a demand to have better representation of disabled characters across genres who are equally important readers, writers, consumers, and professionals today. It is felt that disabled characters are very often stereotyped and superficial greatly due to their exclusion from creative processes. Owing to the fact that currently, there are approximately 1 billion persons with disabilities in the world, which accounts for 15 per cent of the global population; Disability Studies have also gone on to forge intersectionality with post-colonial, race, ethnicity, gender, and queer theories. This gives the discipline a broader approach.

The Conference proposes to analyse the portrayals of persons-with-disability in literature and cinema in order to challenge and understand the notions that are attached to both ability and disability, remaining alert all the while to not uncritically import and adopt Western constructs of ability/ disability. The Conference also invites research to contextualise disability in cultural, geographical and identity-based frameworks. This Conference believes that the study of disability is a study of disproportions that exist in society and how the society reinforces or removes them. Within the space of disability, the Conference proposes to open up the term to not see it as another form of universalisation but to provide platform for engaging with specific types of disabilities, hierarchies governing physical and mental disabilities and permanent and temporary or treatable and terminal disabilities, disability as common to all forms of marginalisation, and disability as a universal phenomenon as it visits human beings at some stage or the other in life. Thus, all of us have a stake in mapping representation of disability over history, cultures, genres, disciplines, and approaches both to come to terms with what we consider ability and disability in self and others as well as to create and critique truly inclusive spaces of diversity and equity. We invite persons with disabilities, scholars, researchers, writers, activists, medico-legal professionals, caregivers, policy makers and everyone who thinks can contribute to the threads given below or beyond, within or

extending the scope of this concept note:

SUGGESTED THREADS

1. Representation of disability as a social and political phenomenon
2. Representation of disability as produced by environmental and cultural factors
3. Ideology of ability
4. Formation and hegemony of normalcy in cultural production
5. Historicity/ Situationality of ability/ disability in literary and cinematic texts
6. Representation of 'Nature's Outsiders' such as dwarfs etc. as Outsiders in the discourse of the abled
7. Literary and Film criticism of texts representing disability
8. Self-writing and representation of disability
9. Pathologisation of disability in literature and film
10. Human behaviour and social institutions' attitude to disability in literature and cinema
11. Intersectionality with gender, race, class, LGBTQ in literature and cinema
12. Representations of cognitive and mental disability in literature and cinema

13. Critiquing the medical model of mental disability in literature and cinema
14. The 'cultural' turn in Disability Studies
15. Disability and issues of diversity, equity and accessibility in/ to literature and cinema
16. Educational justice, human rights and indigenous issues surrounding disability in literature and cinema
17. Public health, wellness, ageing, and sustainability policy in context of disability in literature and cinema
18. War, violence, terrorism and disability in literature and cinema
19. Rehabilitation, support networks, human bonding, technology and prosthetics and other support networks for disability in literature and cinema
20. Activism and advocacy regarding disability in literature and cinema
21. New approaches, studies, experiments or projects of Disability Studies advancing insights into representations of disability in literature and cinema

Team Disability

ABSTRACTS

Trauma, Mental Aberrations and Society in Select Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto

Aanchal Awasthi

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The partition of India and Pakistan witnessed extreme violence, in the forms of killings, mutilation of body parts and rapes. Saadat Hasan Manto investigates partition trauma by probing into the psyche of his characters. My paper will analyze three short stories by Manto- 'Toba Tek Singh', 'Khol Do' and 'Khuda Ki Kasam' and explore mental aberrations in the characters as a response to trauma and would also reveal much about the attitude of society towards persons with mental illness. The paper shall use theoretical framework of disability studies, trauma theory, stigma theory and subaltern studies and also textual evidences to establish a connection between trauma and mental aberrations as a result of partition. The paper also tries to understand the positioning of persons with mental disabilities in society. I would also like to investigate the center-margin dichotomy present in the society in the context of disability through these stories and question the accepted notions of 'normality'.

Keywords: Disability, Mental Aberration, Trauma, Partition

Contesting "Disability": Charlotte Bronte's Bertha Mason and the Making of the "Madness"

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Disability Studies as a distinct academic discipline has been a recent development. Even much newer dimension of this field of enquiry is the interrogation of mental illness. Victorian writer Charlotte Bronte's (1816-1855) much celebrated and also much critiqued 1847 novel *Jane Eyre's* colonial character Bertha Mason's mental illness has been much disputed. Mason has been portrayed by Bronte as violently insane and a "savage". Even her laughter has been described as "demonic". She is a threat to the safety of her husband Edward Rochester and others at the Thornfield Hall. Therefore, she was locked in a room on the terrace for the safety of everyone. She is accused of setting the house at Thornfield Hall on fire and committing suicide. However, her supposed

madness is contested when she rips Jane's bridal dress when she discovers that Rochester is about to marry Jane. Secondly, her setting of the Rochester's house on fire and committing suicide comes only after her realization that Rochester and Jane's matrimonial engagement is inevitable. Jean Rhys (1890-1979) in her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) critiques Brontë's depiction of Mason as mentally unstable and argues that her supposed mental illness is projected by her colonial husband due to her displacement from her own culture and marginalization in the White European society. She also contends that she has been wronged by her husband due to his colonial motives as she was extremely rich and Rochester and his family were behind her to misappropriate her property. Additionally, Mason's supposed madness also clears Rochester's way to pursue Blanche Ingram and Jane.

This paper intends to interrogate the supposed mental illness of Brontë's disputed character Bertha Mason. Besides, it also seeks to examine whether her "madness" was a part of Rochester's design to negate her subjectivity and get rid of her smoothly.

Dismantling Disability, Racism and Sexuality in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847)

Aishwarya Jha

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Disability studies scholar Lennard Davis in his text *Enforcing Normalcy* argues that broadly speaking, "the social process of disabling arrived with industrialization and with the set of practices and discourses that are linked to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notions of nationality, race, gender, criminality, sexual orientation". Martha Stoddard Holmes in her reading suggests that nineteenth-century thinkers were among the first to see disability as a cause of individual suffering, which has the problematic consequence of minimizing "the importance of the material circumstances that surround all disabilities" while maximizing "the importance of personal agency while minimizing the need for social change" (*Fictions of Affliction* 28-9). In my paper, I will be examining the popular Victorian novel, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* within the intersectional rubric of disability, racism and sexuality. In their seminal work, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar propose that Brontë's Bertha Mason is a foil to Jane Eyre, depicting her "imprisoned hunger, rebellion, rage". Bertha's mental illness and colonial subject position must be taken in account for a true reading of her predicament in the attic and eventual demise. In the novel, even the hero, Mr. Rochester is a disabled individual at a later stage but while Rochester's disability is accepted and also sympathized with, Bertha's mental

illness does not find any such acceptance or even empathy from the society within the novel as well as the readers. She, in fact, has to be villainized, treated as a plot-obstruction to be subsequently killed off, in order to maintain the coherence and 'normality' of the plot. Under the two-fold lens of post-colonial feminism and disability studies, Bertha becomes a disabled female who is a casualty of the colonialist, the patriarchy and the ableist hegemony.

Keywords: Disability, Colonialism, Feminism, Victorian literature

Intersection of Caste and Disability in Premchand's *Rangbhoomi*

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In this paper, I will discuss disability in the context of caste. For this discussion, I have chosen *Rangbhoomi* (1925) by Munshi Premchand. It is the naked truth that people with any form of disability are discriminated against and are taken advantage of. They are the marginalized subsection of society. This marginalization happens on multiple levels—financial, societal and political. In *Rangbhoomi*, Premchand explores the ideas of caste and disability through the character of Soordas. Further in the paper, I will juxtapose the character of Soordas with other characters in the novel, to highlight the differences and similarities between them.

Soordas, in the novel, is described as physically weak and idealistic. According to established social norms, a blind person is not seen as capable enough to look after his own land. It is assumed that a blind person can only survive with the help of charity of others. And these were the norms that allowed the villagers to take advantage of Soordas' condition. In the opening chapter of *Rangbhoomi*, Premchand says, 'In India, neither name nor work is required for blind people.' The fact of the matter is that disabled people are, more often than not, bracketed as meek, polite and downtrodden. But like any person, disabled people too possess an entire spectrum of emotions—from being courteous to aggressive, and everything in between. Firmness and determination are valued human characteristics and the character of Soordas is an embodiment of both of them.

Keywords: Rangbhoomi, Soordas, Premchand, Disability, Caste

Sexuality and Love – Representation of Women with Disability in Hindi Cinema

Amanpreet Kaur and Rachit Raj

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Within the narrow representation of disability in Hindi cinema, ideas of love and sexuality are often brushed under the carpet and especially when it comes to representation of women with disability. Stories of characters with disability are often about rising through the ranks, which was the case in the Nagesh

Kukoonor directed *Iqbal* (2005), or about one's own struggle with life as a person with disability, which Sanjay Leela Bhansali explored in *Guzaarish* (2010). Even when a film like *Sparsh* (1980) explores the idea of disability in relation to romantic relationships, it refrained from looking at Anirudh's (Naseeruddin Shah) sexual life. Of late, women's sexuality has found voice in films like *Lipstick Under The Burkha* (2017) and *Veerey Di Wedding* (2018), yet there is limited representation of women with disability dabbling with the idea of love and sexuality. In instances where these themes have been explored, the representation demands a deeper critique to understand their relevance and contribution to the larger understanding of persons with disability. This paper will look at three films, namely *Black* (2005), *Margarita with A Straw* (2015) and *Zero* (2018) and explore the importance and inconsistencies in the representation of women with disability and their tryst with love and sexuality. It will also try to interrogate the reason behind the need for more representations of women with disability as sexually engaged individuals to challenge a problematic populist image of persons with disability as asexual people.

Portrayal of Differently Abled in Hindi Cinema: A Transition from Victimhood to Empowerment

Dr. Anita Vaidyanathan

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The purpose of my paper is to subvert the notion of disability through the portrayal of diverse images culled from Hindi cinema. The portrayal of differently abled characters with a twist reorients our attitudes and perception towards the notion of disability. Differently abled characters are no longer portrayed as objects of compassion, pity; neither are they delineated as stock characters who become the butt of jokes, ridicule or as ones having malicious intent. On the contrary, we see a shift from the medical model of disability to an empowered model through the filmmakers sensitive portrayal of such characters. These on screen characters do not play the victim card, on the other hand they emerge as vivacious, zestful, confident, independent, strong, courageous and creative individuals who have a lot of clarity

about their goals and pursuits. I have attempted to analyze disability through the lens of two films- *Margarita with a Straw* (2014) and *Hichki* (2018) both of which are female-centric films. The analysis also enables one to look at the dimension of gender and disability. The noted Tamil Dalit writer, Bama Faustina Soosairaj has pointed out that women are discriminated and alienated on the basis of their caste, class, gender and religion. In this context, in addition to their gender, their discrimination, alienation and marginalisation become more conspicuous on account of their disability. However, the focus of my paper is not so much on their bodily disabilities, but their transcendence through optimism, courage, positive coping, determination and faith in their abilities.

Keywords: differently abled, victimhood, alienation, marginalization, empowered model

Resplendent Angst of Christy Brown in the film *My Left Foot*

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This paper seeks to examine the experience of disability through the character of Christy Brown in Jim Sheridan's 1989 film *My Left Foot*. The images that most of the films have tried to portray before this film released are full of pity for the disabled characters. The film was path breaking in its treatment of disability. It tries to take the disablement out of the disabled. The film traces the trials and tribulations of the disabled character. Told in bildungsroman style, the film navigates through the inner psyche of Christy Brown and we see the strength and endurance that has been put in the character. The film bravely attempts to negate the ideas of sympathy towards disability. The beauty of the film lies in propelling the resplendent angst of the protagonist which does not come out of self-pity. The rage and anger of the disabled has been stereotyped in most of the narratives and it develops out of the frustration and self-pitying of the body. This is where *My Left Foot* differs. 'My left foot' attempts to normalise this angst. It is important to represent the experiences of disability without the societal intervention full of stereotypical myths surrounding disability. The film as such has compelled other filmmakers to portray the disabled through a "normal" lens which does not let the stigmas creep in.

