

CONFERENCE

PROGRAMME



ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA
DE ESTUDIOS INTERDISCIPLINARIOS
SOBRE LA INDIA

*With heartfelt thanks to all the people who have made this conference possible:
AEEII Executive Board, UB administration staff, colleagues and students, and
members, delegates and all the collaborating entities and people.*



UNIVERSITAT DE
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Departament
d'Estudis
Asiàtics i
Turqueses



CASA ASIA

9TH AEEII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

FRACTURED BODIES, BODY HEALINGS
CRISIS AND RESTORATION NARRATIVES AND PRACTICES IN THE
SOUTH CONTINENT AND ITS DIASPORAS

An International AEEII Conference

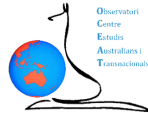
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Asociación Española de Estudios Interdisciplinarios sobre la India

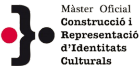
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Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació
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Masculinidades vulnerables y
normatividad
(PID2022-140375NB-I00)



9th AEEII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

FRACTURED BODIES, BODY HEALINGS: CRISIS AND RESTORATION NARRATIVES AND PRACTICES IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND ITS DIASPORAS

CUERPOS HERIDOS, CUERPOS QUE SANAN: RELATOS Y PRÁCTICAS DE CRISIS Y RESTAURACIÓN EN EL SUBCONTINENTE Y SUS DIÁSPORAS

Barcelona, 26-28 November 2025

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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This Conference is dedicated, in loving memory, to

Professor Doireann MacDermott (1923-2024)

A homage session will be celebrated on Wednesday, 26, at the
Aula Magna of the Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació
Universitat de Barcelona

With the participation of
Dr. Sue Ballyn
Dr. Kathleen Firth
Prof. Jacqueline Hurltley
(Universitat de Barcelona)

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY 26

10:00-11:00	Registration 1st Floor Claustre de Lletres
11:00-11:30	Welcome Coffee & Exhibition 1st Floor Claustre de Lletres
11:30-12:30	Featured Session: Elena Sierra Aula Joan Maragall
12:30-13:30	Visit of Historic Building (including Clock Tower)
13:30	Cava Reception Faculty Garden (Jardí Aribau)
15:30-16:00	Conference Opening Aula Magna
16:00-16:45	Opening Plenary Lecture: Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry Aula Magna
16:45 -17:30	Featured Session: A Homage to Professor MacDermott Aula Magna
17:30-18:00	Coffee Break 1st Floor Claustre de Lletres
18.00-19:30	Parallel Sessions 1 Sala de Graus/Sala de Professorat
21:00	Conference Dinner Restaurant La Lluna

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY 27

9:00-10:30	Parallel Sessions 2 Sala de Graus/Sala de Professorat
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break Sala de Professorat
11:00-11:45	Plenary Lecture: Esther Pujolràs-Noguer Aula Joan Maragall
11:45-13:15	Parallel Sessions 3 Sala de Graus/Sala de Professorat
13:15-14:45	Lunch Break
14:45-15:30	Plenary Lecture: Teresa Segura-Garcia Aula Joan Maragall
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break Aula Joan Maragall (Corridor)
16:00-16:45	Featured Session: A Conversation with Haritha Savithri Aula Joan Maragall
16:45	Book Presentations Aula Joan Maragall
17:45	Guided Tour: A Walk through Barcino Plaça Villa de Madrid

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

FRIDAY 28

9:00-10:30	Parallel Sessions 4 Sala de Graus/Sala de Professorat
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break Sala Professorat
11:00-12:00	Round Table Aula Joan Maragall
12:00-13:30	Parallel Sessions 5 Sala de Graus/Sala de Professorat
13:30-15:00	Lunch Break
15:00-15:45	Closing Plenary Lecture: Brototi Roy Aula Capella
15:45-16:15	Poets' Corner Aula Capella
16:15-16:45	Farewell Coffee Ground Floor, Claustre de Lletres
16:45-17:00	Closing Remarks & Farewell Aula Capella
17:00-17:45	Odissi Dance Workshop Aula Capella
18:00	AEEII Assembly Aula Joan Maragall

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 26

10:00–11:00 Registration – First Floor, Claustre de lletres

11:00–11:30 Welcome coffee and exhibition opening – First floor, Claustre de lletres

Exhibition: “Dones de l’Índia”,
Photographies by **Lluís Vilaró**

11:30–12:30 Featured Session – Sala Joan Maragall

Maria Elena Sierra, “¿Qué es el sánscrito? Tradición y actualidad: El descubrimiento del sánscrito en occidente”
Chair: **Dolores Herrero Granado**, AEEII President

12.30-13.30 Visit of Historic Building (Including Clock Tower)

13:30 Cava Reception in the Faculty Garden – Jardí Aribau

15:30–16:00 Conference Opening – Aula Magna

Dr. Ana Moya Gutiérrez
Vice-Dean, Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació, UB

Dr. Sue Ballyn
Founder of the Observatory: Centre for Australian and Transnational Studies, OCEAT

Prof. Dolores Herrero Granado
AEEII President

Dr. Gabriela Gavagnin Capoggiani
Head of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and of English Studies, UB

Dr. Isabel Alonso Breto
OCEAT Vice-Director and Conference Convener

Dr. Dolores Ortega Arévalo
OCEAT Secretary and Conference Convener

16:00–16:45 Opening Plenary Lecture – Aula Magna

Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry, “Conflict and Resilience: Navigating Crisis through Coexistence”
Chair: **Dolores Ortega Arévalo**

16:45–17:30 Featured Session – Aula Magna

“A Homage to Professor Doireann MacDermott”, with **Sue Ballyn**, **Kathleen Firth** and **Jacqueline Hurlley** (Universitat de Barcelona)
Chair: **Isabel Alonso Breto**

17:30–18:00 Coffee – First floor, Claustre de lletres

18:00–19:30 Parallel Sessions 1

Panel 1a - Sala de Graus

HEALING, CARE AND BIOPOLITICS

Chair: **Maurice O’Connor**

Antonia Navarro-Tejero (Universidad de Córdoba),
“Biopolitics and Power in Kishwar Desai’s *Origins of Love*”

Juan Miguel Zarandona (Universidad de Valladolid),
“I also Had a Farm in Africa, According to a Short Story by Abdulrazak Gurnah: Diaspora, Crisis, Exile and the Need for Healing”

Itisha Giri (Universidad Complutense de Madrid),
“An Ethics of Care in *Hospital* by Sanya Rushdi”

Panel 1b – Sala de Professorat

SRI LANKAN F(R)ICTIONS AND AFFECT

Chair: **Isabel Alonso Breto**

Núria Andrés Curto (Universitat de Barcelona), “Socialised Affects: Subversion and Repression in Karen Roberts’ *The Flower Boy* (1999)”

Aina Díaz (Universitat de Lleida), “‘I don’t want to suffer. Why should that be my role?’: Women in Conflict and their Role in the Sri Lankan Civil War in V. V. Ganeshanathan’s *Brotherless Night*”

Dolores Herrero Granado (Universidad de Zaragoza), “Chandani Lokuge’s *If the Moon Smiled*: The Burden of Womanhood in No-Woman’s Land”

21:00 Conference Dinner – Restaurant La Lluna

THURSDAY 27

9:00–10:30 Parallel Sessions 2

Panel 2a – Sala de Graus

PARTITION MEMORIES

Chair: **Dolors Ortega Arévalo**

Alejandra Moreno Álvarez (Universidad de Oviedo), “Bibliotherapy and Art Therapy: The Partition of India and the Mexican Revolution”

Juan Ignacio Oliva (Universidad de La Laguna/GIECO-Franklin-UAH/Ratnakara), “Fractured Bodies & Healing Processes in Poetic Diasporic Revisions of the 1947 Partition”

Maurice O'Connor (Universidad de Cádiz), “Archipelagic Memory: The Padma River as Mode of Reading the Partition of Bengal”

Panel 2b – Sala de Professorat

FORMS OF FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

Chair: **Cristina Arbués Caballé**

Regiane Corrêa de Oliveira Ramos (Universidade Estadual de Mato Grosso do Sul), “Healing through Literacy: Collective Empowerment in ‘Writing with Fire’”

Roger García Coll (Laija Foundation), “Mind the Social Gap: Women’s Status and Narrative Strategies Against Patriarchal Violence in Tamil Nadu”

F. Berna Uysal (Hacettepe University/Türkiye), “Between Wound and Word: Affect as the Passage from Collapsing Body to Resistant Body in *When I Hit You: Or, The Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*”

10:30–11:00 Coffee – Sala de Professorat

11:00–11:45 Plenary Lecture – Aula Joan Maragall

Esther Pujolràs-Noguer, “‘Water obscures, blurs, and dilutes all boundaries’: Thalassentric Thinking and Offshore Dissent in Vandana Singh’s ‘Mother Ocean’”
Chair: **Felicity Hand**

11:45–13.15 Parallel Sessions 3

Panel 3a – Sala de Graus

SALMAN RUSHDIE AND PAKISTANI ECHOES

Chair: **Sonia Haiduc**

Saima Rafique (Independent scholar), “Understanding Muslim Feminine Identity in Deputy Nazir Ahmed’s *Mirat-ul Uroos*”

Maricel Oró-Piqueras and **Núria Mina-Riera** (Universitat de Lleida), “Cycles of Decline and Healing: Agelessness as Both a Curse and an Empowerment Tool in Salman Rushdie’s *Victory City* (2023)”

Sonia Haiduc (Universitat de Barcelona), “I am that comma: Strategies of Melodrama as Aesthetic Articulation in Salman Rushdie’s *East, West* (1994)”

Panel 3b – Sala de Professorat

THE LARGER INDIAN OCEAN

Chair: **Juan Zarandona**

Claudia Silva (UNED), “Women’s bodies shaped by the ephemeral practice of *Kolams*”