Able-ing Disability: How Cinema Pushes Disability Sensitization

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Disability, abound in metaphors and analogies has made its space in cinema as a core subject of story-telling. Connecting the reel and the real, and despite this high visibility and its potential influence on public attitudes, disability portrayal in cinema has barely been a

concern that requires scholarly inquiry. This paper provides a multi-disciplinary review of film-literature by combining resources from film history, the social sciences, psychology, rehabilitation and education. The first part of the paper throws light how film themes dealing with disability swing primarily between two extremes- disability as an object of caricaturing, pity, fun, sympathy, social maladjustment and comic interlude and on the other end of the spectrum- with heroism as a core concept, aspirations of the human soul and coping-up often pretexting biographical narratives. The observation seeps that story telling in this aspect has progressed much from denying the stereotyping tendency to naturalising disability in present day film narratives. We look at certain character graphs and the often-typical character attributes attached to these characters- pre-Victorian era type comic relief and on the flipside the villainization of characters with disability treated them as social maladies- and how contemporary cinema has broken this hackneyed understanding. The second part of the paper traverses the arena of superheroes in films. We try to understand the redefined contemporary idea of a superhero, with an observation that most superhero characters have a disability character trait adjacent to them and their superpower. The more burgeoning question in this field of inquiry stands “Why do so many superheroes have a disability?” We look into marshalling insights from comic studies and disability studies tracing the increasingly challenged and complicated hypermasculinisation, quasi-eugenicist biases through such disabled figures in films. The persistent highlighting of “body’s imperfection” makes us observe this interpretation of predominant aspect of super-heroic self.

Need to Reclaim the Space: A Disabled’s View of the Himalaya

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In the arena of Himalayan writing one rarely gets to hear a disabled body’s voice as it is filled with the experiences of able-bodied men. Their narrations appear as transcendental since their subjectivity seeps into the reader’s psyche which tends to remove concerns around a disabled body from one’s imagination. The highly metaphysical topics seem to be reserved spheres for the expressions of the able-bodied. This shows that the Himalaya as a region could only be accessible and suitable for people who display fit bodies? But the time is to think about bodies who are injured both physically and mentally and want to go on pilgrimage. Does anyone wonder where their share of puṇyā goes? The general population becomes quite fascinated with the travel accounts of Paul Brunton, Dharamvir Bharati, people who have the command over language and physical mobility to present their accounts as if they are great adventurers and thus their ideas need to be preserved for posterity. But one needs to be mindful whether these accounts propel the ideology of able-bodiedness and engulf the readers within them. Brunton, despite being an able-bodied white man, has a helper to accompany him and look after his needs. Dharamvir Bharati goes to the Himalaya purely for his fascination for snow which is an exercise in pleasure. In their accounts they

do not once say what it feels like to live disabled existence in the Himalaya and what are the precautions one should take.

Their accounts seem to establish a hierarchy, ironically it is a hierarchy of power relations based on one's body. This paper attempts to contest the 'ideal' experiences of able-bodied men in the Himalaya with the accounts of disabled women who consciously describe how venturing into the Himalayan landscape is not a purely pleasurable experience, yet they go there to attain puṇyā.

Changing Norms in Representation of Disability in Indian Cinema

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Disability in the Indian concept is widely misunderstood due to the lack of sensitization and awareness among the audience. It served different purposes like for humor, punishment, comedy. Disabled people are continuously marginalized in the Indian Cinema. Such representation is basically fine for normal people but it sucks the morale of the disabled people. They began to think that they are useless and inefficient and became the victim of life. But which is a complete failure of Indian Cinema. In the *Golmaal* series, a dumb character leads the entire film and loved by the audience but no other initiatives are taken to change the perspective of the audience. There are few films that portray disability in a completely different limelight. In the film *Taare Zameen Par* (2007), a seven-year-old child is seen as the victim of social norms. He was not able to read and write and this problem is common in Indian society. This film changes the perspective of the audience by approaching the problem from a different angle, the Disabled child was not able to fulfill the needs of society and considered by his parents and teachers a 'procrastinating' child. The depiction is taken seriously in the film, a teacher finds his disability and helps him in overcoming that. Another film *Chhapaak* (2020) is something more like it. It portrays the struggle of the acid attack survivor Laxmi Agrawal. Both these films depict the same thing, disability can be obscured if the people around that person encourage and support them to be the part of mainstream society rather than pushing them into margins and prejudice them on the basis of their disability.

Keywords: Disability, Social Normalcy, Mainstream society

Iterations of Heroism of Dis-abled Figure: Reading of Contemporary Hindi Film Thrillers

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Hindi cinema for the longest time was solely interested in portraying the disabled in a drastically melodramatic light. In such “unstable/ disable body genre” films like *Anand* and *Kal Ho Na Ho* and other films of that ilk, as primary characters, the disabled subject’s role was usually meant to evoke sympathy in the audience and the secondary characters or to fill the latter with prophetic wisdom and hope in the diegesis (Prasad, 2013). As Madhava Prasad claims, in the recent revival of these films, the ideological and narrative functions of such subjects have been reconfigured. He states, in the contemporary, these characters are different in their iterations of heroism compared to action heroes of a mass film, in the way the former presents the protagonist’s internal aching and its perspective which is a more private and inward look of middle-class lives and a turn away from the social (95). Though Prasad’s formulations are well-grounded, they arrive from a focus that is limited to a set of melodramatic films that inculcate the disable body genre. In this paper, by throwing light upon the thrillers that are part of the same revival period which deal with disability, a category which Prasad conveniently ignores, I will explain how an altogether constellation is opened up, where disabled subjects conjure both the capabilities of an action hero and a survivor. Occupying a space between mass films and melodrama, they challenge the dominant views of ability and disability, as the protagonists are shown suffering the pains of disability, but also outdoing the so-called able secondary characters with their daring exploits. By reading thrillers like *Ghajini* (2008), *Kaabil* (2017) and *Game Over* (2019), I will deeply analyze elements such as the new emphasis on different abilities, the use of prosthesis in filmic action and the new identity formation of the disabled figure as an avenger in contrast to the cliched angelic disposition.

Ideology of Ability

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The whole understanding of “disability” is tied to a cultural matrix where, a normalization and acceptance about the term, generates a set of stereotypes and redundant procedures which need a reconsideration. While providing a level playing field and equal opportunities to the disabled within the government and the education sector has been integral to constitutional and legal provisions, it seldom translates into an enabling attitude of identifying “disability” as “this” ability. If adopted, this becomes not just a productive approach, but can translate into humanitarian ethos which give some meaning to activism and provisions related to disability in education. This paper

will begin by problematizing the ideological and the cultural divide between “ability” and “disability”, and how it translates into a set of redundant approaches in the field of higher education. It will then make a case for treating “disabled” as highly “abled” and transforming the smugness of legal and constitutional practices into everyday useful teaching approaches. Through a utilization of real life case studies, pedagogic experiments and productive literature, this paper will interrogate and explore the significance of recognizing the ‘ability’ in the disabled and combining infrastructure enablement with teacher activism so as to problematize stereotypes and standardized conventions with regard to treatment of disabled learners in an average skill classroom.

Gender and Disability: Exploring Representations of Disabled women in Films

Jyoti

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The paper will discuss and evaluate representations of disabled women characters and their sexuality in a variety of films. Disability scholars like Don Hevey and Jenny Morris identify ten pervasive stereotypes in the mass media. Most of these are identified to be negative by Colin Barnes (3). These stereotypes include presenting the disabled character “as pitiable and pathetic, as an object of violence, as sinister and evil, as atmosphere or curio, as super cripple, as an object of ridicule, as their own worse and only enemy, as burden, as sexually abnormal, as incapable of participating fully in community life and as normal (it is one dimensional and does little to reflect the experience of disability)” (Barnes 1992). Thus, most scholars seem to agree that disability has been extensively represented in mainstream culture and used as a cultural commodity for many years. As disabled people have been rarely given a chance to voice or control their own portrayal, their representation has operated at the expense of being portrayed negatively. In her discussion of the domain of representation, disability studies scholar, Rosemarie Garland Thomson substantiates her assertion that western thought has associated women with primal freaks and disability for the longest time by pointing out Aristotle’s definition of women as “mutilated males” and Nancy Tuana’s identification of women as “misbegotten men” (6). In *The Enfreakment of Photography*, David Hevey contends with numerous examples that disabled people have been frequently represented as figures of otherness (445). Tobin Siebers writing in the same vein declares that disability has been present throughout the history of modern art even though it is not usually recognized as such (Fraser 43). It is important to note that these historical representations of disability were mostly used to rationalise normative standards of non-disabled people which in turn leads to an oppressive understanding of disability. Cinema holds massive power in moulding society’s attitudes and educating people by presenting disabled characters in ways that promote empowerment and dislodge the widespread negative notions about disability. *Margarita with a Straw* and *The Shape of Water* interrogate the category of disability, influence perceptions, opinions of the

viewers and increase their awareness by “unsettling the way our collective consciousness frames disability” (1559). The purpose of the analysis is to embody the critical issues of feminist disability studies by exploring the characters of Laila and Eliza to show that stigmatization of disabled women and their sexuality is less a consequence of disability itself than misunderstandings and stereotypes that society identifies with them. To expand the scope of our analysis, films that did not confront the discourse of pity, asexuality and dependency surrounding disabled women will also be considered. In films like *Magnificent Obsession*, *Johnny Belinda* and *Passion Fish*, negative stereotypes prevail and disabled women characters are portrayed as people who are not able to fulfil the social demands of their gender, and inevitably recognised as an outsider.

Now I live on a Lonely Planet--Frida Kahlo

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Art initiates an experiential dialogue between the artist and the world. This is evident from the array of paintings of Frida Kahlo in which she consumingly expresses the experience of being incapacitated by polio and eventually by a harrowing accident which left her victim to a lifelong experience of pain.

Art, in the words of Barbara Ettinger allows for 'aesthetic wit(h)nessing'. Bearing this perspective, in this paper I will study the works of artist Frieda Kahlo and examine how she uses art as an instrument of expression of her trauma. This paper will analyse the impossibility of articulating pain and trauma through the spoken word – albeit how pain finds a different linguistic discourse – art, in the case of Kahlo. Using

Elaine Scarry's work – *Body in Pain* and Cathy Caruth's works on trauma studies, the paper will read Kahlo's art as transactions in pain that uses disembodied bodies as expression of her personal trauma. It will explore how Kahlo's traumatic experiences are transcribed in a visual language which is complicated, yet provocative. As Kahlo once said that so many of her 'unapologetic self-portraits' are a response to her sense of loss, loneliness and pain. Even Satish Gujral's paintings can be seen as testifying to the trauma of loneliness which defines individuals who are disabled in ways which are visible and which the world uses to signify them as an

'other', while choosing to forget that they are warped and deformed in multiple ways.

From Representation to Re-presentation: A Study of Disability in Literature

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Representation of disability has always found its way in literature and cinema in one form or the other. The concept of Representation to Re-presentation of disability in literature and cinema stresses on the evolution of portraying the impaired characters in a positive light. It revolves around the breaking of all stereotypes and prejudices from the past to broadening the horizon of cultural mind-set of people in the present. As reflected by numerous categories of written works, often disability is equated with negativity, where such characters are to be feared of and dehumanized in a subsidiary plot; presenting disability as catastrophic or a burden for the affected people and those around them. For example, *Shakuni* having contorted legs from Hindu epic 'Mahabharata' and the crippled *Bijjaldev* from the movie 'Bahubali' depict the streaming of evil-impaired people responsible for massive bloodshed. Whereas, the character of *Rani Mukerji* in 'Black' and *Ranbir Kapoor* in 'Barfi' shares the optimistic life of deaf and dumb young people; breaking the barriers of evil portrayal of the impaired individuals. Similarly, in literature- *Quasimodo* with a severe hunchback is revealed to have a kind heart as well as *Auggie*, with a rare medical facial deformity succeeded in proving that there was more to him than meets the eye. The idea of the paper through the above examples is to study the evolution of Representation of Disability with time - which disabled people are now seen with a different lens and are Re-presented as the 'specially-abled' or 'people with extraordinary bodies' in our society. With the understanding of the above swot, there will definitely be an acceptance and absorption of disables by the society, in general and literary community, in particular. It clearly shows the well-sighted Re-presentation of the formerly Represented mentality of the society on Disability.

Keywords: Disability, Representation, Re-presentation, Specially-abled, Impaired, Stereotypes, Evolution

Desire and Disability in Devdutt Pattanaik's *Jaya* – A Retelling of *Mahabharata*

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Devdutt Pattanaik has skimmed in the mythological world to fish out his retellings of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Catering to the needs of an individual inhabiting the post-

colonial and post-humanistic world, Devdutt has retold epics in the form of textbooks i.e., logically illustrated, and easy to follow. These retellings gave us vivid images of disability, ranging from blindness, limpness, immobility, ugliness, etc. to mental disabilities like sleeping disorders, forgetfulness, etc. The characters with impairment are treated differently and are not considered to be good enough to fulfill the desires of the heart, mind, and body. If Dhritarashtra is not allowed to fulfill his cherished desire of ruling because of his physical impairment, then Yayati is also disabled for expressing his physical desires. Eventually, desire emerges both as a cherished dream as well as the cause of disability. In this paper, I would like to explore desire in the context of the various disabled characters. Curses and boons act as tropes of disability in mythology. I would also like to perceive how desire invokes curses/boons and brings forth intersectionality between desire and disability.

Keywords: Desire, Disability, Mahabharata, Curse/Boon, Indian epic

Defensive Othering: The Stigma of Blindness and Its Ramifications in *Planet of the Blind*

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Defensive othering is a response of “devalued” people to an “oppressive identity code” imposed by a domineering group, distancing themselves from their peers to deflect their own stigma. Although it is an adaptive reaction, this “identity work” feeds the continuance of inequality by supporting the dominant group’s ideology of superiority and undermining subordinate solidarity (Schwalbe et al., 2000).

Stephen Kuusisto’s first memoir *Planet of the Blind* offers a brutally honest account of his life as a visually impaired man. Diagnosed with ‘retinopathy of prematurity’ and nystagmus at an early age, Kuusisto grows up with an intense feeling of self-loathing while his parents live in denial over their son’s disability. Their insistence upon sending him to a regular school stems from the stigma attached to blindness. His mother decides to raise him as a ‘normal’ child by distancing him from the blind community. This creates massive difficulties for Kuusisto at school, where he is bullied by classmates, yet refuses to accept his impairment since he fears ridicule from non-blind people and aspires for inclusion in their community. Over time, Kuusisto’s denial of his blindness gives rise to several health issues, such as anorexia and alcoholism. Defencing othering makes his life tougher and more problematic than usual. Finally, he overcomes his fears pertaining to social judgements and embraces his blindness. Drawing upon theories of disability and defensive othering, this paper attempts to analyse the representation of the social stigma of blindness and its adverse effects on differently abled persons through a textual perusal of this memoir.

Keywords: Kuusisto, disability, defensive othering, blindness, denial

The Disabled Body and Sexuality: Representation and What Lies Ahead, the case of *Mom*

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The influence that popular culture exerts on our increasingly digitalized world cannot be emphasized upon enough. The debate of an inclusionary representation within the realm of popular culture has amplified in recent years, drawing on John Cawelti's idea of impact theory. When the debate extends to disability and sexuality, an odd vacuum emerges for sexually active disabled body is twice removed from the norm, contributing to the creation of a dual stigma, and dual blockades towards representation. Certain books and television series have started representing disabled characters in romantic and sexual relationships and I will specifically pay attention to *Mom*, a popular American sitcom in which a main character (Bonnie) in a relationship with a man in a wheelchair on account of a spinal injury (Adam). The sitcom shows Adam and his disabled body not as subjects of pity and devoid of sexuality, but rather as both a source and receiver of sexual pleasure, an object of sexual attraction rather than pity and disgust. As the sitcom unfolds, it goes on to include cognitive disability, as it is revealed that Bonnie has Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and her therapy sessions, normalizing the very idea of seeking help, and reducing the stigma surrounding cognitive disability. The sitcom, thus, actively resists the narratives of passivity and deprivation that surround disability and sexuality, and seeks to move away from the cloak of silence, exclusion and invisibility that garbs people with disabilities. I will also extend the argument to include the idea of token representation by using able-bodied actors to represent the disabled (William Plitcher in *Mom*) and the larger argument of representation itself. What lies ahead of inclusive representation, what can be deemed the most accurate form of representation, and can we ever grow out of normalization?

Disability and Spectacle: Case studies from Reality Television in India

Mona Sinha (Invited Speaker)

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The popularity of reality shows and especially competition –based ones continues unabated on Indian television. However, like the rest of the media landscape, representation of persons with disability on these shows are rather few and far-between. Even where they are included, it is to provide a 'diverting spectacle', created to add yet another element to the drama that is reality television. The life-story of the disabled participant becomes 'narrative prosthesis' for the show, where the elements of emotions, mental strength, struggle, etc. can effectively be narrated and used as a crutch to generate either pity or awe in the viewers. The logic is that the more tears there are, the greater is the Television Rating Point for a

show. Behind the inclusion of the disabled is also the idea of 'inspiration porn' where primarily the physical disability of the participant is portrayed as an obstacle that has been overcome to enable her to be part of an exclusive club of individuals who were found worthy of appearing on television. After all, given a chance, who doesn't want to be on television! The present paper proposes to take up some case studies from a few popular Hindi language talent and competition- based reality shows on Hindi GEC's in the recent past- singing talent shows such as *Indian Idol*, *Sa Re Ga Ma*; *India has got talent* (multiple talent show), *Super Dancer* and *Nach Baliye*, both dance-based; and above all, the two-decade old *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, the quiz and knowledge based show, hosted by Amitabh Bachchan. The question we ask is, to what extent has Indian reality television evolved in representing the disabled?

Sexual Desires of Disabled Homosexuals: Studying Gender and Geographical Difference

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The suppression of the voices of the disabled in both literature and cinema has led to the erasure of their presence and participation in mainstream discourse. Their shift to the periphery has resulted in the complete obliteration of dialogue of their sexual needs and desires. Netflix's *Special* explores the consciousness of a gay man having cerebral palsy of his ability to lead an independent life, thereby challenging the perceived necessity of familial support for the survival of the disabled. Shonali Bose's *Margarita with A Straw* similarly investigates the possibility of self-sufficiency of an Indian bisexual girl, named Laila, having cerebral palsy. Laila's realisation of her sexuality, the episode of her lesbian romantic relationship, and her casual sexual intercourse with a man is, however, made possible only against the backdrop of the United States. Bose's film hints at the difficulty of pursuing and fulfilling sexual desires of the disabled in India, and encourages the normalisation of exchange of their sensual longing. What makes the aforementioned cinematic scripts unique is their support of the supposition that the happiness of physically disabled people is not contingent on romance. The paper endeavours to examine the impact of normalisation of the disabled in cinema by studying Bose's film and briefly referring to *Special* to compare and contrast the difference in the process of normalisation for disabled men and disabled women.

Disability and the Quest for Identity: A Reflection on Disabled Lives

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In the last few decades, writing disability autobiography has emerged as a field of inquiry (especially of women with disability) in the field of humanities. The reason behind writing about “self” is that sexual identity and sexuality of a woman with disability is almost never talked about in India. The paper tries to explore the present scenario of disability in India on the basis of life and experiences of two women Shivani Gupta and Malini Chib; and foreground the need to reconceptualize the relation between gender and disability. The paper looks at disability as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon; and the need of the shift from ‘charity’ to ‘rights’. These autobiographies show like never before the insights into identity of a woman living with crippling disability. I have chosen two disability autobiographies as a valuable and liberatory medium to introspect the “self”. These women defy all the odds to emerge victorious in spite of their crippling disability. The story either of Shivani or Malini is not only about the search for independence but also, about identity and zeal to live a meaningful life despite their lifelong disability. The paper questions how ableism considers the disabled as ‘incomplete’ or ‘less autonomous’/ dependent; what people meant when they use the word “Disabled” and what (Dis)ability implied because the biased stereotypical prejudices that has kept shaping our lives forever has an important part in deciding our status as an individual. It also tries to interrogate a fresh notion of selfhood, a challenge to normative idea of the ‘body’, how disabled person adjust and manage disability based on the lives of these women with disability. The paper also looks at how these authors make a shift from body to rights as the locus of self and individuation.

Keywords: Accessibility, Acceptance, Inclusion, Education, Normalcy, Charity

A Sentimental Freak Show: A Disability Studies’ Reading of Keller’s ‘the Story of My Life’

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The representation of Disability in literature is a ubiquitous phenomenon. The literatures across cultures exploit the idea of disability and disabled characters. However, this representation is often symbolic, metaphorical, as well as reductionist, which does not account for the lived reality of the embodied experience of disability. And hence, these representations continue to maintain the stereotypical views of disability which results in the dehumanizing, marginalization of persons with disability. To counter this reductionist representation of disability, the disability studies scholars and activists are coming up with the idea of a disability culture which values the first hand experiences of disability by giving voice to the persons with disability. The disability autobiography is one of the crucial aspects of disability culture which imparts agency and the voice to the disabled person, thereby, challenging the unidimensional literary representation of disability. The disability autobiography/disability memoir is in fact the story of some body. Helen Keller is popularly celebrated as the icon of fortitude and strength in the face of adversity. Despite her political radicalism, she still remains the miracle poster-child who in spite of her disability manages

to graduate and remains a celebrity throughout her life. In this paper I will attempt to show that Keller's 'the story of my life (1923)' despite being a story of a disability experience, continues to be the narrative of overcoming, thereby, sentimentalizing and keeping in place the poster-child image. Apart from being a some-body memoir, it is also a somebody memoir. I will further argue that the general tone of the memoir is that of gratitude. I will further problematize the idea of agency and voice by arguing that Keller's memoir is actually a collaborative memoir written by Keller and her teacher together.

Keywords: disability autobiography, disability culture, some-body memoir, narrative of overcoming, poster-child, sentimentalizing disability

Not Sexually Disabled but Disabled Sexuality

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Freud theorized that sexuality is the root of one's identity. To quote World Health Organization, "Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being...(which) requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence." Today we are in an age where even able bodied human beings are grappling with disorders like body dysmorphia and anorexia. This compels us to think how a person with disability understands sex appeal and attractiveness, while struggling with confidence and perhaps internalizing unfathomably deeper insecurities. In the Indian context, where intercourse, sexuality and their exploration is relatively still a taboo, there is a need to popularize narratives like *Margarita with a Straw* which complicate the nexus between disability, self-acceptance, societal inclusion and alternate sexualities. The representation of characters like Laila and Khanum in the movie shines a light on groups that are thrice-marginalized due to their sex, sexual orientation and respective disabilities. Stories like this as well as *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes challenge the existing ideas of "normalcy," heteronormativity and physical desirability through the lens of disability. The basic premise of psychoanalysis is to trace the developmental process of the subject becoming a self on three plains – biological, sociological and psychosexual. Social welfare schemes that are made available for the disabled by the state largely ignore the sexual dimension of disability. This paper attempts to answer what is the place accorded to challenges with respect to sexuality for a disabled person in mainstream discourses and why it is necessary to work towards not only providing special facilities (ramps, aids in public spaces for convenience) and economically uplifting differently-abled persons but also be vocal about their sexual needs which by extension impact mental as well as emotional health.

Keywords: sexuality, heteronormativity, self, identity, desire

Analyzing “Freak politics” in American Horror Story: Freak Show

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Since 1990 there has been an outpouring of disabled writing in the west which has managed to spread across nations. With the growing consciousness in people along with the ability of the disabled writers to present their experiences, their stories come out in form of art, poetry and other representative forms. Along with various autobiographies and novels, cinema and other sources of visual entertainment has managed to bring forth the underlying unacceptance towards the Disabled or the "abnormal" human beings. Charlie Chaplin's City Lights, Disney's Finding Nemo are such examples.

The paper will analyze such extremely over growing commercial American show, i.e. American Horror Story, which is based on an anthology of stories consisting of a house with a deadly secret in asylums, hotel or a farmhouse. American Horror Story is an Emmy award winning show and the paper will focus on its season fourth, which is named as Freak show. The season packs a tall political agenda: It asks people to confront their notion of “freaks” and the marginalization of those whose bodies don’t conform to our ideals. The paper will however, deal with such cinematic experience which casted established actors to normalize a form of abnormality in societies. It will also talk about the horror genre and how a form of physical abnormality usually tends to scare people in the commercial world, even when it comes to Hindi cinema. Along with this, the paper will also analyze Robert Bogdan's Freak Show, which talks about presenting the human oddities as a form of earning profits and will talk about the intersectionality between Disability and the discourses formed around the Third World countries.

Sparsh: Cinematic Construction in Sensitivity

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Hindi Cinema has a variegated approach to its treatment of disability ranging from sympathy to slapstick comic feature, sheer insensitivity and display of pathetic nonchalance. It has been unusual to find movies where the portrayal of disabled has been without inviting comparison with the so called normal or have been shown to be heroic in their struggle against their condition but still never really as inclusive to the society.