Jorge Ruano (Independent scholar), “Deterritorializing the Border in *Uhuru Street*: Reading the Work of Vassanji through the Lenses of Deleuze and Anzaldúa”

Anuradha Acharjee (Universidade de Vigo), “Fractured Subjectivities and Spatial Negotiation: Indian Female Identity in *Never Have I Ever*”

13:15- 14:45 Lunch Break

14:45–15:30 Plenary Lecture – Aula Joan Maragall

Teresa Segura-Garcia, “Rethinking the Body in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: Beyond Boundaries, Beyond Binaries”
Chair: **Isabel Alonso Breto**

15:30–16:00 Coffee – Aula Joan Maragall (Corridor)

16:00–16:45 Featured Session – Aula Joan Maragall

“**Haritha Savithri** in Conversation with Bill Phillips”
Chair **Bill Phillips**

16:45–17:15 Book Presentations – Aula Joan Maragall

Shihan De Silva Jayasuriya, *Global Portuguese: Literary, Historical and Anthropological Approaches*

Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry, *Remembering the Past: Critical Perspectives on the Anti-Sikh Violence of 1984*

Chair: **Jorge Diego**

17.45

Guided Tour: “A Walk through Barcino” – Pça. Villa de Madrid

FRIDAY 28

9:00–10:30 Parallel Sessions 4

Panel 4a – Sala de Graus
DECAY AND RESTORATION
Chair: **Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru**

Sreya Chatterjee (University of Leeds), “Of Food and Faith: Religion, Decay and Restoration in 21st-century India”

Juan Sanz Amor (Universidad de Valladolid), “*Dhrupad*: decadencia, revival y actualidad”

Jorge Diego Sánchez (Universidad de Salamanca), “‘And everything just stopped’: Post Activism, Slowness and the Indian Ocean in Tishani Doshi’s Essays”

Panel 4b – Sala de Professorat
HEALING POETICS
Chair: **Juan Ignacio Oliva**

Gemma Gorga (Universitat de Barcelona), “Bombay, entre el colapso y la sanación: *Kala Ghoda*, de Arun Kolatkar (2004)”

Greta Perletti (Università di Trento), “Vital Matter and Colonial Resistance: More-than-Human Agency in Early Indian Poetry in English”

Esther Sánchez-Pardo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), “Empathy in Decline: Confronting Violence across Poetry and the Arts in Selected Works by Imtiaz Dharker and Bharti Kher”

10:30–11:00 Coffee – Sala de Professorat

11:00–12:00 Round Table – Aula Joan Maragall

“Violence and Resistance Initiatives in Indoceanic Narratives from Multiple Perspectives” With **Jorge Diego Sánchez**, **Juan Ignacio Oliva**, **Maurice O’Connor** (Ratkanara)
Chair: **Esther Jiménez Rodríguez** and **Aina Díaz Llabrés** (Ratnakara)

12:00–13:30 Parallel Sessions 5

Panel 5a – Sala de Graus
AMITAV GHOSH’S ECOLOGIES
Chair: **Alejandra Moreno Álvarez**

Poonam Sharma (University of Leeds), “Planetary Histories and the More-than-Human in South Asian Historical Fiction”

Esther Jiménez Rodríguez (Universitat de Lleida), “Ecodisasters as Transformative Agents in the Ecological Crisis in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide and Gun Island*”

Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru (University of Bucharest), “Body Healing and Fluid Reinventions of the Self: Routes of Decolonization in Nathacha Appanah’s *Les rochers de poudre d’or* and Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*”

Panel 5b – Sala de Professorat
POSTHUMAN AND ECOFEMINISMS
Chair: **Maria Grau Perejoan**

Claudia Martori (Universitat de Barcelona), “The Presence of the Posthuman in Ratheesh Balakrishnan Poduval’s Film *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* (2019)”

Bianca Cherechés (Universidad de Zaragoza), “Ecofeminist Memory, Caste, and Technological Heritage in *The Immortal King Rao*”

Raisa Rafaela Serrano Muñoz (Universidad de Córdoba), “A Restorative Eco-Feminist Future in the Visual Healing Narratives of Manjot Kaur’s Work”

13:30–15:00 Lunch Break

15:00–15:45 Closing Plenary Lecture – Aula Capella

Brototi Roy, “Artistic Expressions of Socio-environmental Justice in South Asia”
Chair: **Antonia Navarro-Tejero**, Former President and Founder of AEII

15:45–16:15 Poets’ Corner – Aula Capella

16:15–16:45 Farewell Coffee – Ground Floor, Claustre de Lletres

16:45 – 17:00 Closing Remarks – Aula Capella

17:00 – 17.45 Odissi Workshop – Aula Capella

18:00 AEII Assembly – Aula Joan Maragall

Conflict and Resilience: Navigating Crisis through Coexistence

Hope is an abstract idea; it is also detrimental as it emerges at time of conflict. Hope and conflict go hand in hand. Are these human emotions? Do we need to talk about emotions? Does expressing emotions suggest weakness or is it strength? In an attempt to answer these questions, we realise that addressing emotions allows one to navigate through crisis. How do we coexist in a world with so much diversity—so many different cultures, customs, trends, and lifestyles? Differences exist alongside this diversity, including those related to identities, faiths, castes, races, genders, and species (flora and fauna). How do we negotiate these differences and navigate times of conflict and crisis? Is there an answer to this? Can coexistence allow possibility of negotiation?

In this presentation, I will share incidences, stories, and cases raising concern related to times of conflict addressing crisis of existence. These are also stories of resilience. They discuss people who challenged, resisted and survived these times. These stories are in fact stories of strength. The pandemic's aftereffects are still being felt around the world, along with anti-war and human rights protests (such as the George Floyd movement, women's protests in Iran, and anti-war protests in Russia, America, the UK, Australia) as well as environmental crises like draught, fires, flooding, and famines. On the one hand, there are the politically initiated wars; on the other there is the fury of the nature that humans have invited on themselves. A lot is lost but a lot can be protected. How? Is coexistence the answer? The paper will contest the definition of 'development' and concentrate on the cross-disciplinary ideas of coexistence, offering relational ways or thinking, taking a pause and returning to earlier times when civilisation was in the making; and then returning to the present to seek the traces of thoughtful practices from indigenous knowledge systems that care for its fellow beings.

Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry is an Associate Professor at Department for English Studies at Central University of Gujarat, Vadodhara. She was recognised as an Inspired Teacher for The President of India's In-residence Program at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi in June 2015. She has received several awards for her outstanding dedication and contributions to social welfare: on Women's Day 2024 by Aryavart-The Life Saviours, an Ahmedabad based NGO, and Women Achiever's Award, 2025 by WSCC, Gujarat Chapter. She was also acknowledged by the Ahmedabad Book Club in recognition of her outstanding contribution to literature in 2024-2025. Her poetry has been published in several journals and anthologies. Her latest collection is entitled *Poems on the Anti-Sikh Violence of 1984: Survivors of Chaurasi* (2025). As an academic, Ishmeet has been working on literatures of margins and minorities with major contributions to the study of 1984 anti-Sikh massacres, having authored among others the substantial *Black November: Writings on Anti-Sikh Massacres of 1984 and the Aftermath* (2019). She is also the author of *Patrick White: Critical Issues* (2014). She has also been participating in various translation projects. Her recent works are on Cyberfeminism and menstrual studies.

PLENARY SPEAKERS

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

“Water Obscures, Blurs, and Dilutes all Boundaries:” Thalassentric Thinking and Offshore Dissent in Vandana Singh’s “Mother Ocean”

Vandana Singh’s “Mother Ocean” forms part of a collection of speculative fiction on oceans commissioned by XPrize in order to picture “a future when technology has helped unlock the secrets of the ocean”. In it, Paro, an Indian scientist, follows a blue whale and swims alongside him, in the hope of achieving a connection with the animal which will eventually allow her to literally communicate with him via soundwaves. As a literary trope, the whale has been a determining element in unveiling “terracentric thinking” (Mohan 2019) as the backbone of a colonial capitalist discourse that is sexist, racist and classist. In its configuration as both mammal and sea creature, the whale fosters a thalassentric way of thinking that re-conceptualizes the category “human” by pondering on and questioning the ethical and ontological borders that separate the “human” from the “non-human”. Inasmuch as Vandana Singh’s “Mother Ocean” narrates the relationship of Paro, a human animal, with a blue whale, it should be placed within a literary tradition that goes back to the biblical Jonah and the Whale story and which features classics such as Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*. However, the aim of my presentation is to somehow transcend the human-whale focus of the story and instead suggest that “Mother Ocean” be allocated in the literary tradition of what I call “offshore dissent”. Taking a cue from Paul Gilroy’s “offshore humanism” (Gilroy 2018) and his identification of the sea as a site for ethical and ecological engagement, I argue that “offshore dissent” configures an aquatic imaginary wherein knowledge is created out of acts of epistemic disobedience (Mignolo 2009, 2011, 2020). This is a dissent formulated upon the entanglement of politics with ecology in which acts of empowerment are concomitant with the inclusion of non-human actants as fully-fledged narrative agents. Offshore dissent is formally performed in the sea and sanctioned by the sea. Wider in scope, “offshore dissent” invites a reading of stories about whales and humans as part of a genealogy of resilience operating at sea level that includes rebellions ranging from slave revolts—Martin Delany’s *Blake* and Herman Melville’s *Benito Cereno* to sailors’ mutinies—Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*—and, as in the case of Vandana Singh’s “Mother Ocean”, scientists’ insurgency. The emaciated body of the whale Paro saves from death resonates with the drowned body of her grandmother and with the bodies of those lost to the sea in the face of enslavement. As the recipient of multiple stories of displacement, the ocean emerges as a powerful narrative agent that unveils, in the words of Isabel Hofmeyr, the world “below the waterline” (Hofmeyr 2022). And since, as the story reveals, “water obscures, blurs, and dilutes all boundaries”, at another interrelated level, “Mother Ocean” creates a mnemonic network that perpetuates the Indian Ocean as the propeller of a thalassentric consciousness that surpasses terracentric national boundaries.