Movies like *Margarita with a Straw* where a young romantic rebel in a wheelchair undeterred by cerebral palsy embarks on a journey of sexual discovery or *Koshish* which extended the cinematic frame to cover the daily time space of two deaf and dumb people have been a little sporadic. *Sparsh* with Naseeruddin Shah and Shabana Azmi playing the characters of a visually impaired principal and a sighted teacher in a school for the blind respectively takes on a different glare. Deviating from the stereotypes created by cinema and society where

disabled people are often presented as objects of pity, the movie creates an inclusive space where the blind protagonist wears his self-esteem on his sleeve and the emotional upheavals faced by him places him next to any sighted protagonist. A beautiful relationship evolves which is more tactile than visual though soon their complexes tag along and they struggle to get past them to reconnect with love.

The paper would work towards underscoring the sensitive handling of the issue of disability which went on to earn National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi in that year.

‘Disability’ as an Identity

Sakshi Singh & Rituraj

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From childhood, we have been introduced to literature as a source of identification. We associate ourselves with the characters we learn about, which further shape our assumptions and beliefs. With literature evolving to become more inclusive, more novels are exploring sexualities while the authors experiment with narration. What still remains lacking is the recognition the disabled people deserve. In an ideal world, literature would accurately reflect the demographics of our society. However, the majority of literary characters are white, cis-gendered and of able body and mind. This leaves many people of the demographics underrepresented in the literature they read; one of such category being disabled people. Author Marianne Ryan writes that when people with disabilities are represented in literature they, more often than not, “serve as merely the means to an end, a perpetuation of ableist thinking that construes and objectifies people with deformity or disability as inherently pitiable, powerless, defeated.” One classic example of such harmful narrative is portrayed even in a children’s book, Heidi by Johanna Spyri. The character of Clara, who is wheelchair-bound, depicts that disability is just another aspect of humanity. Another one being the novel and movie, “Me Before You”. The male lead, here cannot bear to live as his condition worsens and seeks out euthanasia, leaving the female lead with a sizeable inheritance. This narrative presents disability as something irreconcilable with happiness, and treats the death of a main character as a cathartic ending. Ideally, though the audience would prefer to have more positive narrations surrounding disability, through this paper we currently seem to have more thought-provoking portrayals in order to accentuate the focus on appreciating the categories of people around us since the literary texts which explore this theme of disability in a positive light are not as well-known as they should be.

Keywords: Cis-gendered, Disability, Euthanasia, Identification

Representational Politics in Showcasing the ‘Disabled’ as a Site of Violence and Criminal Activity

Saniya Puri

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We live in the age of euphemisms, where “handicapped” or a ‘disabled’ is replaced by “specially-abled”. However, the attitudes and stereotyping has not been erased. Yes, the typical portrayals have undergone evolution but the popular culture still enjoys a wide audience that caters to these prejudiced representations of ‘person with disability/disabilities’.

In the wake of this over-arching thematic, this paper will focus on the idea of a person with disability as a site of violence and criminal activity. The argument trajectory will follow Elizabeth Rider’s approach towards the subject matter. Treatment of a ‘disabled’ person with two resolutions has been the norm, as she suggested. First is the idea of “super gimp” as Rider suggests where the disabled character has super human abilities despite the handicap and how they surpass the non-handicapped by the end. The second part of the resolution is where the person reconciled with bitterness of their experiences as a disabled and the non-handicapped character gets a salvation out of this sight. This paper will talk about those two methods of resolutions and refute the whole idea that these people be made easy targets to become sites of crimes. The paper will make use of John Steinback’s *Of Mice and Men* and *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherjee. Stark opposites in their backgrounds, these texts form the foundation of the main argument. However, the paper will give references from *Copycat Sam* by Alfred T. Stefanik and *Nick Joins in* by Joe Lasker. The secondary argument being, that representational politics of the disabled has a lot to do with the linguistic origin of the term ‘handicap’ itself. Also, the trope of ‘sinister-ness’ associated closely with the disabled, especially those ‘hunch-backed’ characters. (As seen in the character of Captain Hook in Peter Pan)

The paper will discuss the resolutions in these texts, and the specific portrayals where the handicapped is the site of violence and illegal/criminal activity. Also, the idea of the “moron as the menace” in the character of Lenny in Steinback’s work will be discussed through and through. The paper will also talk about Howard Margolis and Arthur Shapiro’s argument as to how the ‘sinister’ is made to found in disabled fictional characters and the counter argument to that.

Visualizing Disability through Graphic Memoirs: *El Deafo* and *Dumb*

Shilpa B S L

Assistant Professor, Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Management Studies, New Delhi

The paper hopes to argue that the distinctive genre of graphic memoirs which typically combine pictures and personal narratives has enormous ability to depict disabilities in minute details. In doing so, the paper draws attention to the artform of comics, employed by the genre of graphic memoirs, with its characteristic conventions of word-image combination, range of choice of panels, colours, scale of realism and abstraction as a powerful alternative to depict complex embodied disability experiences. Such graphic representations have been foregrounded in various works. Two such works namely *El Deafo* by Cece Bell and *Dumb* by Georgia Webber have been chosen here to illustrate the above argument. Further, the paper also attempts to argue that the genre of graphic memoir representing disability can add a new dimension by synthesizing the individual world view with the broader frameworks of disability studies. And the genre can be employed actively

to familiarize and sensitize readers about the physical and psychosocial dimensions of disability experiences.

Staring the “Other”: Spectacle of the disabled body

Shivam Yadav

M Phil Scholar, University of Delhi

The “disabled body” of a “disabled person” is not a naturalistic given which is objectively recognized by “scientific institutions” within society. On the contrary, the so-called “disabled body” is itself merely a hermeneutical construct, the product of an act of interpretation in which a society utilizes various oppressive institutions of surveillance in order to actively inhibit the “disabled person” from ever having a chance to define his or her own self and identity. In the process, the society will be granted full reign to objectify, demonise, and mystify the “extraordinary body” of the disabled by deceiving the general public, and even the disabled himself or herself, into mistaking this contingent act of interpretive domination for a disinterested registration of objective fact. Disability is always influenced by social relations and cultural values. As a result of this institutionalized-deception, any relationship between a disabled person and “abled-bodied” person will always already be dominated by an asymptomatic distribution of power founded on a fallacious either-or binary logic. The power balance will always tilt to the side of the non-disabled person, insofar as the disabled person will be forced to assume the position of remaining the “stare” rather than a “starer” within the one-sided gaze of objectification, to borrow terminology which Rosemarie Garland favoured. What has all too seldom been realized, however, is that this logic of staring can be turned back against the oppressor. This paper will set out to present this argument through an in-depth analysis of the play *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance. Put briefly, the only way for a disabled person to shift the power balance to his side, or at least bring it back to an equilibrium, is precisely by staring back.

Keywords: Stare, disability, freaks, objectification, able-bodied

Exploring the Representation of Disability in the Contemporary Hindi Cinema: Some Preliminary Observations

Shivani Yadav

PhD Scholar, Department of Humanities and social sciences, National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur, H.P.

This paper deals with the paradigmatic shifts and its challenges occurred in the representation of disability and normalcy discourse in Hindi cinema. It charts out how disability, normalcy and ableism have been portrayed in Hindi cinema in last two decades. It argues that the two decades of the present century in Hindi cinema have three argumentative positions (dominant waves or phases) in representing disability. The first phase (before 1990s) is of disability as “inability” which has very limited focus such as blind, deaf, mute, etc. and considered it as a punishment of previous life, as a punishment for the

“Karma”. It was considered and portrayed as punitive, dependable, punishment, sin, etc on moral and religious grounds. Earlier films like *Sholay*, *Dhanwaan*, *Khamoshi*, *Sparsh*, *Koshish*, and *Aankhen*, have dealt with such themes. The second phase (during 1990s) is medicalization of disability which portrayed it as some kind of lack or deficit and advocated the physical and psychological disability as “abnormal”, that is, a “negative” variation to the “normalcy”. The third phase (from 2000 to the present) has a phenomenal shift in terms of thematic concerns and radical sociopolitical negotiations, which has no base to criticize people with disabilities. The films like *Taare Zameen Par* (2007), *My Name Is Khan* (2010), *Paa* (2009), *Ghajini* (2008), *Guzaarish* (2010), *Barfi* (2012), *Margarita with a Straw* (2014), *Hichki* (2018) have been produced with the objective to raise awareness about disability issues and break down stereotypes about people with disabilities. Further, Bollywood is setting up a new trend in showcasing the rare diseases like autism, cerebral palsy, progeria, Asperger’s syndrome, amnesia, Alzheimer, dyslexia etc and it would be befitting to term this epoch as the phenomenal shift in Hindi cinema

Keywords: Disability, Hindi films, Representation, adaptation

Disability, Gender and Embodiment in Jerry Pinto’s *Em and the Big Hoom*

Smriti Verma

Student, M.A. English, Ramjas College, University of Delhi

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, in “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory”, invokes the integration of disability studies in feminist theory in order to produce a feminist disability enterprise that not only investigates “how culture saturates the particularities of bodies with meaning,” but also introduces the ability/disability binary into the ideological sphere of gender. The centrality of the body emerges as the collaborative factor between the two, wherein the relationship between the body and its larger environment informs the relation of self to society. The non-normativity ascribed by larger societies to the category of the disabled, hence, creates a mental distance from the embodied self by locating the primary flaw in the bodies of the disabled, rather than in the social systems surrounding them. She elaborates by drawing parallels in the performance of disabled bodies and female bodies in the analogous negative labels – both are seen as inept, dependent and incompetent in the larger cultural set-up.

Jerry Pinto’s *Em and the Big Hoom*, published in 2012, examines this junction of gender and mental disability through the figure of Em – the narrator’s mother whose bipolar disorder renders her vulnerable to episodes of mania, depression, and suicidal tendencies. Her disorder is described as “a tap of black drip filling her up,” which opened at the birth of her son. In doing so, the narrative converges Em’s identity as a female, as a mother and as a mentally disabled patient, complicating the identity markers that define her.

This paper will explore the manner in which Em’s figure represents the intersection of disability and feminist theory, and the degrees to which Em’s disability defines her position within the family unit, the narrative of motherhood, and framework of ability. The paper will also attempt to explore Em as a manic-depressive patient, belonging in an ambivalent state of being wherein the self constantly flits from states of ability and disability,

and internal suffering is often rendered invisible, through Tobin Siebers' theory of complex embodiment.

Keywords: feminist, disability, theory, gender, embodiment

Reading Disability in Premchand's *Rangbhumi*

Suraj Agarwal

Research Scholar, Ph. D, Department of English, University of Delhi

Representation of disabled characters has always held a place in literature, be it classical literature, oral literature, media or modern fiction, but these characters are generally “binary opposition” to the so-called abled bodied characters. They are merely reduced to a “narrative prosthesis” in the texts, just to “enforce normalcy”. A character is only identified by their disability, cancelling out their personality and other qualities, or they seem to require a distinct set of attributes and/or talents to be viewed beyond their disabilities. The gaze of the ‘other’, the ‘normal’ or nondisabled individuals keeps shifting from either that of sympathy, avoidance, disgust, discomfort or even ridicule as and when the space of encounter changes. This paper will attempt to unravel the problematics of Premchand's *Rangbhumi* which has been viewed from various angles including feminism, historical perspective, Gandhian ideology, its literary aesthetics and Dalit studies but not disability studies. though the appearance of disability is overt in this novel as the protagonist *Surdas* is a blind and a Dalit character who is doubly marginalized, but still scholars and academicians have not engaged with *Rangbhumi* in terms of disability studies and have limited themselves to other identity paradigm. The traits of what David bolt calls ‘critical avoidance’ cannot be denied. Many scholars are still reluctant to accept this text as disability studies text as though a fundamental order would thereby be disrupted. To analyze this novel and the concept of blindness in the Indian context, I shall not only use disability studies theory but also my personal experiences of becoming blind as I believe that personal experiences do provide a strong and legitimate account of marginalization when discussing different identity paradigms.

Keywords: Blindness, Disability, Marginalization, Dalit

Collective Memory and the Holocaust: Disabled as the Subaltern in Postwar Literature and Film

Swasti Sharma

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Satyawati College, University of Delhi

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

The aforementioned poetic-prose was composed in 1946 by the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller as he lambasted the timidity of German intellectuals and the sycophant clergy ensuing from the Nazi hegemony. The Holocaust has shaped the cinema and literature concomitantly in the Central and Eastern European countries, particularly the cinemas of Poland, both the Czech and Slovak halves of Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The likes of *The Last Stage*, *Ulica Graniczna* and *The Unvanquished* have endeavoured to capture the trauma of trench life. The Holocaust and the fate of Central Europe's Jews has periodically haunted the work of many film directors and writers. There is a substantial body of literature in many languages on the issue of anti-Semitism. Perhaps one of the most difficult part of studying Holocaust literature is the phallogentric and normative language employed by the perpetrators of violence. The research paper will attempt to examine the representation of the disabled men and women in postwar popular literature and the challenges which accompany it. The paper will explore the thematic connections-both broad and focused-between literature and film. While most narratives emphasize upon masculinized response to war, the paper will encompass anecdotes from the lived experience of the survivors and veterans who were maimed and rendered shell-shocked by the war. The focal point of the paper shall remain a close textual /trans textual analysis of Lawrence Baron's *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* and the experimental approaches adopted by contemporary directors and writers for the investigation of its aftermath. The changing landscape of cinema and the undulating trajectory of the written word are also some of the ancillary concerns that would contour the discourse.

Keywords: antisemitism, postwar, masculinized

Guilty Able-Bodied Readers and Viewers

Tripti Aggarwal

Student, MA English, Miranda House, University of Delhi

Able-bodied receivers are generally nonchalant and oblivious to the predicaments and struggles of disabled people. Inevitably, sensitization of readers and viewers is the most prominent aim of the representation of disability in literature and cinema. The paper investigates the pedagogical effects of written and film adaption of autobiographical accounts of disabled writers like Helen Keller, Christy Brown, Malini Chib and Jean-Dominique Bauby. The narration of how disabled people meander through daily chores titillates guilt in reader-viewer. Though the guilt produced is an emotion that bears negative valence, however it results in positive outcomes through development of informed perspective of reader-viewers as it reciprocates to emotional and intellectual labour of a disabled writer. Most of the social and political actions of an individual towards disabled people are based upon emotional valence of inciting encounters. Susan L. Feagin's concept

of aesthetics of reading is colluded with Affective theory to explicate the relation between representation of disability and induced fruitful guilt. The guilt is not any oppressing form of obligation instead a sensitizing tool for the insensitive able-bodied world. Keller's Braille language, brown's one toe, Chib's one little finger and Bauby's one blinking eye are strong enough to blow the smeared prejudices upon identity of disabled people.

Finding the Body and the Self in Alice James's Diary

Uddipana Borah

Research Scholar, University of Delhi

This paper attempts to examine Alice James's diary as a text that explores her prolonged illness in terms of its status as a disability. James's diary becomes sort of a gateway to comprehend how the nineteenth century view disability especially concerning women. Victorian concepts of illness and health have begun to be studied with particular interest in how nineteenth century authors, artists, and medical practitioners invested the afflicted body with social meaning. What Michel Foucault sees as boxing away of female body by medical writings and practices, these women who are often called invalids would find their subjectivity in writing. Alice James like thousands of women of her time suffered from various undefined illnesses that left her confined to bed and thus a victim of frequent pity and patronized gaze. But through her writing James defied her status as simply an "invalid" by carving a space of her own- taking control of her own representation. She does so by an amalgamation of narrative techniques that borders on both tragic and comic. In her self-reflexive writing she captures the nuances of her sympathetic visitors by injecting comedy. This paper will attempt to contextualize James's writing from the theoretical framework provided by Lennard Davies that sees narrative tool as having potential of providing disability as an autonomous class. Moreover, it will also use Foucault's study of disability to address issues of subjectivation and autonomy.

Demystifying Disability Myths: (Re) Reading Herman Melville's Moby Dick

Varsha Sundriyal

Student, M.A English, Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi

Herman Melville's ground breaking classic novel *Moby Dick* is considered one of the pioneers for modernism as it sought to deviate from the formerly constructed norms which seemed futile in the environment of post-world war age. Melville's use of allegories to represent the unsaid profoundly allured critics and his deviant style was celebrated. Yet Melville adhered to the former myths constructed around persons with impairments which portrayed individuals overshadowed by their disabilities and stripped of their personalities and

histories which, in turn, depicted them as the mysterious others. The otherness of the individuals with disabilities mystifies them and successfully polarises abled and non-abled individuals. This paper explores the equation of impairment corresponding to otherness and focuses on disability not as an inherent human flaw but as a mythical identity which is the product of the political, social, and historical system. Following the Barthes's emphasis in his work *Mythologies*, this paper focuses on looking beyond the culturally fixed truth and uncovers the mechanics of the stigma associated with the word disability and examines how Melville used disability as a representative of mystical or demonic other. Susan Sontag in *Illness as Metaphor* asserts that disability was perceived as evil in societies bound around religious beliefs. Melville maintains this notion through the character of Ahab who is seen as an unnaturally satanic character "ever since he lost his leg... he's been...savage sometimes." Melville also constructed mental disability as a supernatural phenomenon which gave persons hyper human sensibilities. One such character is Pip who transcends normality in his prophetic visions "The sea has jeeringly kept his finite body up but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths...primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes." Melville exploits the cultural idea of disability and reasserts it through the novel while irrevocably continuing the pattern of myth associated with disability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

How does one arrive at the imperatives of a shared, collective, formidable academic endeavour of a conference? In the case of this conference, it was a fait accompli in many ways. When I was asked to take up this conference in January, I knew it would relate to Disability Studies. From experiencing and encountering disability, ever more visibilized in the social space and dealing with the constructions and discourses around it; from working in various capacities such as teacher in charge of Equal Opportunity Cell, programme officer, NSS, and Nodal Officer in college for reservation policies for persons with disability, to finally witnessing the pronounced change in undergrad syllabus revisions that witness a deliberate accent on Disability Studies; this conference on representations of disability, for me was the conference I would undertake. Deliberating upon and expanding the germ of this idea took team effort and support, and with inputs and ideas from Debosmita Paul and Sangeeta Mittal, finally the intent and purpose of this conference was articulated in the draft concept note. From there, it was all hands on deck.

Which is why this space of acknowledgements is a cherished space, where one can finally and formally acknowledge one's debt of gratitude to all those who have made such endeavours possible. So here, as a team we would like to pay our sincere acknowledgements.

We are grateful to Mr. Prashant Ranjan Verma, Mr. Satish Kapoor, Shri T.D. Dhariyal who supported our initiative and also helped us to get in touch with other community leaders, policy makers, disability rights activists and film makers working with the cause of persons with disability and contributing to general awareness and sensitization regarding disabilities. A heartfelt thanks to Prof. Nishat Zaidi and Prof. Anuradha Ghosh, who although were not part of the conference, helped us immensely in contacting some of the resource persons we have in the conference.

We are thankful also to our fellow participants and paper presenters for their enthusiasm and acumen, and for their willingness to share their research with us.

We are grateful for the unstinting support and encouragement of our principal, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari, who ensured prompt institutional facilitation of administrative processes involved in an endeavour of this scale.

Sincere thanks are due to our conference mentor and chairperson of the college governing body, Prof. Anil Aneja from department of English, Delhi University, for his timely guidance, interventions and careful steering of this conference.

We also thank Prof. Raj Kumar, head of the department of English, Delhi University, for his interest, suggestions and encouragement to us.

Deep gratitude to all our colleagues within the department, who stood by us and collectively shared the responsibilities of the conference. Prem for drawing up the conference schedule, Mona for designing the PPTs, Gitanjali for formulating guidelines, Charu and Subodh for managing photography, Indrani for working at the abstract booklet, Guntasha for managing

promotion on social media and organising student teams, Aditya for rapporteuring teams. Special thanks to Mr Vinod K. Verma for his valuable inputs in shaping the conference. Thanks also to our colleagues from other departments, Amit Pundir, Geetika Jain for tech support, Arun Julka and tech acquisition team for advice on platform acquisition. A special thanks to administrative officers, Dipin Arora and Rajinder Bisht for expediting permissions and approvals.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to my core committee comprising of Dr Debosmita Paul (Co-Convener), Dr Sangeeta Mittal (Organising Secretary), Dr Anupama Jaidev (Treasurer), Ms Nabanita Deka (Co-Treasurer). The team spirit and enthusiasm with which they worked has helped in the successful materializing of this conference.

Last but not least, thanks also to the dedicated student teams who adapted and worked brilliantly as ever in our very altered reality.

On behalf of Team Disability,

Anupama Jaidev, Teacher-in-charge, Department of English

Shilpa Gupta, Convenor, Conference Committee

a



SNAPSHOTS 2019-2020

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

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**THANK
YOU!**

A yellow sticky note with the handwritten text "THANK YOU!" in bold, black, uppercase letters. The text is arranged in two lines: "THANK" on the top line and "YOU!" on the bottom line. A thick, black, curved underline is drawn below the second line of text.

NOTES

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 1: Monday, 15 June 2020

10.00 am-11.30 am

Inauguration

10 AM	10.20 AM	10.30 AM	11.15 AM
<p>Welcome and Setting Up the Perspective: Ms. Shilpa Gupta, Convenor, Conference Committee</p>	<p>Principal's Address: Dr. Sanjeev Tiwari</p>	<p>Keynote Address: Prof. Anil Aneja, Department of English, University of Delhi and Chairman, GB, MAC. Title of Talk: Disability Studies Literature: Perspectives and Prospects</p>	<p>Vote of Thanks Dr. Anupama Jaidev, Chair and Teacher-in-charge Session Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85496957563?pwd=S2hLajdUOFM4RS9CcE5MRkdJb0hVdz09 Meeting ID: 854 9695 7563 Password: 891093</p>

Day 1: Monday, 15 June 2020

12 noon-1.30 pm

PLENARY SESSION:

Negotiating Disabilities

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

TALK 1	TALK 2	CHAIR	SESSION LINK
<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. T D Dhariyal</p> <p>Title of Talk: Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016:</p> <p>Demystifying the Ideology of Ability</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Varun Bhati</p> <p>Title of Talk: From Ekalavya to Arjuna: The Story of My Life</p>	<p>Dr. Charu Arya, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p>	<p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84678325307?pwd=OVduZzJaSUUp2MU5BSjQwSmkwMk44Zz09</p> <p>Meeting ID: 846 7832 5307</p> <p>Password: 001759</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 1: Monday

15 June 2020

4.00 pm-5.30 pm

ACADEMIC SESSION:

Disability in the Textual Space

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85216214902?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85216214902?pwd=NkJzVUhveDRxOW8xTytBdU15UktRZz09)

[pwd=NkJzVUhveDRxOW8xTytBdU15UktRZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85216214902?pwd=NkJzVUhveDRxOW8xTytBdU15UktRZz09)

Meeting ID: 852 1621
4902

Password: 621445

PAPER 1

**Ms. Shilpa BSL,
Assistant
Professor, Maharaja
Agrasen Institute
of Management
Studies**

**Visualizing
Disability through
Graphic Memoirs:
El Deafo and Dumb**

PAPER 2

**Ms. Loveleen Kaur,
Assistant
Professor,
DAV College,
Amritsar**

**Desire and
Disability in
Devdutt Pattanaik's
Jaya - A Retelling
of Mahabharata**

PAPER 3

**Ms. Manisha
Sinha, Ph D
Scholar, , Amity
University**

**Defensive
Othering: The
Stigma of
Blindness and
Its Ramifications
in Planet of the
Blind**

CHAIR

**Dr. Prem Kumari
Srivastava,
Department of
English, Maharaja
Agrasen College**

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 2: Tuesday, 16 June 2020

10 am-11.00 am

PLENARY SESSION:

Inclusive Identity: Perspectives and Narratives

TALK 1	TALK 2	CHAIR	SESSION LINK
<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Manoj Kumar</p> <p>Title of Talk: Akshamta Mein Kshamta Ki Pehchaan: Sahitya Srijan</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Husnain</p> <p>Title of Talk: Dignity, Equality, Inclusion and Empowerment for all Differently Abled Persons</p>	<p>Ms. Shilpa Gupta, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p>	<p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88500133380?pwd=Z2tXMk5WemsyYlBxNkhxZFFubDlVQT09 Meeting ID: 885 0013 3380 Password: 479631</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 2: Tuesday, 16 June 2020

12 noon-1.30 pm

PLENARY SESSION

*Defining Accessibility: Negotiating Space for the
Differently-Abled*

TALK 1	TALK 2	TALK 3	CHAIR
<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Prashant R. Verma</p> <p>Title of Talk: Making Cinema Accessible to the Visually Impaired</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Subhash Chandra Vashishth</p> <p>Title of Talk: Impact of Accessibility on Representation of Disability</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Vikas Dagar</p> <p>Title of Talk: My Long Jump Over All Hurdles</p>	<p>Ms. Mona Sinha, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p> <p>SESSION LINK https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87684680706?pwd=Nlk0VlNrdTdKT3oydWVVOXF4UUEzQT09 Meeting ID: 876 8468 0706 Password: 194223</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 2: Tuesday

16 June 2020

4.00 pm-5.30 pm

ACADEMIC SESSION: Reading

Disability: Analysing Social

Variables of Society

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/868453532>

60?

pwd=WDdYVXZ1dUdtamZIQVVEMzU

3eWRQUT09

Meeting ID: 868 4535

3260

Password: 064721

Chair: Dr. Guntasha Tulsi

PAPER 1

Ms. Preeti M. Gacche, Assistant Professor, Aryabhatta College, University of Delhi

A Sentimental Freak Show: A Disability Studies' Reading of Keller's 'the Story of My Life'

PAPER 2

Ms. Aishwarya Jha, PhD Scholar, Department of English, University of Delhi

Dismantling Disability, Racism and Sexuality in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre (1847)

PAPER 3

Ms. Aanchal Awasthi, Ph D Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Delhi

Trauma, Mental Aberrations and Society in Select Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto

PAPER 4

Dr. Akhilesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, SGTB Khalsa College, University of Delhi

Intersection of Caste and Disability in Premchand's 'Rangbhoomi'

Day 3: Wednesday

17 June 2020

10.00 am-11.30 pm

ACADEMIC SESSION:

Praxis and Poetics of Representation

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

PAPER 1

Mr. Suraj Agarwal,
PhD Scholar,
Department of
English, Delhi
University.