Esther Pujolràs-Noguer is a Serra-Hünter Fellow at the Universitat de Lleida. She teaches postcolonial literature and culture, gender studies and poetry. She has published widely on Indian Ocean writers especially 2021 Nobel prize winner Abdulrazak Gurnah and twice Giller prize winner, M.G.Vassanji in *Clio*, *Research in African Literatures*, *Critique*, *Interventions* and *PLMA* among other prestigious journals. She has co-authored with Felicity Hand a volume on Indian Ocean Life Writing entitled *Mourning and Resilience in Indian Ocean Life Writing* (2024) published by Palgrave MacMillan. She is the director of the research group Ratnakara. Indian Ocean Literatures and Cultures and chief investigator of the group’s current financed project, *Aquatic Imaginaries: Re-charting Indoceanic and Atlantic Literary Productions* (Ref. PID2022-141118NB-I00). She is Associate Editor of *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* since 2024 and a reviewer for the journal of the AEEL, *Indialogs*. Esther has run several creative writing workshops in Uganda and Mauritius and is also a published poet having won prizes for her work in both English and Catalan.

BROTOTI ROY (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Artistic Expressions of Socio-Environmental Justice in South Asia

The current polycrisis we are witnessing in social, environmental and economic spheres is also coupled with a crisis of imagination. Banners, slogans, songs, poems and pamphlets deployed in movements for socio-environmental struggles highlight these injustices artistically and provide a healing scope of re-imagining a world based on equity and justice. They are a source of hope and inspiration.

This plenary talk will discuss the different artistic expressions of socio environmental justice movements from South Asia documented in the *Global Atlas of Environmental Justice Atlas* (EJAtlas). It will further analyze the different narratives that stem from the different iconographies used in the movements. The EJAtlas is the largest depository of movements documenting struggles across ten main categories of socio-environmental conflicts. The systematic mapping of 572 cases from Afghanistan (9), Bangladesh (41), Bhutan (2), India (415), Maldives (6), Nepal (22), Pakistan (30) and Sri Lanka (47) is the basis of the talk, bringing in differences and similarities. Finally, the talk will provide some directions on how artistic expressions of struggles can be mobilized for building solidarities across movements which despite their differences in geographies and commodities articulate for a socio-ecologically just future.

Brototi Roy is a postdoctoral researcher based at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Autonomous University of Barcelona (ICTA-UAB). She is a political ecologist who was awarded her doctorate from ICTA-UAB working with the EJAtlas database focusing on socio-environmental justice movements against coal in India. Her current research focus continues to be socio-ecological justice and equity, looking at unequal exchange, degrowth, decoloniality and delinking.

TERESA SEGURA-GARCIA (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Rethinking the Body in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: Beyond Boundaries, Beyond Binaries

The talk critically re-examines the history of the body in colonial and postcolonial India, challenging the binary frameworks that have long shaped scholarly understandings. It explores how bodies were imagined, shaped, and controlled across the Indian subcontinent in the modern period, not only through the well-known dynamics of colonial rule but also through often less explored transimperial and global circulations of bodily knowledge and practices.

Focusing on the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, class, caste, and religion, the talk highlights how embodied categories – such as coloniser and colonised, respectable and deviant, confined and mobile – were never fixed. Instead, they reveal themselves as contingent constructs shaped by shifting cultural and political contexts. In moving beyond culturally essentialist and Western-centric narratives, the talk calls for a more intersectional, globally attuned understanding of the body in the Indian subcontinent.

Teresa Segura-Garcia is a Tenure-track Professor of Modern South Asian History at the Department of Humanities at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Barcelona. Her research on nineteenth and twentieth-century India explores several often overlapping topics: the global links of the Indian princely states, gender and masculinity, the history of the body, and visual culture. She holds a PhD in History from the University of Cambridge.

She has been a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in Delhi, with an ICAS:MP fellowship awarded by the M. S. Merian – R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies. She has also held two postdoctoral fellowships at Universitat Pompeu Fabra: the Juan de la Cierva-Formación Fellowship and the Juan de la Cierva-Incorporación Fellowship, by the Government of Spain's State Research Agency. She has held visiting fellowships at Brown University's Department of History (awarded by the Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad) and at the American University of Beirut (with an Erasmus+ International Staff Mobility Grant). Her publications include the edited volumes *Bodies beyond binaries in colonial and postcolonial Asia*, edited by Kate Imy, Teresa Segura-Garcia, Elena Valdameri, and Erica Wald (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2024) and *Unexpected voices in imperial parliaments*, edited by Josep M. Fradera, José María Portillo, and Teresa Segura-Garcia (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

A Homage to Professor Doireann MacDermott

SUE BALLYN is the Founder of the Observatory: Centre for Australian and Transnational Studies at the University of Barcelona from where she graduated. Both her MA thesis and her doctoral dissertation won Faculty prizes, and her PhD thesis on Australian Poetry was the first one on Australian Literature in Spain. She joined the English and German Philology Department on graduation 1982 and remained at the university ever since. In 1990 she founded the Australian Studies Program, which was recognised as an official University of Barcelona Observatory – Studies Centre, OCEAT, in 2000. It is the only Australian Studies Centre in Spain and one of the most active in Europe: For years, Dr. Ballyn organized biannual conferences in collaboration with Australian universities, which made the CEAT a hub of research, knowledge transference and academic relations.

Throughout her long academic career, her research kept focussing on Australian Studies. She worked closely with the Female Convicts Research Centre, Tasmania, on the history of convicts transported to Australia, in particular Spanish, Portuguese, Hispanics and Sephardim. She has published and lectured widely in the area. Besides editing other collections, in 2018 she authored the monography *¿Quién fue Adelaide Thoreza? Una convicta española en Australia colonial (1808-1877)* together with Professor Lucy Frost.

She was also involved in the Ageing Studies group DEDAL-LIT at Lleida University, and in other research ventures, such as the ministry funded Project, run out of the OCEAT and headed by Dr Bill Phillips, on Postcolonial Crime Fiction (POCRIF). More recently, while she keeps doing research in the area of Convict Studies, she has been part of the IAFOR global platform as an active member and organizer.

KATHLEEN FIRTH took over Postcolonial Studies in the Department of English and German Studies at UB from Professor Doireann MacDermott, together with Dr. Susan Ballyn. Dr Firth is renowned as an international scholar in the field and worked in many areas, with a strong focus on research, but, remarkably, also with a deep commitment to expanding the teaching curriculum. While her research and teaching emphasis was on the Caribbean and India, she also explored and introduced literature from Canada and from the African continent. She created pioneering courses in all these areas. Until she retired in 2011, she led the postcolonial team at the University of Barcelona with enthusiasm and tireless work.

FEATURED SESSIONS

SPEAKERS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

JACQUELINE HURTLEY is a graduate in Spanish with Italian and in English. She taught literatures in English at the Universitat de Barcelona from the 1970s until her retirement in 2016. She has published on the Catalan journalist, poet and publisher Josep Janés i Olivé and on the founder of the British Council in Spain, Dublin-born Walter Starkie: *José Janés, editor de literatura inglesa* (1992) was awarded the Enrique García y Díez Research Prize by the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies (AEDEAN) and *Walter Starkie. An Odyssey* (2013) obtained the Book Award for Cultural Studies, Category A, conferred by The European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) in 2014. Between 2002 and 2022, she contributed six chapters (one of which was co-authored) to the Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe (RBAE) project, under the general editorship of Elinor Shaffer. In 2018, together with Pere Gifra Adroher, she produced a critical edition of articles by Irish writer and translator Hannah Lynch, *Hannah Lynch and Spain. Collected Journalism of an Irish New Woman, 1892-1903*. Since 2017, Hurtley has reviewed for the Escola de Llibreria within the Faculty of Information and Audiovisual Media at the University of Barcelona. (<https://fima.ub.edu/edl/ca/search/node?keys=Jacqueline+Hurtley>)

Haritha Savithri in Conversation with Bill Phillips

HARITHA SAVITHRI is a novelist, freelance journalist, human rights activist, and translator. She has published several articles in Malayalam journals and online portals, mostly on Middle East politics and human rights violations. She has translated Iskender Pala's *Tulip of Istanbul*, *The Crossing* by Samar Yazbek, and *The Cry of a Swallow* by Ahmet Umit into Malayalam. Her book *'Murivettavarute Pathakal'* won the 2022 Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for the best travelogue. *Zin* won Kerala State Library Council's Kadammanitta Literary Award (2022), Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for the best novel (2023), Udaya Sahitya Puraskaram (2023) and IAS Literary Award (2025).

BILL PHILLIPS was a senior lecturer in English literature at the Universitat de Barcelona, now retired. His research includes ecocriticism, ecofeminism, gender studies, crime fiction and postcolonial studies. From 2013 to 2017 he led a Spanish Ministry-financed research project on postcolonial crime fiction. He is currently pursuing his interests in crime fiction and poetry.

MARÍA ELENA SIERRA, profesora de Sánscrito en la Universidad de Barcelona, imparte clases de Lengua y Literatura sánscritas desde 2006, y es autora de la primera tesis doctoral sobre fonética sánscrita presentada en la Universidad de Barcelona, con el título: Traducción y comentario del tratado de fonética del कृष्ण Yajur Veda: Taittirīya Prāṭisākhya, con la calificación de Cum Laude (2008). Es licenciada en Filología clásica con premio extraordinario de final de carrera en 2002 y graduada en Bellas Artes por la misma Universidad. Además de las clases regulares de Sánscrito, organiza, desde el año 2008, diversos eventos relacionados con la lengua y la cultura sánscritas en cooperación con su esposo, Fernando Giménez Castellà, también profesor en la Universidad.