**Reading Disability
in Premchand's
Rangbhumi**

PAPER 2

Ms. Meghal Karki,
MA student,
Jamia Millia
Islamia

**The Disabled
Body and
Sexuality:
Representation
and What Lies
Ahead, the case of
Mom**

PAPER 3

Ms. Sadia Hasan,
Assistant Professor,
JMI, New Delhi

**Sparsh:
Cinematic
Construction in
Sensitivity**

CHAIR

**Dr. Debosmita
Paul, Department
of English,
Maharaja Agrasen
College**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81607779000?pwd=UzZNVjNHMWdMbjNxRU5NSFdnS3lDdz09>
Meeting ID: 816 0777 9000
Password: 574868

Day 3: Wednesday

17 June 2020

12.00 noon-1.30 pm

*ACADEMIC SESSION: Perspectives
of Dis(ability): Dynamics of Body
as Self*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/865539075
31?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86553907531?)

pwd=TW11dUZ5Y1IWbkR2a1FBODIy
d05BQT09

Meeting ID: 865 5390
7531

Password: 644995

Chair: Ms. Nabanita Deka

PAPER 1

PAPER 2

PAPER 3

PAPER 4

**Dr.Guntasha Tulsi,
Assistant Professor,
Maharaja Agrasen
College, University
of Delhi**

**Ms. Tripti
Aggarwal
Miranda House ,
MA Student,
University of Delhi**

**Ms. Uddipana
Bora, Research
Scholar,
University of Delhi**

**Mr. Atul Mishra,
MA Student,
Jamia Millia
Islamia**

**Ideology of
Ability**

**Guilty
Able-Bodied
Readers and
Viewers**

**Finding
the body and the
self in Alice
James's diary**

**Resplendent
Angst of Christy
Brown in the film
My Left foot**

Day 3: Wednesday, 17 June 2020

4.00 pm-5.30 pm

*PLENARY SESSION: Theorizing Dis(ability):
Literary and Cinematic Transactions*

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

TALK 1	TALK 2	CHAIR	SESSION LINK
<p>Invited Speaker: Prof. Ranu Uniyal</p> <p>Title of Talk: Disability: Ability with a Difference</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Ms. Shampa Sen Gupta</p> <p>Title of Talk: Representation Matters: Voice of Disabled People in Indian Cinema</p>	<p>Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p>	<p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81533724555? pwd=cjduMHNNevk1UUZidEZsU0owa0xqUT09 Meeting ID: 81533724555 Password: 227473</p>

Day 4: Thursday, 18 June 2020

10.00 am-11.30 am

PLENARY SESSION: Positioning the Dis(abled) in Popular Culture

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

TALK 1	TALK 2	CHAIR	SESSION LINK
<p>Invited Speaker: Prof. Anita Ghai</p> <p>Title of Talk: Cinema and Disability: A Tool for Understanding Disability</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Ms. Nidhi Goyal</p> <p>Title of Talk: Impact of Popular Culture on Self and Identity of Women with Disability</p>	<p>Dr. Gitanjali Chawla, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p>	<p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85079504188?pwd=N256K1luV0dSM2RwMkJKV3Nzc2ZNdz09</p> <p>Meeting ID: 850 7950 4188</p> <p>Password: 846450</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 4: Thursday

18 June 2020

12.00 noon-1.30 pm

*ACADEMIC SESSION: Reclaiming
Space, Memory and Visibility*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85442631081?>

pwd=d3V5QmNTNkRuYjRCblQ3QXN2V21PQT09

Meeting ID: 854 4263
1081

Password: 423509

Chair: Dr. Charu Arya

PAPER 1

**Dr. Anita
Vaidyanathan
CIE, University of
Delhi**

**Portrayal of
Differently Abled in
Hindi Cinema: A
Transition from
Victimhood to
Empowerment**

PAPER 2

**Ms. Kanika Gupta,
Student, & Mr.
Rituraj
Anand, Assistant
Prof., Shaheed
Rajguru College,
University of Delhi**
**From
Representation to
Re-presentation: A
Study of Disability
in Literature and
Cinema**

PAPER 3

**Ms. Swasti Sharma,
Assistant Professor,
Satyawati College,
University
of Delhi**
**Collective
Memory and the
Holocaust: Disabled
as the Subaltern in
Postwar Literature
and
Film**

PAPER 4

**Ms. Dolly Sharma,
MA Student,
Jesus and Mary
College, University
of Delhi.**

**Need
to Reclaim the
Space: A
Disabled's View of
the Himalayas**

Day 4: Thursday, 18 June 2020

4.00 pm-5.30 pm

PLENARY SESSION: Interface of Sports, Body and Disability

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

TALK 1	TALK 2	CHAIR	SESSION LINK
<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Jagseer Singh Mahar</p> <p>Title of Talk: "How I Won the Race against My Disability?"</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Joginder Saluja</p> <p>Title of Talk: "Powering my way through Disability"</p>	<p>Dr. Anupama Jaidev, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p>	<p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87522723045?pwd=VWVhrK1RSRXJHYUFCaXE3TDdqdFE2QT09 Meeting ID: 875 2272 3045 Password: 718959</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 5: Friday

19 June 2020

10.00 am-11.30 am

*ACADEMIC SESSION: Interface of
Gender, Sexuality and Disability*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82972065128?>

pwd=aWxyQUVxTzdYbmNVK3ILS2p1dHQ5QT09

Meeting ID: 829 7206

5128

Password: 055602

Chair: Mr. Aditya Premdeep

PAPER 1

PAPER 2

PAPER 3

PAPER 4

Ms.Mridula Sharma
Student, Maharaja
Agrasen
College, University
of Delhi

Mr. Faiz Khan,
Student,
Maharaja Agrasen
College, University
of Delhi.

Ms. Jyoti Singh,
Research Scholar,
University of Delhi
Sharma

Ms. Pratima Singh,
Research Scholar,
Banaras Hindu
University

**Sexual Desires of
Disabled
Homosexuals:
Studying Gender
and Geographical
Differences**

**Changing norms
in representation
of Disability in
Indian Cinema**

**Disability and
Gender: Exploring
Representations of
Disabled Women in
Films**

**Life Writing and
Disability:
Exploring Identity
of Women with
Disability**

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 5: Friday, 19 June 2020

12.00 noon-1.30 pm

*ACADEMIC SESSION: Narratives of
Sensitization: Politics of
Spectacle in Literature and
Cinema*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81453438408?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81453438408?pwd=ZFYvZStQbStEcEQwOG9GRW9iamVRdz09)
pwd=ZFYvZStQbStEcEQwOG9GRW9iamVRdz09
Meeting ID: 814 5343 8408
Password: 219149

Chair: Dr. Subodh K Upadhyay

PAPER 1	PAPER 2	PAPER 3	PAPER 4
<p>Ms. Riya Chawla, MA Student, Jamia Millia Islamia University</p> <p>Analyzing Freak politics in American Horror Story: Freak Show</p>	<p>Ms. Shivani Yadav, PhD Scholar, National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh</p> <p>Exploring the Representation of Disability in the Contemporary Hindi Cinema: Some Preliminary Observations</p>	<p>Mr. Aditya Premdeep, Assistant Professor, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi</p> <p>Contesting "Disability": Charlotte Bronte's Bertha Mason and the Making of the "Madness"</p>	<p>Mr. Pinaki Ranjan Chandra and Ms. Disha Ray, Students, St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi</p> <p>Able-ing Disability: How cinema pushes disability sensitization</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 5: Friday, 19 June 2020

4 pm-5.30 pm

PLENARY SESSION

Cinematic Narratives: Problematizing the Differently-abled

TALK 1	TALK 2	TALK 3	CHAIR
<p>Invited Speaker: Prof. Shohini Ghosh</p> <p>Title of Talk: Bombay Cinema and the Disability Closet</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Mr. Satish Kapoor</p> <p>Title of Talk: Portrayal of Disability in Indian Cinema</p>	<p>Invited Speaker: Ms. Mona Sinha</p> <p>Title of Talk: Disability and Spectacle: Case Studies from Reality Television in India</p>	<p>Dr. Sangeeta Mittal, Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College</p> <p>SESSION LINK</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86405239187?pwd=cHdWSjBsNHRzN1pVQ1BCWEFnRy9OZz09</p> <p>Meeting ID: 864 0523 9187</p> <p>Password: 281944</p>

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 6: Saturday, 20 June 2020

10.00 am-11.30 am

*ACADEMIC SESSION: 'Disabled' as
the Other: Embodiment of the
Differently-Abled*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87491881052?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87491881052?pwd=QlhlakZVN0pmSWILcnVmcVIQT VhMzZ09)

[pwd=QlhlakZVN0pmSWILcnVmcVIQT VhMzZ09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87491881052?pwd=QlhlakZVN0pmSWILcnVmcVIQT VhMzZ09)

Meeting ID: 874 9188
1052

Password: 413934

Chair: Dr. Gitanjali Chawla

PAPER 1

Mr. Gowreesh V.S,
M Phil Scholar,
School of Visual
Arts and Aesthetics,
JNU, New Delhi
**Actionable
Disabilities :**
picturing the super-
crips of
contemporary
Hindi cinema

PAPER 2

Ms. Saniya Puri
Sage Publishing,
New Delhi

**Changing norms
in representation
of Disability in
Indian Cinema**

PAPER 3

Ms. Smriti Verma ,
MA Student,
Ramjas College,
University of Delhi
**Disability,
Gender and
Embodiment in Jerry
Pinto's Em and the
Big Hoom**

PAPER 4

Ms. Sakshi Singh,
student, & Rituraj
Anand, Assistant
Professor,
Shaheed Rajguru
College of Applied
Sciences for
Women.
**'Disability' as
an Identity**

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day 6: Saturday, 20 June 2020

12 noon-1.30 pm

ACADEMIC SESSION:

*Demystifying Narratives of
Disability'*

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84810393415?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84810393415?pwd=aGY3SVZnZXBZakRTS0lyWm1FTVFGZz09)

[pwd=aGY3SVZnZXBZakRTS0lyWm1FTVFGZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84810393415?pwd=aGY3SVZnZXBZakRTS0lyWm1FTVFGZz09)

Meeting ID: 848 1039

3415

Password: 896680

Chair: Ms. Indrani Das Gupta

PAPER 1

**Dr. Kamayani
Kumar, Assistant
Professor,
Aryabhatta College,
University of Delhi**

**Disembodied
Selves: Partition
Of India**

PAPER 2

**Ms.Varsha
Sundriyal, MA
Student,
Lady Shri Ram
College, University
of Delhi.**

**Demystifying
Disability Myths:
(Re) Reading
Herman Melville's
Moby Dick**

PAPER 3

**Mr. Shivam Yadav,
M Phil Scholar,
Department of
English, Delhi
University.**

**Staring the
"Other": Spectacle
of the Disabled Body**

PAPER 4

**Ms. Amanpreet Kaur,
M Phil Scholar, and
Mr. Rachit Raj,
Assistant Prof.
Panjab
University and
Sri Aurobindo
College, University of
Delhi**