Todos los eventos y conferencias pueden verse en ubtv, el canal de televisión de la Universitat de Barcelona:

<https://www.ub.edu/ubtv/video/sanskrit-introduction-by-dr-maria-elena-sierra>
<https://www.ub.edu/ubtv/video/ycryya-ryrla-bhaktisiddhynta-sarasvaty-el-mestre-perfecte-el-maestro-perfecto-the-perfect-spiritual-master>

Qué es el sánscrito: Tradición y actualidad; descubrimiento del sánscrito en occidente

La pregunta ¿Qué es el sánscrito? permite múltiples posibles respuestas desde diferentes perspectivas y criterios. Desde una perspectiva diacrónica, los orígenes literarios del sánscrito y su conservación a través de la tradición oral durante siglos, mediante una serie de técnicas de recitación rigurosas y exhaustivas es, en sí mismo, un motivo de reflexión y estudio. Significativo es también el contenido de estas primeras obras, que muestran una forma de percibir el mundo y describir la naturaleza que sorprende a occidente cuando se descubre su lengua y su literatura.

El descubrimiento del sánscrito en occidente da lugar a una serie de repercusiones mucho más allá de lo ampliamente conocido. Sin duda, este descubrimiento en el siglo XIX, es la causa motor que provocó el nacimiento de la lingüística histórico-comparativa como ciencia, pero su influjo va mucho más allá. Menos conocido es, por ejemplo, que Ferdinand de Saussure, considerado por muchos como el padre de la lingüística sincrónica occidental, fuera profesor de sánscrito en la Facultad de letras y ciencias sociales de Ginebra a partir de 1906 e iniciara su labor investigadora con un estudio diacrónico sobre el vocalismo de las lenguas indoeuropeas.

Con el descubrimiento de la lengua sánscrita llega también el descubrimiento de sus obras. La lectura y traducción de los tratados de fonética sánscrita que llegaron por primera vez a manos de los filólogos y lingüistas occidentales, les revelaron una tradición con una precisión fonética y gramatical desconocida para ellos hasta ese momento, hecho que revolucionó los estudios lingüísticos en occidente.

Los estudios y traducciones de obras sánscritas proliferaron en aquella época, con especial mención de la traducción de la obra dramática de Kālidāsa *Abhijñānaśakuntalā* ('El reconocimiento de Śakuntalā') que a partir de la versión inglesa de William Jones en 1789 se conoció en occidente simplemente como *Śakuntalā*. Esta obra fue traducida al alemán por Georg Förster en 1791 y fue acogida con gran entusiasmo por autores como Herder y Goethe. Éste último se sintió tan impactado por la obra que no sólo se inspiró en ella para la composición del prólogo en el teatro de su obra *Fausto*, sino que le dedicó un poema de alabanza en 1792.

Autores como Bloomfield reconocieron abiertamente su admiración por el nivel alcanzado por los antiguos gramáticos sánscritos hasta el punto de definir la gramática de Pāṇini, denominada *Aṣṭādhyāyī* ('las ocho secciones o capítulos'), como 'uno de los mayores monumentos de la inteligencia humana'.

La influencia ejercida por el descubrimiento de la tradición gramatical sánscrita en occidente no solo provocó que se estudiaran estos tratados antiguos con gran interés sino que incluso conceptos propios de la tradición sánscrita, como sandhi o svarabhakti, se aplican hoy en día en la lingüística actual. Todo ello es solo un apunte de la repercusión de la influencia del sánscrito en la historia de la lingüística y pensamiento en occidente.

Las traducciones y la aproximación a estos textos ha evolucionado a lo largo del tiempo, tema que también se comentará en esta Conferencia, junto con muchos detalles desconocidos hasta la fecha más allá del ámbito especializado, como el hecho de que algunos de los textos más antiguos documentados en lengua sánscrita sean atribuidos a autoras femeninas.

RAISA RAFAELA SERRANO MUÑOZ (Universidad de Córdoba)

A Restorative Eco-Feminist Future in the Visual Healing Narratives of Manjot Kaur's Work

Today, there is a multidimensional critical diagnosis in India related to socio-political issues, including ecological, communal, individual and public health problems. Many Indian activists and artists approach these challenges through narratives of healing and resilience.

The theoretical framework draws on the decolonial eco-feminism, which denounces the systemic violence inflicted on the feminised bodies in the name of modern sovereignty. The methodology of this paper combines visual studies and ecofeminist theory, focusing on the Indian subcontinent and its diasporas. Within this context, the language developed in the contemporary visual narratives of Manjot Kaur is analysed to explore how her work functions as a counter-narrative and symbolic healing. Kaur's oeuvre, consisting of drawings and paintings, proposes a decolonisation of both ecology and female bodies. Her work explores the boundaries between fiction, archetypes and precarious ecologies, decentring the human being as a main character and proposing an ethic of multispecies coexistence.

Through her art, Kaur imagines posthuman and queer worlds where the meaning of human and nature are interconnected, generating possibilities that question the hierarchy of the human being. Kaur's work enhances a feminist ecological healing, not as a return to the past, but focused on the projection of a more sensitive and fairer future, which stimulates a political, poetic and transformative imagination.

Raisa Rafaela Serrano Muñoz es Licenciada en Filología Inglesa, Máster en Profesorado de Enseñanza Secundaria, Máster en inglés para la Cualificación Profesional y Doctora en Lenguas y Culturas (cum laude) por la Universidad de Córdoba. Complementó su formación académica cursando un año de licenciatura en la Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) en Alemania. Ha sido investigadora visitante en la Dominican University, en Chicago, así como de la Technical University of Liberec, en la República Checa, ampliando su proyección internacional en el ámbito de la enseñanza y trabajo académico. Su trayectoria investigadora se centra en los estudios literarios asiáticos con perspectiva de género, así como el estudio de la diversidad y la gestión de conflictos en el entorno educativo. Es miembro activo del Grupo de Innovación Docente GID-200: Pedagogía Sistémica, el Grupo de Investigación HUM-1117: Sociedades y Poder Revisitadas: humanidades medioambientales y ecofeminismo (SoPoR), así como de la Asociación Española de Estudios Interdisciplinarios sobre India (AEII). Cuenta con un amplio corpus de publicaciones sobre estudios de género, así como entrevistas con diferentes activistas indias y numerosos artículos y comunicaciones sobre educación. Actualmente se encuentra trabajando como profesora sustituta interina en la Universidad de Córdoba en la cual imparte asignaturas de inglés instrumental en las que diseña y adapta sus propios materiales contribuyendo y fomentado el pensamiento crítico del alumnado.

PAPERS - ABSTRACTS

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF TITLES

ITISHA GIRI (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

An Ethics of Care in *Hospital* by Sanya Rushdi

Hospital by Sanya Rushdi, originally published in Bengali in 2019 and translated into English by Anurava Sinha in 2023, is an autofictional narrative about the author's ongoing struggle with psychosis and her experiences of being in and out of medical institutions. The novel intricately presents the visible and invisible crises of care that emerge in the interactions between a patient and a medical institution.

Care—generally understood as the act of providing for or fulfilling one's own needs or those of another—is intrinsically linked to the value attached to human life and the human spirit. When approaching illness narratives like *Hospital* through an ethical lens of care, we are positioned to consider the socio-political and economic dimensions of care in direct relation to the individual receiving it. In her novel, Rushdi reveals the ruptures in modern medical practice, which often fails to respond to care needs shaped not only by illness but also by factors such as gender and religion. The narrator in *Hospital* struggles to maintain autonomy and agency over her own care, raising critical questions about the ethical dimensions of caregiving.

By drawing on theoretical approaches to care, this paper will examine the dynamics of care relationships between care-receivers and caregivers within both informal kinship networks and formal medical institutions. This analysis will help determine whether the ethical and moral demands of care are being adequately met in both private and public spheres, and whether an individual's journey toward healing and recovery can be meaningfully supported within institutional settings.

Itisha Giri is a doctoral candidate at Complutense University. Her PhD is on care and illness narratives. She is an associate professor of English language in the translation and interpretation department at Comillas University. She is the author of the poetry collection *An Archive* (2022) and editor of the anthology *These Fine Lines* (2015).

JORGE DIEGO SÁNCHEZ (Universidad de Salamanca)

"And Everything Just Stopped": Post Activism, Slowness and the Indian Ocean in Tishani Doshi's Essays

Decadence, deterioration, absence(s) and the passing of time are key topics in Tishani Doshi's oeuvre. This paper focuses on exhaustion and its literary interpretation in Tishani Doshi's essays, namely "The Luxury of Slowness" (2011), "Tender Yet Creepy" (2024) and "On Startling the Ordinary" (2025).

I claim that the representation of depletion and void articulate a discourse of transformative hope in which post activism and exhausted resilience (Albrecht 2016; Akómólafé 2017, 2019, 2020; O'Brien 2024; Basseler and O'Brien 2024) may harbor possibilities for transformation. I focus on the representation and role given to the Indian Ocean by Tishani Doshi from Thalassentric Optics (Pujolrás-Noguer & Hand 2024; Lavery 2021; Sivasundaram 2020) and the Studies in Maritime Transmodernities (Mohan 2019; Dussel 2012) to offer new research questions, concepts and hypothesis that facilitate new interpretations of traditional and contemporary transnational literatures in relation to exhaustion and the ocean beyond terracentric surfaces. Doshi depicts exhaustion in relation to land, beings, economic resources and the seas in reference to a coexisting confluence of past-present-future. Doshi's essays echo different overlapping times and weave a slow hope where nuances of exhaustion bring a specific pace that corresponds to the possibilities that the world may embrace.

Jorge Diego Sánchez (jorgediegosanchez@usal.es) teaches at University of Salamanca. His academic background centres on Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Studies in English with a focus on literature, cinema and dance from India and its diasporas. He is member of the Research Projects "Aquatic Imaginaries: Re-charting Indoceanic and Atlantic Literary Productions" and has carried out research and taught at Jadavpur University (Kolkata, India) or University of Hyderabad (India).

MAURICE O' CONNOR (Universidad de Cádiz)

Archipelagic Memory: The Padma River as Mode of Reading the Partition of Bengal

Bangla Partition literature often deals with borders, crossings, and the trauma of migration, experiences that resonate with the Indian Ocean's history as a site of movement, exile, and encounter. By reading Partition through an Indoceanic lens, the waterways are not just backdrops but active agents that shape identities, memories, and routes of resistance. The Indian Ocean, as theorized in archipelagic and oceanic studies, provides a model for understanding fragmented yet interconnected histories that mirror the dislocations of Partition. When Bengalis ask each other "Which side of the river are you from?", they refer to a deep-rooted cultural and identity marker connected to the River Padma (or Ganges), which serves as a historical and symbolic divider between East Bengal and West Bengal. This question is more than geography, it's a shorthand for exploring regional, cultural, historical, and even political identities. With my focus being on the Bangla literary tradition, I will examine how water bodies often serve as sites of trauma, transition, and possibility.

Using archipelagic theory I shall interpret how the fragmented, non-linear memories in Partition fiction become analogous to the dispersed, interconnected histories of Indian Ocean communities. I understand Archipelagic memory an epistemic approach that recognizes how islands (or, by extension, communities separated by rivers and borders) can be both isolated yet interconnected. In the context of Bengal, the riverine landscape, marked by the Padma, Brahmaputra and the deltaic terrain, creates a lived experience of fragmentation, yet also of contiguity and exchange.

Maurice O'Connor (<https://uca-es.academia.edu/MauriceOConnor>) is Associate Professor of the Department for English Studies at the University of Cádiz. He has been a member of the "Afro-Europeans: Black Cultures and Identities in Europe" research group and is currently collaborating with the research and development project "Aquatic Imaginaries: Re-charting Indoceanic and Atlantic Literary Productions". He is an active member of the AEEL, The Spanish Association on Indian Studies. His book *The Writings of Ben Okri: Transcending the Local and the National* was published by Prestige Books, and he has published academic articles on African literature, Indian literature, and East African Indian writing. His latest publication "Broken Bengal: Tropes of Conviviality and Fracture in Bangla Fiction" was published in 2024 by *Kritica Kultura*. Funding for the research for this paper was provided by "Aquatic Imaginaries: Recharting Indoceanic and Atlantic Literary Productions." INDAOC. Ref. PID2022-141118NB-I00.

F. BERNA UYSAL (Hacettepe University)

Between Wound and Word: Affect as the Passage from Collapsing Body to Resistant Body in *When I Hit You: Or, The Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017)

This paper examines Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or, The Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017) as a narrative that traces the trajectory from bodily collapse under sustained gendered violence to feminist resistance through the act of writing. Based on the author's personal experience and set in contemporary India, the novel recounts the story of a woman whose physical and psychological boundaries are systematically dismantled within a violent marriage. Her breakdown is not metaphorical; it is written on her body, silencing language, isolating thought, fragmenting subjectivity, and erasing identity. Yet affect lingers where words cannot form. Fear, rage, and dissociation circulate within the narrator's body, domestic space, and moments of internal witnessing. Even when she cannot write, she composes silently through observing herself as if from a distance, scripting pain in thought. In this reading, affect functions as an accumulative and transitional force; it saturates the body in the aftermath of collapse and later enables the emergence of narrative agency.

Writing, then, is not completely a return to wholeness but the formation of a new self through embodied affective articulation. It is a passage not from victimhood to survival, but from fracture to form. Through language, the narrator not only reclaims authorship over her experience but also reconstructs the body as a speaking subject. This paper argues that the novel renders affect as the connective tissue between collapse and resistance, showing how feminist authorship can emerge from the wounded body as both political testimony and creative reconstruction.

F. Berna Uysal is a doctoral researcher in English Literature and Cultural Studies based in Türkiye, at Hacettepe University. Her work focuses on affect theory, embodiment, and the theme of forbidden love in modern and postmodern fiction. She is currently developing a research project on the methodology of affect theory in literature, with a focus on contemporary narratives of love and resistance.

ALEJANDRA MORENO ÁLVAREZ (Universidad de Oviedo)

Bibliotherapy and Art Therapy: The Partition of India and the Mexican Revolution

Inspired by Anita Desai's note in *Rosarita* (2024) where she highlights that Satish Gujral saw a parallel between the Mexican Revolution and the Partition of India, it is my purpose to do a comparative study between Gujral's work and that of his maestro during his time in Mexico, Diego Rivera. Although these two historical events unfolded in different spaces and at different times, both artists turned to muralism as a means of collective and personal healing. Their murals convey the anguish of the victims, offering powerful visual testimonies to suffering and resilience. As Gujral remarked, "I didn't paint Partition, but I painted my own suffering" (in Shilpa 2017).

This paper will explore that, for Gujral and Rivera, art functions as a therapeutic tool. Furthermore, I will examine how Anita Desai extends this healing process through literature. In *Rosarita* (2024), she not only foregrounds the role of art in intergenerational recovery but also invites readers into a process of healing. Gujral and Desai exemplify how both visual and literary narratives can become acts of art therapy and bibliotherapy, offering meaning through creative expression.

Alejandra Moreno Álvarez is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Oviedo, holding a PhD in English Philology and Women's Studies. Her research focuses on English-language literatures, feminist and postcolonial theory, and representations of the body in literature and film.

ANTONIA NAVARRO-TEJERO (Universidad de Córdoba)

Biopolitics and Power in Kishwar Desai's *Origins of Love*

Arnold argues that, in Indian history, the body and the discourse about it have historically been the site of colonization, conquest and contestations of power. We can argue that the institution of women's hospitals in India, created with western medical technology during the nineteenth century, helped to consolidate the imperial discourse about the supremacy of the British standards over the "mediocre" and "uncivilised" native ways. This historical legacy of class relations of servitude persists in the power dynamics of contemporary gestational surrogacy, as new biopolitical operations upon the bodies of women from "the third world" (Mohanty et al., 1991) are becoming increasingly complex within power relations, with practices that coerce, and take advantage of the vulnerable population. Desai's *Origins of Love* is a telling example of the literary representation of the horrors behind commercial surrogate pregnancy in India. In this paper, we will look into the interrelated notions of caste (pollution/filthiness), gender and medical discrimination. Since childbearing is done through the womb, which is declared a national resource made possible by the medical industry, we will also look into nationhood as an important matter in how surrogacy politics is depicted in the novel. To conclude, we will argue that the agency of non-western, low-caste, poverty-stricken surrogates has been banished from history due to the structural inequalities caused by biotechnology, which play an essential role in establishing this marginalization. Moreover, the constraints of nation, caste, class and gender further relegate surrogates to precarity and exploitation.

Antonia Navarro-Tejero is professor at Universidad de Córdoba (Spain), where she also chairs the Permanent Seminar on India Studies. She founded the Spanish Association for Interdisciplinary India Studies in 2007. She has held several scholarships, including Salvador de Madariaga fellow at Syracuse University (New York, USA) with Prof. Chandra T. Mohanty; Fulbright fellow at University of California-Berkeley with Prof. Bharati Mukherjee; and Rotary International fellow at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (India) with Githa Hariharan, among others. She is the author of more than 90 publications and is Editor-in-Chief of the "India Studies" series of Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Prof Navarro is currently Grant Awarding Coordinator and member of the managing committee of Cost Action "Europe's Representations of India: Texts, Images, and Encounters," and main researcher of the group "Societies and Power Revisited: Environmental Humanities and Ecofeminism."

MARIA-SABINA DRAGA ALEXANDRU (University of Bucharest)

Body Healing and Fluid Reinventions of the Self: Routes of Decolonization in Nathacha Appanah's *Les rochers de poudre d'or* and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*

This chapter takes on board the concept of postcolonial *mappae mundi* as a liberating response to the political conceptualization of the map of the world meant to justify colonization (John Thieme, *Postcolonial Literary Geographies*, 2016), as well as the importance of aquatic routes in the colonial process, as suggested by Isabel Hofmeyr's concept of hydrocolonialism (2022). I propose a comparative analysis of the migration of Indian indentured workers to Mauritius in the novels *Les rochers de poudre d'or* by Nathacha Appanah (2006) and *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh (2008), with a focus on the reinvention of the self through liberation/remapping of the body in the way it relates to other bodies and escapes rigid conceptual paradigms.

I will argue that, through some of their modern-minded characters that subvert the expected frame of mind and behaviour of their time and context, the two novelists, coming from both sides of the Anglophone/Francophone postcolonial writing divide, imagine the maritime journey of Indian indentured workers to Mauritius as a metaphorical liberating journey towards an alternative modernity. This paper will aim to demonstrate that these two narrative accounts of indentured workers' journey to Mauritius resonates with an entire line of philosophical revision of Eurocentric views on modernity and the body, starting from Bruno Latour contention that *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991/1993) to ecocritical perspectives on the body and/as nature in Greta Gaard's *Critical Ecofeminism* (2017).

Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru is an Associate Professor of American Studies and postcolonialism at the University of Bucharest. Her research interests include: ecocritical perspectives on global writing in English, interactions between narrative and performance, postcolonialism and postcommunism, gender studies. She has published articles in prestigious journals and authored and co-edited books, notably: *Performance and Performativity in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English* (Brill Rodopi, 2015) and *Women's Imaginary Cooking and Appetites across Cultures* (co-edited, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2025).