**Sexuality and
Love –
Representation of
Women with Disability
in Hindi Cinema**

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

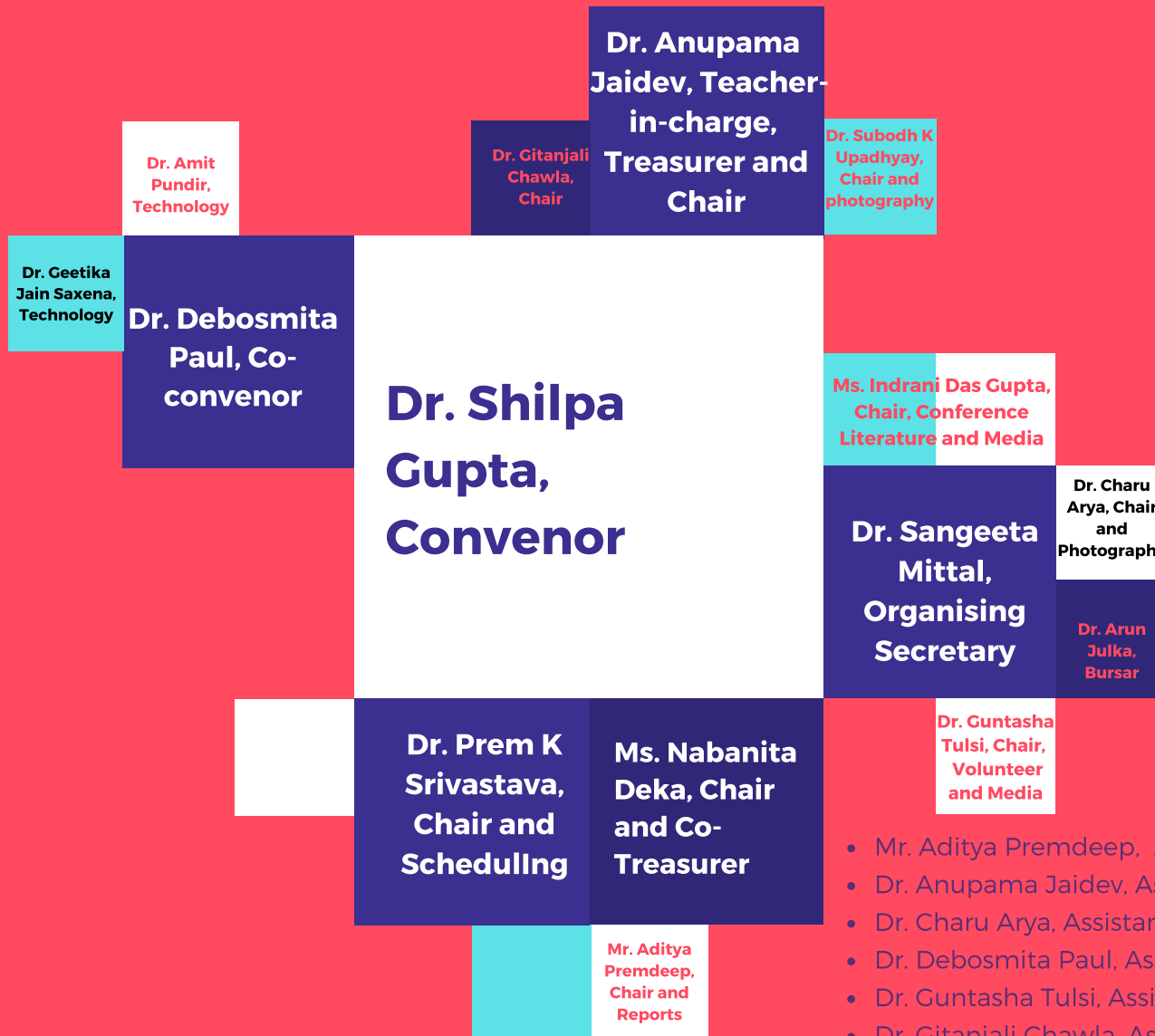
Day 6: Saturday, 20 June 2020

4.00 pm- 5.30 am

Valedictory Session

4.15 PM	4.45 PM	5.15 PM	SESSION LINK
Valedictory Address: Prof. Raj Kumar, Head, Department of English, University of Delhi	Closing remarks Dr. Sangeeta Mittal Chair and Organising Secretary, Conference Committee	Vote of Thanks: Dr. Debosmita Paul, Co-convenor, Conference Committee	https://us02web. zoom.us/j/82526 312981? pwd=V1kvaElUd G9JUG5hT1B2 WlE0V3Y4UT09 Meeting ID: 825 2631 2981 Password: 537104

THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE



- Mr. Aditya Premdeep, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Anupama Jaidev, Associate Professor
- Dr. Charu Arya, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Debosmita Paul, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Guntasha Tulsi, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Gitanjali Chawla, Associate Professor
- Ms. Indrani Das Gupta, Assistant Professor
- Ms. Mona Sinha, Associate Professor
- Ms. Nabanita Deka, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Prem K Srivastava, Associate Professor
- Dr. Sangeeta Mittal, Associate Professor
- Ms. Shilpa Gupta, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Subodh K Upadhyay, Assistant Professor

INAUGURAL SESSION, 15 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Chair: Dr. Anupama Jaidev

Ms. Shilpa Gupta, Convenor, Conference Committee, opened the first session and highlighted the intent behind the conference, which is to engage with specific types of disability without any generalizing or subscribing to pre-available western constructs, but to understand that disability is common to all forms of marginalisation and is a universal phenomenon.

Dr. Sanjeev Tiwari, Principal (Offg.) Maharaja Agrasen College, highlighted achievements made by people from disabled community throughout history and traced the history of literature and cinema featuring disability.

Dr. Anil Aneja, Keynote Speaker, explained disability as subjective, relative and experiential. He spoke of scholars such as Foucault and Derrida whose discourses have dealt with disability studies but have not been sufficiently tapped by disability studies scholars. He discussed significant literary texts - Gulliver's Travels, Jane Eyre, Clear Light of the Day, and A Fine Balance to demonstrate how the disabled are stereotyped in literature. Challenging the definition of disability and margins of disability studies, he emphasized that it should be located and studied in all forms and all sites of its expression. Literature is eminently suited for this objective and the overall purpose ultimately is to achieve equity.

PLENARY SESSION, 15 JUNE 2020, 12 noon: Negotiating Disabilities

Chair: Dr. Charu Arya

Invited Speaker, Shri T.D. Dhariyal, a dedicated activist for the disabled, talked on the topic 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016: Demystifying the Ideology of Ability'. He said that there is a paradigm shift in the very definition of disability. He also stressed how important it is to accept the PWD as the part of human diversity by focusing on their abilities and not the disabilities. This can only happen with **conviction and persistent advocacy**.

Invited Speaker, Para athlete Mr. Varun Singh Bhati speaking on the topic 'From Ekalavya to Arjuna: The Story of my Life' shared his life journey from being an alumni of Maharaja Agrasen College to a gold medallist para athlete of India. His philosophy of serving the purpose of life and learning from failures has helped him to bring laurels to the country.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 15 JUNE 2020, 4 pm: Cinematic Narratives: Problematizing the Differently Abled

Chair: Dr. Prem K Srivastava

Ms Shilpa BSL in her paper 'Visualizing Disability through Graphic Memoirs: El Deafo and Dumb' described the daily problems faced by a deaf child, not only from the society but also from his Family. His use of facial expressions to portray humanly emotions and to communicate what is often taken for granted is extremely poignant. She describes how the characters gain strength in other senses like sight and also visualising El-Deafo as his superhero. The comic does a wonderful job in visiblising the challenges of the child through

word-image combination, range of choice of panels, colours, scale of realism and abstraction as a powerful alternative to depict complex embodied disability experiences.

Ms Loveleen Kaur

Ms Loveleen Kaur, in her paper 'Desire and Disability in Devdutt Pattnik's Jaya- A Retelling of Mahabharata' explained that the characters with impairment are treated differently and are not considered to be good enough to fulfil the desires of the heart, mind, and body in Mahabharata. She discussed how desire invokes curses/boons and brings forth intersectionality between desire and disability in the mythological world.

Ms Manisha Sinha

Ms. Sinha in her paper 'Defensive Othering: The Stigma of Blindness and its Ramifications in *Planet of the Blind*' explains that defensive othering is a response of "devalued" people to an "oppressive identity code" imposed by a domineering group, distancing themselves from their peers to deflect their own stigma. Stephen Kuusisto's first memoir *Planet of the Blind* offers a brutally honest account of his life as a visually impaired man as he lives in an intense feeling of self-loathing while his parents live in denial over their son's disability. The denial of blindness gives rise to his bullying in school, several health issues, such as anorexia and alcoholism but he overcomes his fears pertaining to social judgements and embraces his blindness.

PLENARY SESSION, 16 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Invited Speaker, Mr. Manoj Kumar, teacher and author, questioned and challenged the yardsticks prevailing in society for 'ability' and 'disability' upon which a person is judged. He talked about the vital role played by education in shaping the norms of disability in today's society. He also discussed "Sahitya Seva" and how one should derive inspiration, knowledge and experience from her surroundings.

Invited Speaker, Mr Husnain, shared his inspiring and enriching journey as a wheelchair bound bharatnatyam dancer, marked with exceptional calibre shown by him on the path of to success making his disability a reason for his achievement. He also talked about the social pressure and other challenges he faced throughout this journey.

PLENARY SESSION, 16 JUNE 2020, 12 noon

Invited Speaker, Mr. Prashant Ranjan Verma, while talking about 'Making Cinema Accessible to the Visually Impaired talked about technology' like Audio Description and apps like XL Cinema and their benefits for the visually impaired. He stressed upon the point that it is important for the filmmakers to make movies and other forms of art like cinema more accessible to the disabled community, especially visually impaired, as it is also the part of our culture and traditions.

Invited Speaker, Mr. Subhash Chandra Vashishth, talked about 'Impact of Accessibility on Representation of Disability'. He discussed the various myths associated with disabilities and how accessibility is not just for the disabled but for anyone in need. His main argument was to make things so accessible to the disabled and other groups like the senior citizens, that

the term disability as whole becomes irrelevant. This can be effected by bringing infrastructural changes in buildings or washrooms.

Invited Speaker, Mr. Vikas Dagar, shared his life story 'My Long Jump Over All Hurdles', his struggles and how his never flagging spirit made him a successful para athlete. By reminding us the importance of sports and its help in our overall development, he emphasized that sports is a positive influence in anyone's life and helps to release our stress. He also talked about possible career prospects in sports.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 16 JUNE 2020, 4 pm

Ms. Preeti M. Gacche in her paper 'A Sentimental Freak Show: A disability Studies' Retelling of Hellen Keller's *The Story of My Life*' writes from the point of view of women and disability in India with the example of Hellen Keller negotiating as a woman writer in the 1920s. Disability autobiographies like Hellen Keller's *The Story of My Life* give a voice in the first-person account to the disabled. Despite being a relevant story of disability experience, the author subjected the text to beautification keeping in mind the potential audience. It is a sort of camouflage which emphasises on 'overcoming' and 'achieving' rather than the disability itself.

Aishwarya Jha in 'Dismantling Disability, Racism and Sexuality in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*' examined the intersectional rubric of disability, sexuality and racism. Bertha, a character with mental illness in the text, is villainised rather than sympathised. Under the lens of post-colonial feminism and disability studies, Bertha becomes the disabled female who is a casualty of colonialism and patriarchy. The 'madwoman in the attic' trope treats her like something to be hidden away from the world and a foil to Jane Eyre, depicting her "imprisoned hunger, rebellion, rage". A parallel is drawn between gendered treatment of disability of Bertha and Rochester.

Aanchal Awasthi analyses three short stories by Manto - 'Toba Tek Singh', 'Khol Do' and 'Khuda ki Kasam', exploring mental aberrations in the characters as a response to trauma. She discusses trauma theory; Erving Goffman's stigma theory and how traumatic experiences irrevocably scar the psyche. People in the mental asylum being unaware of the political reality of partition, characters' inability to express in comprehensible language, mental illness and sexual exploitation are some of the aspects used to explore the whole idea of normative and non-normative subject.

Akhilesh Kumar looks at Premchand's 'Rangbhoomi' exploring the intersection of caste, disability and colonial experience rendering the protagonist triply inferior in society. Limits that are put on people with disability concerning the kind of work they can do are rampant in contemporary situation as well. Concept of past life and 'karma', oppressive societal norms and stereotypes like Soordas for a blind man who is supposed to survive only on charity and the role of Gandhian philosophy are discussed in the paper.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 17 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Suraj Aggarwal in his paper 'Reading Disability in Premchand's Rangbhoomi' writes about representation of disabled characters in literature and cinema from ancient times to the

present in media, oral traditions and in art. He contextualises narratives in the ableist critique as cancelling the unique personality and the socio-political dimensions of disability in order to reinforce the idea of normalcy. Soordas is portrayed as extremes either pitiable or as super human. In India, Soordas is the generic name for the blind. Thus in India, disability coexists with other forms of social marginality such as cast, gender and ethnicity combined with the theory of divine retribution of karma.