GEMMA GORGA LÓPEZ (Universitat de Barcelona)

Bombay, entre el colapso y la sanación: Kala Ghoda, de Arun Kolatkar (2004)

A partir del eje temático que inspira el 9º Congreso Internacional de la AEELI, pretendo abrir un espacio de reflexión sobre el valor y la función que puede desempeñar la poesía en el actual contexto paradójico de crisis y restauración. Concretamente, me centraré en la colección *Kala Ghoda. Poemas de Bombay* (2004) del escritor indio Arun Kolatkar. Con su estructura calidoscópica y sus múltiples protagonistas –perros vagabundos, cuervos, mendigos, prostitutas, vendedores ambulantes, convictos, barrenderas, neumáticos...–, esta colección de poemas es una tribuna privilegiada para acercarnos a cuestiones tales como: (a) la atención a lo minúsculo e invisible como lugares donde germina la resistencia, (b) la necesidad de un des-centramiento que dé voz a lo marginal, (c) la reivindicación de la metamorfosis y la fluidez, en detrimento de la solidificación y el dogmatismo, (e) la poesía como educación en la mirada paciente y lenta (frente a un mundo desquiciado por la impaciencia y la prisa), (f) el regreso a los valores artesanales de la poesía, con su carga de trabajo anónimo y meticuloso... etc. Desde esta nueva óptica, la poesía puede convertirse en un instrumento valioso a la hora de proyectar nuevas maneras de estar en el mundo, menos depredadoras y verdaderamente holísticas.

Gemma Gorga López (Barcelona, 1968) es profesora titular del Departamento de Filología Hispánica de la UB. Paralelamente a su labor docente, ha desarrollado una carrera como poeta en lengua catalana y como traductora de poetas indios en lengua inglesa (Dilip Chitre, Kamala Das y Arun Kolatkar). Ha publicado el ensayo *Indi Visible* (2018), traducido al castellano con el título *Invisible India* (2020).

DOLORES HERRERO GRANADO (Universidad de Zaragoza)

Chandani Lokuge's *If the Moon Smiled: The Burden of Womanhood in No-Woman's Land*

This presentation intends to analyze the way in which Chandani Lokuge's novel *If the Moon Smiled* tackles problematic issues such as the inevitable sense of confusion and fragmentation resulting from diasporic experience, especially when the protagonist (Manthri) is a woman who has been traumatized and suppressed by the combined oppression of religion, patriarchy, and migration. First of all, I will briefly survey the backgrounds of South Asian immigration and writing in Australia. Secondly, I will summarize the main arguments put forward by the main figures in the field of the so-called trauma studies, since they will be especially relevant and useful for the analysis of the protagonist's psychological evolution.

Finally, I will explore the way in which Lokuge's novel makes use of all these postulates in order to bring to the fore and denounce the oppression and isolation suffered by an important number of South Asian female migrants.

Dolores Herrero is a Full Professor of English and Postcolonial literature at the University of Zaragoza. She was the chief editor of *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies* from 1998 till 2006, and the Secretary of EASA (European Association of Studies on Australia) from 2011 till 2014. At present she is the Chair of AEELI (Asociación Española de Estudios Interdisciplinares de la India). Since 2003 she has been a member of the consolidated research team "Contemporary Narrative in English", and has participated in several competitive projects, the most recent of which is "Literature off(f) Limits: Pluriversal Cosmologies and Relational Identities in Present-Day Writing in English (code PID2021-124841NB-I00), of which she is the main researcher. She is also a member of IEDIS (Instituto Universitario de Investigación de Empleo, Sociedad Digital y Sostenibilidad), and part of the board of reviewers of the AEI (Agencia Estatal de Investigación-BECA). Herrero is a specialist in Australian, Indian and African fiction, as well as postcolonial cinema.

NÚRIA MINA-RIERA and MARICEL ORÓ-PIQUERAS (Universitat de Lleida)

Cycles of Decline and Healing: Agelessness as Both a Curse and an Empowerment Tool in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City* (2023)

Agelessness figures prominently in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City* (2023). Its protagonist, a village girl named Pampa Kampana, receives the blessing of the Hindu goddess Pampa, after whom the girl is named. As a result, both Pampa Kampana's life is elongated beyond the limits of human ageing to reach the age of 247 years and her ageing process is extremely slowed down, so that she remains young until very late in her life. Although her agelessness is a major asset in her fight towards greater gender equality in Bisnaga –the city she founded–, Pampa Kampana perceives her long-lasting youth as a curse because she outlives all those she loves. The perception of ageing that Rushdie's main character reveals clashes with the real-world, widespread, social paradigm of "successful ageing," which, fuelled by consumer culture, applauds those who succeed at growing older without showing bodily signs of ageing. Age scholars agree that agelessness is indeed a powerful form of age-related prejudice, also known as ageism. Accordingly, agelessness both disempowers and marginalises those who embody old age and prevents continued human development in late life.

While Asian countries are often considered to be prone to honour their elders because of socio-cultural values based on Confucianism, findings reveal that in practice the way younger people relate to older individuals varies greatly (Vauclair et al. 2017). This paper contends that the evolution of Pampa Kampana's character arc throughout her life course, especially regarding her long-lasting youth, both interrogates the complexities of the ageing process and contributes to deconstructing agelessness within the gender perspective of the female character.

Núria Mina-Riera is a full-time lecturer in the department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Lleida, Spain. Her research areas include contemporary Canadian poetry in English, interdisciplinary approaches to ageing studies and ecocriticism, as well as postcolonial studies. She is a member of research group CELCA-Dedal-Lit.

Maricel Oró-Piquer is Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Universitat de Lleida (Spain). She is the current Principal Investigator of research Group CELCA-Dedal-Lit. Her research interests are representations of ageing and old age, and intersections of gender and age in contemporary fiction, film and TV series.

JORGE RUANO PÉREZ (Independent Scholar)

Deterritorializing the Border in *Uhuru Street*: Reading the Work of Vassanji through the Lenses of Deleuze and Anzaldúa

Migrant authors and their texts are very frequently analyzed primarily from the diasporic perspective, which binds them to the large signifier of the original homeland. The approach of this paper on *Uhuru Street* suggests a more dynamic reading, that focuses on the fluidity and permeability of national and identitarian affects of people caught in migratory processes. Vassanji's representation of a changing Tanzania and the tensions and encounters of the different ethnic groups, paired with his ambivalent style and his narrations full of disoriented characters offers a great opportunity to implement this approach.

Informed by the theoretical framework of schizoanalysis (Deleuze and Guattari), on one side, and mestizo theory (Anzaldúa), on the other, this text seeks to explore the possibilities of a deterritorialized reading of migrant subjectifications and the emergence of mestizo becomings, against the more rigid tendency towards nationalism and fixed community boundaries. Following the taboo flow of interracial desire as well as the tensioned dynamics of changing interethnic relationships, this essay observes the gray areas where normative understandings of belonging and identity become unstable.

Jorge Ruano Pérez (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2001) is a Spanish researcher, currently based in northern Portugal. With a background in Social Anthropology and Human Rights, he graduated from the CRIC (Construction and Representation of Cultural Identities) master's degree in 2024. Among his research interests are coloniality, migration, posthumanism, and mental illness and disability, frequently linking these topics and others and engaging in interdisciplinary methods of research. He has also written critically about music, film and literature.

JUAN SANZ AMOR (Independent Scholar)

***Dhrupad*: decadencia, revival y actualidad**

Los expertos consideran que el *dhrupad* es el género más antiguo de la música indostánica (música clásica del centro y norte del subcontinente indio). Su forma actual se remonta al menos a los siglos XV o XVI.

Entre los siglos XVI y XVIII, el *dhrupad* constituyó la forma predominante de expresión musical en las cortes del norte de la India. Sin embargo, el desmantelamiento definitivo del mecenazgo cortesano con la independencia provocó un declive tan pronunciado que esta tradición estuvo al borde de la desaparición.

Paradójicamente, el apoyo que ofrecieron ciertas personalidades e instituciones europeas y estadounidenses a ciertos intérpretes de *dhrupad* fue crucial para la visibilización y reconocimiento de este género durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX. A día de hoy, solo un número reducido de músicos se dedica a la práctica ortodoxa del *dhrupad*, pero este resulta altamente valorado en la India y el extranjero.

Gracias a mi trabajo de campo realizado durante un año (2023–2024) en Gujarat, India, donde fui aceptado como discípulo por el maestro de *dhrupad* Chintan Upadhyay; y en previsión de mi inminente trabajo de campo en el Reino Unido con la comunidad de discípulos, estudiantes y aficionados de Uday Bhawalkar — probablemente la figura en activo más reconocida del *dhrupad*—, analizaré la situación actual de dos de los intérpretes (y su entorno) más relevantes de dicha tradición.

Por tanto, esta ponencia combina un enfoque histórico y bibliográfico con una perspectiva viva y etnográfica para exponer la decadencia, el revival y la delicada situación actual del *dhrupad*.

Juan Sanz Amor ha cursado el grado en Historia y Ciencias de la Música y el máster en Música Hispana de la Universidad de Valladolid. Ha trabajado en la gestión cultural de la Embajada de España en Indonesia y en Casa de la India (Valladolid). También residió un año en India investigando la música indostánica.

ESTHER JIMÉNEZ RODRÍGUEZ (Universitat de Lleida)

Ecodisasters as Transformative Agents in the Ecological Crisis in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide and Gun Island*

The end of the world has already happened. As Morton argues, our planet's demise began with the Industrial Revolution, which turned nature into a passive entity for exploitation. This ill-treatment has been a patriarchal practice. Nevertheless, the earth is a living entity. Ecodisasters have become part of ordinary life. In this regard, literature enables us to observe how these events are not at all typical but instead serve as indicators of the earth's narrative agency.

Amitav Ghosh's Climate Fictions *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* depict nature's response to patriarchal abuse through ecodisasters—cyclones, tidal waves, and wildfires—that highlight its agency as a living entity.

Set primarily in the Sundarbans, these novels reflect the Indian Ocean's role as a site of ecological devastation and interconnection. Moreover, *Gun Island* connects the Sundarbans with another different yet polluted part of the globe by showing several wildfires in Los Angeles.

Drawing on Morton's "Hyperobjects," I argue that these disasters are manifestations of a larger force called global warming. Through his fictions, Ghosh demands a reconceptualization of human-nature relationships, emphasizing empathy and interconnectedness. Taking on Morton's cue, through these novels, I want to explore the narrative dynamics involved in the agency of nature as an ally in the ecological crisis and advocate for a more responsible ecological ethics that transcends patriarchal exploitation and is rooted in interspecies intimacy.