Ms. Meghal Karki in her paper 'The Disabled Body and Sexuality: Representation and What Lies Ahead, The case of Mom' discussed the intersection of "disability" and "sexuality" that perpetuates the already existing norms. She deliberated upon the modern representations in American sitcoms like 'Mom', where the disabled character Adam is shown not vulnerable or pitiable but someone trying to break away from the stereotypical norms regarding sexuality. Bonnie highlights the issue of cognitive disability and the merit of seeking timely professional help. The narrative, thus, actively resists the insinuations of passivity and deprivation that surround disability and sexuality and seeks to move away from the cloak of silence, exclusion and invisibility. Meghal also questioned the casting of able-bodied actors to represent the disabled.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 17 JUNE 2020, 12 noon

Dr. Guntasha Tulsi in her paper 'Ideology of Ability' examined the concept of 'disability' in the Indian Context as well as in the Government Policy Making, and described how providing equal opportunities to the disabled within the educational and the government sector, translates the term 'disability' into 'this' ability. Further, citing her own personal experiences, the research paper disclosed the measures to be adopted by the teachers while treating a disabled child, and not to consider his/her disability as a disorder.

Ms. Tripti Agarwal writes her paper 'Guilty Able-Bodied Readers and Viewers' from the point of view of both the able-bodied and the disabled. She describes how able-bodied people carry a general belief of pity and sympathy towards the disabled. While on the other hand, the disabled use charm, humor and entertainment to rise in the esteem of the able-bodied. She analyses four autobiographies- 'The story of my Life' by Helen Keller, 'The Diving Bell and the Butterfly' by Jean Dominique, 'My Left Foot' by Christy Brown and 'One Little Finger' by Malini Chib. Through these autobiographies, she explains that though the life and efforts of disabled writers produce guilt inside the abled readers and writers, yet it also amounts to sensitisation.

Ms Uddipona Bora in 'Finding the body and the self in Alice James' Diary' attempts to portray the struggles faced by Alice. She is the sister of novelist Henry James and philosopher and psychologist William James. Her diary depicts her struggles in the field of writing due to her physical disability, which held her confined to bed. She also explained Alice's struggle in terms of Victorian ethos that considered women as child producing machines. We learn Alice's methods of self-representation to fight bodily, social and patriarchal alienation through her presentation.

Mr Atul Mishra in 'Resplendent Angst of Christy Brown in the film *My Left Foot*' states the regular struggles faced by disabled people due to the clichéd ideas professed by our society

and framed by film makers through sympathy and empathy. He talks about Christy's life as portrayed in the movie, his struggles, his heartbreak but how his anger does not stem from self-pity but is as 'normal' as that of any other individual.

PLENARY SESSION, 17 JUNE 2020, 4 pm

Invited Speaker, Prof. Ranu Uniyal in her talk 'Disability: Ability with a Difference' discussed the three dimensions of disability as accepted by the World Health Organization. She also discussed Social Role of Valorization by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger. While sharing inspiring stories of disability, she concluded that inclusion is the aim, the right and the dream.

The second **Invited Speaker Ms. Shampa Sen Gupta's** talk was titled 'Representation Matters: Voice of the disabled people in Indian Cinema'. She explained the importance that cinematic world plays in shaping the perspectives of both abled and disabled audience. Bollywood films still associate disability with the charitable model and not the human rights model of disability. Movies should provide space, voice and career opportunity to the differently abled.

PLENARY SESSION, 18 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Invited Speaker Prof. Anita Ghai shared her views on 'Cinema and Disability: A Tool for Understanding Disability'. Taking examples from movies like *Sparsh*, *Mother India* and *Dosti*, she shed light on how cinema has made disability hyper-visible. She validated the term 'people with disability' as the most appropriate as it keeps the personhood of the individual intact. The desexualisation of the disabled is a depersonalisation which snatches their feeling of normalcy from them. Her personal experiences reinforced how the myths and stereotypes attached to the people with disability in cinema and life constricted their existence.

Invited Speaker Ms. Nidhi Goyal talking about the 'Impact of Popular Culture on Self and Identity of Women with Disability' discussed the societal myths for disabled, and how disabled people are desexualised and dehumanised. In movies like *Barfi* a patient of autism is shown wearing frocks but there are also movies like *Margarita with a Straw* which are breaking stereotypes. In the popular domain, it seems there is no space for normative balance for the disabled. Either they are inspiring or depressed. The ultimate message behind this is that "you can lift a pen even if you are disabled" and never stop telling your stories.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 18 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Dr Anita Vidyanathan gave an analytical presentation on 'Portrayal of Differently Abled in Hindi Cinema: A Transition from Victimhood to Empowerment' bringing various issues to the forefront. She traces the transition in Hindi cinema of so-called disabled characters to differently-abled characters who no longer play the victim card but emerge as empowered, courageous, enthusiastic, zestful individuals with their own goals and pursuit. They are not delineated as stock characters who become the butt of jokes, ridicule or have malicious intent. She also includes female-centric movies in her presentation.

In the paper 'From Representation to Re - presentation: A Study of Disability in Literature', **Ms Kanika Gupta and Mr Rituraj Anand** stressed on breaking all stereotypes from the

past and broadening the horizon of cultural mind set of people. They explained the theory of Disability Literature using four key aspects - the social model, the normate theory, medical or mental issue and stigma theory. By citing examples of Manthra (Ramayana), Shakuni (Mahabharata) and Bijjaldev (Bahubali), they stated that disability is equated with negativity and such characters with disabilities were considered outcast, malicious and evil stalking beasts who would devour the society. These people usually played second fiddle or sidekicks to the main characters. The paper aimed to look at disabled people through a different lens and create acceptance and awareness for them in literature and cinema.

Ms Swasti Sharma made an exposition about the contemporary Holocaust cinema and literature in her paper 'Collective Memory and the Holocaust: Disabled as the Subaltern in Post-war Literature and Film'. She explored various narratives that capture the trauma of trench life to examine the representation of disabled men and women in post war popular literature. She used anecdotes from the lived experience of the survivors and veterans who were mutilated and rendered shell-shocked by the war; thus, focusing on the lack of recognition of impaired people as victims of the Holocaust.

PLENARY SESSION, 18 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Invited Speaker Mr Jagseer Singh Mahar began his talk "How I won the Race against my Disability?" by telling us about the terrible accident at the age of 7-8 which made him give up one of his hand for it was burnt beyond repair. He described his struggles, the fear and shame he faced while entering his own village, due to all kinds of mockery. He talked about his journey in the field of sports, earning gold for India and his life changing event in Ireland. He talked about the ups and downs in his path which lead him to become an Income Tax Inspector.

Invited Speaker Mr. Joginder Singh Saluja started the discussion by saying that he himself was a student of Delhi University and remembered how this university had enhanced his personality. He told us that he had to go through 14 surgeries at very early age due to polio, which made him think of even committing suicide. But then through some encouragement he was able to put all his energy in gyming. This one step motivated him to do more in field of fitness and sports, creating a bright future for him. He said that he always wanted to do something for the society and working as motivational counsellor for the disabled community in Delhi university itself was one of the efforts in this direction. He also made us aware about his initiative of 'fitness langar' which aimed at creating an inclusive environment between disabled people and abled people through gyming.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 19 JUNE 2020, 10 am

Dr Sadia Hasan's paper "Sparsh: Cinematic Construction in Sensitivity" reflects that Hindi cinema has a variegated approach to portrayal of disability. She discussed how disability becomes a defining feature. She shows that there is a considerable amount of change in the attitude of filmmakers through deep analysis of the movie 'Sparsh' which deviates from the stereotypes created by the society and sensitively handles the issue of disability.

Mr. Faiz Khan in his paper “Changing Norms in Representation of Disability in Indian Cinema” presented how cinema plays a significant role in making and breaking of myths that persist in society. He made a distinction between Commercial films and Independent films. Bollywood has come a long way by showing disabled characters as more self-reliant individuals full of self-belief, agency and optimism. He hopes that Hindi cinema will create more sensitized films for both abled and disabled community in the near future.

Ms. Jyoti Singh in her paper titled “Gender and Disability: Exploring Representations of Disabled Women in Films” discusses how women are socially invisible, excluded and are frequently represented as figures of otherness. She states the example of movies like ‘Margarita with a Straw’ and ‘The Shape of Water’ which reposition the women in the society and are a turning point in the field of cinema. The protagonist in ‘The Shape of Water’ suffers from Cerebral Palsy but is not shown like a typical damsel in distress.

The last speaker **Ms Pratima Singh** stressed on gender approach to disability in her paper ‘Life writing and Disability: Exploring Identity of Women with Disability’. She explained how disabled women are doubly marginalized in our society by taking in account the experiences of two autobiographies- ‘No Looking Back’ by Shivani Gupta and ‘One little finger’ by Malini Chib. The most significant argument was that how mainstream feminist movement lacked in including the voices, struggles, and issues of gender bias that disabled women underwent for many decades.

ACADEMIC SESSION, 19 JUNE 2020, 12 noon: Narratives of sensitization: Politics of Spectacle in Literature and Cinema

Chair: Dr. Subodh Kumar

Ms. Riya Chawla in her paper ‘Analyzing Freak Politics in American Horror Story: Freak Show’ explained how the Idea of disability’ has been portrayed in American Horror Story: Freak Show. The show started gaining popularity in 19th Century. Season 4 specifically is a pack of tall political agenda. Characters are portrayed horrifically. Such shows depicting disabled bodies or mentally disabled characters made American culture to fetishize different people.

Ms. Shivani Yadav in her paper ‘Exploring the Representation of Disability in the Contemporary Hindi Cinema: Some Preliminary Observations’ discussed how Cinema has played a crucial role in teaching Human Rights to the society. Bollywood has somewhere discussed disability in a nuanced way. The journey of disabled categories in Indian cinema can be categorized in three sections: before 1990s, 1990-2005 and 2005- till present.

Mr. Aditya Premdeep while talking about ‘Contesting Disability: Charlotte Bronte's Bertha Mason and making of the Madness’ discussed the portrayal of madness in Jane Eyre with reference to the confinement of Bertha Mason. He also talks about the history of madness and theories of Michel Foucault. He concluded that the idea of madness is a dynamic phenomenon and therefore it has been highly contested from the past.

Mr. Pinaki Ranjan Chandra and Ms. Disha Ray in their paper on ‘Able-ing Disability: How Cinema Pushes Disability Sensitization’ talked about how Hollywood movies promote

the notion of sympathy over empathy for disabled while on the contrary, comics have established identity creation and showed that differently abled could be different yet normal. With their differently abled superheroes, they encourage the notion that no matter who or how one is, he has a hero within him.

PLENARY SESSION, 19 JUNE 2020, 4 pm

Prof. Shohini Ghosh in her paper titled *Bombay Cinema and the Disability Closet* brought out complex transactions involved in creation and consumption of the cinematic body. Added to that are the polysemy of artistic texts which when viewed or heard by differently abled enter the slippery ground of heteronormativity, ableism and perfect bodies. She contextualised some iconic Bollywood movies with respect to disability closet, vitality over morality, extra-sensory powers attributed to disabled, and justice and revenge.

Mr. Satish Kapoor also shared his personal experiences and interaction with the specially-abled and how it helped him to evolve as a human being and as a filmmaker. He highlighted the quintessential stereotypical portrayal of disability in Indian cinema with the help of many references of movies like “Sparsh”, “Koshish”, “Anjali” and many more. He further mentioned about his involvement in Film Festivals, predominantly endeavoring to spread awareness among the common masses about the deep entrenched prejudices against the disabled. His presentation brought out the theorizations through praxis as he worked his way through many biases in his attempt to curate film festivals.

Ms. Mona Sinha in her presentation of **Disability and Spectacle: Case Studies from Reality Television in India**, expressed her views on how the reality television in India is an arena of visual, cultural and identity politics. Incorporating the differently abled in this politics produces many tropes, images and notions which provide exposure, appreciation and inspiration on the one hand, but strategies of emotional, dramatic and ableist manipulations on the other. She also added several case studies of disabled participants on reality television platforms, for instance, Diwakar Sharma on singing show *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* 2006, Nupur Chauhan on *KBC* and many more.