Esther Jiménez Rodríguez is currently working at the University of Lleida as a PDI researcher while completing her PhD studies. Her areas of research are Postcolonial Studies, Ecocriticism, Oceanic Humanities and Indian Ocean Studies in the literature produced within the area of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. She is part of the research group Ratnakara.

BIANCA CHERECHÉS (Universidad de Zaragoza)

Ecofeminist Memory, Caste, and Technological Heritage in *The Immortal King Rao*

This paper offers an ecofeminist reading of Vauhini Vara's *The Immortal King Rao* (2022), a speculative novel that intricately binds ecological collapse, caste oppression, and patriarchal technology. Set in a near-future governed by an algorithmic regime—the Shareholder Government—the novel traces the rise of King Rao, a Dalit man from rural India who becomes a global tech titan. At the narrative's core is Rao's daughter, Athena, whose body becomes a site of technological implantation and memory preservation. Her inherited consciousness serves as a poignant metaphor for how women's bodies—like colonised ecologies—are inscribed, exploited, and disciplined under systems of power.

Through a multi-generational narrative that shifts between caste-marked rural landscapes and climate-damaged technocracies, the novel juxtaposes ancestral ecological ties with the sterile digital landscapes of capitalist modernity. Women's roles in the novel—both central and peripheral—highlight the gendered dynamics of environmental and technological violence: from maternal deaths and reproductive exploitation to marginalisation in algorithmic governance. The novel also imagines resistance through the Exes, a land-rooted, anti-tech community that evokes ecofeminist alternatives to dominant paradigms of extraction and control.

Thus, drawing on frameworks from ecofeminism (Shiva, 1988; Plumwood, 1993), postcolonial ecocriticism (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010), and anti-caste environmental thought (Omvedt, 1997; Sharma, 2017), this paper explores how *The Immortal King Rao* reclaims memory and heritage from the margins, arguing that Vara's speculative fiction functions as a counter-archive preserving the embodied, affective, and ecological memories of those most.

Bianca Cherechés is a lecturer at the University of Zaragoza, where she earned both her degree in English Philology and a master's in English Studies. Her doctoral research focused on the Dalit community. She previously served as director of the international network New Voices in Postcolonial Studies and is currently a member in the research project "Literature Off(f) Limits".

ESTHER SÁNCHEZ-PARDO (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Empathy in Decline: Confronting Violence across Poetry and the Arts in Selected Works by Imtiaz Dharker and Bharti Kher

Strong thematic resonances can be found between the works of visual artist Bharti Kher's (London, 1969) and British (Pakistani-born) poet and film maker Imtiaz Dharker (1954-), particularly in their shared concern with fractured bodies, vulnerability, and the decline of human empathy in the face of suffering. While Kher works through sculpture—drawing on religious and classical references to expose the wounded, and silenced female bodies—Dharker uses poetry to voice silences, often speaking from the margins of social and cultural visibility. This paper aims at exploring how in collections such as Dharker's *The Terrorist at My Table* (2006), she repeatedly returns to the pain of others—especially migrants, women, and victims of religious or political violence—and questions how easily their suffering is rendered invisible in public discourse. The female body, in particular, is often presented as a battleground for cultural control, echoing I argue, the broken and hybrid forms in Bharti Kher's sculptures. Their feminist denunciation of emotional anaesthesia in the escalation of violence since the beginning of the 21st century makes us wonder how empathy can be reclaimed in a world that has grown impervious to suffering.

Esther Sánchez-Pardo teaches Literature and Critical Theory at Complutense University. She is the author of *Cultures of the Death Drive* (2003) and co-editor of *Women Poets and Myth in the 20th and 21st Centuries* (2018), as well as *Poéticas Comparadas de Mujeres* (2022), *Myth and Environmentalism* (2023), and *Nomadic New Women* (2024).

JUAN IGNACIO OLIVA (Universidad La Laguna)

Fractured Bodies & Healing Processes in Poetic Diasporic Revisions of the 1947 Partition

If we tackle the collapse of all kinds of human structures, which is currently taking place, we will arrive at what Bauman coined "Liquid (Post)Modernity" (2000) as both a problem and a solution in their inherent fluctuating questioning of absolute truths. Thus, prolonged traumas, such as the ones caused by the 1947 Partition in India, can be conceived as epigenetic scars that cyclically heal and suppurate. To identify and develop proposals for healing, this paper will analyze the violence between bodily and territorial membranes that divide the map of the Indian subcontinent, producing fractures that can only be cured if their origin is understood. Through the analysis of borders as ecotones in tension (a term derived from New Ecological Materialism), this material violence could diminish if we understood the biological reality of the corporeality of the territory and the individuals who inhabit it, on the one hand, and the entropic kinetics of crossing bodies and their confessional creative capacity, on the other. For this purpose, relevant poetic texts will be used, such as Nirupama Menon Rao's "India-Pakistan," Fatimah Asghar's "Partition," and Zia Ather's "Kashmir Only Bleeds." Among the main points of interest, we will highlight, firstly, the transformation of the landscape following the political fracture; secondly, the level of tonicity of the barrier separating populations with the same ethnic and racial origin; and, lastly, the construction of a polysemic ecotone that is constantly pulsating on the trauma that the Partition has produced in the genetic memory of its inhabitants.

Juan Ignacio Oliva is Full Professor of Anglophone Postcolonial Literatures at U. La Laguna, Tenerife, Canarias. He studies humans and their environment in ecopoetry, and the interactive observation of landscape and the relationship of sensitive selves with an agent and eloquent nature. He is a member of the research groups GIECO-Franklin-UAH (Ecocriticism) and Ratnakara-UdL (Indian Ocean Literatures).

ANURADHA ACHARJEE (Universidade de Vigo)

Fractured Subjectivities and Spatial Negotiation: Indian Female Identity in *Never Have I Ever*

This paper critically examines the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever* (Kaling and Fisher 2020–2023) through the entangled subjectivities of Devi Vishwakumar and Kamala Nandiwadal, interrogating the ideological weight of the model minority myth and its production of fractured diasporic identities.

Coined during the civil rights era, the model minority myth casts Asian Americans as a homogenous, compliant, and industrious cohort (Lee 2009), functioning less as a benign stereotype than as a mechanism of racial triangulation that conceals structural inequities and enforces assimilationist imperatives (Ng, Lee, and Pak 2007). Framed within postcolonial critique and feminist television studies, this analysis engages Charlotte Brunsdon's (1997) theorisation of the sitcom as a gendered ideological form, wherein domestic and affective spaces operate as contested terrains, to explore how these gendered spatial dynamics intersect with postcolonial concerns and inform the series' portrayal of diasporic identity and cultural negotiation. Devi's compulsive pursuit of academic and social capital, coupled with her psychological precarity, and Kamala's silent negotiation of patriarchal familial scripts and the masculinist white ethos of the US, illuminate the psychic toll of navigating multi-positional identities. Drawing on Bhabha's (1994) conception of hybridity and Hall's (1990) theorisation of identity as discursive and processual, the paper argues that both characters inhabit liminal and overdetermined spaces, wherein racialised, gendered, and diasporic selfhoods are contingently performed and persistently contested within U.S. cultural imaginaries.

Anuradha Acharjee holds a BA (Hons), MA, and MPhil in English Studies from the University of Delhi and Jamia Millia University, and she is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Vigo, Spain. Her areas of interest include gender studies; postcolonial theory; diaspora studies; literary and audiovisual representations of ethnic minorities; Asian-American literature, film, and television. Her thesis is provisionally titled *Women of Indian Origin in 21st Century US Television: An Intersectional Study of Mindy Kaling's Comedy Dramas*. She has taught English language and literature across India, Colombia, Mexico, and Spain.

RAGIANAE CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA RAMOS

(Universidade Estadual de Mato Grosso do Sul)

Healing Through Literacy: Collective Empowerment in "Writing with Fire"

This paper examines the documentary "Writing with Fire" (2021) directed by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh as a compelling narrative of collective empowerment that functions as both personal and social healing within India's marginalized communities. The film chronicles the journey of Dalit women journalists at Khabar Lahariya, India's only newspaper run by rural women, as they navigate the transition from print to digital media while confronting systemic inequalities. Through close analysis of key scenes, this study explores how literacy and journalism become transformative healing practices that address the "fractured bodies" of marginalized communities.

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Regiane Corrêa de Oliveira Ramos is an Associate Professor at the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul with a postdoctoral degree in Literary Studies from UNESP (2021) and PhD in Literary Studies from USP (2016). Her research focuses on Postcolonial Literatures in English, particularly Indian literatures in English, examining intersections of gender, class, caste, race, and sexuality.

JUAN MIGUEL ZARANDONA (Universidad de Valladolid)

I Also Had a Farm in Africa, According to a Short Story by Abdulrazak Gurnah: Diaspora, Crisis, Exile and the Need for Healing

Tanzanian writer Abdulrazak Gurnah, born on the island of Zanzibar (aka Unguja) in 1948, published a short story entitled “My mother lived on a farm in Africa” (2006) which does not fall short of what is expected of a Nobel Prize for Literature winner. The narrative scheme is based both on myth and fact. In other words, the mythical overtones associated with ‘farm life’ in African environments, with deep roots in the European imaginary; and the suffering of ‘diaspora life’ and violent exile in the context of the Indian Ocean. On the one hand, the myth associated with *Out of Africa*, both the novel, written by Karen Blixen (1937), and the movie (1985), directed by Sidney Pollack and starred by Meryl Streep and Robert Redford as leading actress and actor. And, on the other, the bloody facts of the so-called Zanzibar Revolution, starting from 12 January 1964, and ending with the founding of the independent nation of Tanzania (Tanganyika plus Zanzibar) on 26 April 1964. It was then when the dominating ruling elites of Arab and South Asian (Indian) diasporic minorities inhabiting the Zanzibar Archipelago were not only killed in large numbers, but also forced to exile, mainly in the United Kingdom, by the Black African majority. Gurnah’s story here depicts, in very symbolic and intriguing words, the past and present time trauma and fractured lives of those who were the losers of those events, and their need for healing. As in *Out of Africa*, an impossible African love story is also invited to play a role in the tale.

Juan Miguel Zarandona teaches translation at the University of Valladolid in Soria. He is a member of the Research Group Ratnakara. He leads a research project on African culture, literature and translation, Afriqana (www.afriqana.org), part of the University of Valladolid Research Group Tradhuc (www5.uva.es/tradhuc), devoted to cultural and literary translation. He is editor of the journal *Hermēneus* on Translation Studies, the monographs *Vertere*, and *Disbabela*, i.e., a series on unknown translations.

SONIA A. HAIDUC (Universitat de Barcelona)

“I am that comma”: Strategies of Melodrama as Aesthetic Articulation in Salman Rushdie’s *East, West* (1994)

Salman Rushdie’s interest in visual culture is evident throughout his work – from screenplays, to cameo appearances in films, to his assiduous use of cinematic intertexts and references in his literary and non-fictional output. This paper will explore the use of melodrama – understood as a mode of aesthetic articulation rather than a genre, whose function is “the aesthetic realization of social forces embodied in individual energies, released through and into modernity” (Gledhill, xvii) – in his only short story collection to date, *East, West* (1994). I will argue that the semantic force-field of melodrama and its foregrounding of the socioemotional individual, an individual that embodies and enacts ethical values, rather than simply represent them, lend the collection a special poignancy in its exploration of displacement, loss, deconstruction and reconstruction. The fragmentary quality of the short story form, on the other hand, mirrors the hesitant, disjointed life-experiences of the characters that operate like grafting nodes in processes of linguistic, cultural and social cross-pollination. Rushdie’s stories in *East, West* explore precisely these fertile sites where the injuries of displacement are predicted, experienced, negotiated, succumbed to or made peace with, and, potentially, turned into ‘newness’.

Sonia A. Haiduc is a part-time adjunct lecturer in English literature at the University of Barcelona. Her areas of research interest are film adaptation, biography and melodrama. She has published in the journal *Adaptation*, the collection *The Writer on Film: Screening Literary Authorship* and Wiley-Blackwell’s *A Companion to the Biopic*.

AINA MARIA DÍAZ LLABRÉS (Universitat de Lleida)

"I don't want to suffer. Why should that be my role?": Women in Conflict and their Role in the Sri Lankan Civil War in V. V. Ganeshanathan's *Brotherless Night*

Brotherless Night (2023), a historical fiction by V. V. Ganeshanathan, illustrates the Sri Lankan Civil War and its lasting effects on individuals and the Tamil community, centering primarily on Sashi and her family. As depicted in Ganeshanathan's work, the Civil War was a moment of absolute collapse and violence based on issues of caste, class, religion, and power. Within the utter chaos of warfare, and what eventually became a planned genocide, a narrative of resistance and resilience was born.

The novel centers on Sachi and the women around her. I analyze their role during the conflict and focus on gendered activism. Sachi and Anjali, who inhabit the margin, lead an initiative of tracking and documenting all the violence committed during the Civil War. Drawing from bell hooks (1989), marginality, understood as a place of resistance, prompts the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse. This perspective is essential and emphasized in subaltern studies, which place subaltern subjects as the center of their own histories, following Veena Das' ideas on subalternity and history (1989). The women's initiative of "Re-membering" history through writing has epistemic potential, based on Niharika Pandit's (2023) study of gendered and feminist politics under military occupation.

Thus, I argue that in this novel the role of women during the war contributes to an exercise of epistemic reconstruction through activism, story telling, and re-membering. Consequently this research is in conversation with post/anticolonial feminist scholarship while emphasizing the importance of gendered activism in times of conflict.

Aina Díaz Llabrés is part of the University of Lleida as a PDI researcher in the project "Aquatic Imaginaries: Re-charting Indoceanic and Atlantic Literary Productions INDAOOC". Her areas of interest involve Silence and Trauma Studies, Diasporic Literatures, and Indoceanic Novels. Her research focus is Indoceanic diaspora and conflict literature.

ROGER GARCÍA COLL (Laila Foundation)

Mind the Social Gap: Women's Status and Narrative Strategies Against Patriarchal Violence in Tamil Nadu

This paper examines patriarchal violence against women in Tamil Nadu, South India, by comparing the cases of two women of substantially different social and educational backgrounds: one is the urbanite protagonist of Meena Kandasamy's novel *When I Hit You* (2017); the second, a woman from a small village in a rural area near Chennai. Critical discussions, relevant findings and my own experience as an observer are combined in order to establish if social status plays a role in determining the chances of overcoming abuse. To discuss this idea, the research contextualises the abuse within the frame of subalternity, patriarchy and caste. Then it analyses the forms and actors of violence, outlines the resources available for the victims and proposes one technique of expressive writing as a healing tool. Results suggest that higher status does not necessarily provide protection from being abused but certainly contributes to overcoming the abuse and possessing more solid tools for healing.

Roger Garcia Coll works as a language teacher and has a BA in Catalan Philology and a BA in English studies. He obtained a research award for the best end-of-degree paper in the IV Edition of the AEEL research awards. He is actively involved in projects of education and women empowerment in rural South India.

SREYA CHATTERJEE (University of Leeds)

Of Food and Faith: Religion, Decay and Restoration in 21st-century India

Of Food and Faith: Religion, Decay and Restoration in 21st-century India This paper analyses Shoba Narayan's travelogue *Food and Faith: A Pilgrim's Journey* through India through a postcolonial, intersectional framework, to analyse how the body of the devotee, acting as a receptacle of structural violence, is reclaimed as a site of healing and restoration.

As a 'sceptical pilgrim' looking at spirituality through the lens of food, Narayan journeys across some of the most revered pilgrimage spots in India such as Mathura, Ajmer Sharif, Udupi among others. In this context, I will analyse how Narayan's travelogue represents religion as refracted via the body and its experiences. I will investigate how both the individual body of the devotee and the body politic of the Indian nation-state come to experience systemic degradation through forms of caste-based exclusion and gendered violence as embedded in organised religion. In 21st century India, rampant overconsumption, corruption and ecological ruin only exacerbates the decay of this body that lies at the centre of religious experience.

I will contend, however, that religion can be reimagined to provide avenues of embodied healing and restoration. I suggest that Narayana's narrative achieves this in mainly two ways —through 1. the formation of postcolonial, community-orientated collectives and 2. The reclamation of feminist agency through the celebration of joy. This paper shows that religion, when reimagined, can foster individual and collective healing in times of manifold crises of sociocultural, political and ecological degradation.

Sreya Chatterjee is a PhD candidate based at the School of English and Sociology, University of Leeds. Her doctoral thesis analyses travel narratives by Indian women to map the generic shifts that have resulted in the 21st century. Her other research interests include postcolonial studies, gender studies and pop culture. Her research is funded by the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities, AHRC.

POONAM SHARMA (University of Leeds)

Planetary Histories and the More-than-Human in South Asian Historical Fiction

This paper examines how contemporary South Asian historical fiction engages with planetary history by narrating more-than-human experiences within stories of colonialism, decline, and ecological disruption. Focusing on Indian author Amitav Ghosh's historical novel *The Glass Palace* and related literary works, I argue that contemporary historical fiction allows a unique convergence of human and nonhuman temporalities, highlighting how landscapes, forests, animals, and climatic forces are intertwined with the violence of empire and its lasting effects.

These novels broaden the historical imagination beyond anthropocentric views, positioning the environment not just as a backdrop but as an active participant in shaping colonial and postcolonial histories. By referencing long ecological durations and the planet's history—what Wai Chee Dimock calls “deep time”—they challenge traditional event-based histories and European frameworks of historical form as developed by theorists such as George Lukacs and Michel Foucault. This narrative approach emphasises slow violence and ecological decline, while also hinting at modes of care, relationality, and resilience within damaged landscapes.

Through an analysis of *The Glass Palace*, this paper explores how South Asian historical fiction rethinks history, memory, and agency. These works reveal how more-than-human entities—trees, soils, monsoons—serve as repositories for colonial violence. Ultimately, I contend that South Asian historical fiction and its diaspora are essential for cultivating a postcolonial planetary consciousness.

Poonam Sharma is a PhD scholar at the School of English, University of Leeds. Her PhD is fully funded by the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities AHRC studentship.

Her thesis addresses an ecocritical and planetary reading of contemporary Indian English novels. She completed her MPhil at the University of Cambridge as a Commonwealth Shared Cambridge Scholar. Her MPhil dissertation concentrated on Indian English novels following economic liberalisation in India. Her research interests encompass postcolonial studies, planetary humanities, animism, eco-materialism, environmental history, neo-colonialism, globalisation, Hindi modernism, and Indian English fiction. Prior to joining Leeds, she served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Delhi, India. She obtained her BA Hons and Masters in English Literature from the University of Delhi.

NÚRIA ANDRÉS-CURTO (Independent Scholar)

Socialised Affects: Subversion and Repression in Karen Roberts' *The Flower Boy* (1999)

This paper examines affect in Karen Roberts' *The Flower Boy* (1999) as a simultaneously subversive and repressive force. Through the lens of Tomkinsian Affect Theory, Chandi's and Rose-Lizzie's families are analysed as mirrors of one another, peacefully coexisting in an initial pre-social state. Nevertheless, once society bursts into their idyllic world in the form of World War II and its aftermath in Ceylon, the racial, cultural, and gender disparities result in diverging outcomes for each family member. The present paper argues that affect plays a pivotal role in this process by both disrupting and upholding certain social barriers. This duality is represented through the parallelisms drawn between Chandi/Rose-Lizzie, Premawathi/John, and Rangi/Anne, whose different relationships with emotionality have a direct influence in their respective endings. For Rose-Lizzie, John, and Anne, as part of a white, upper-class English family, affect remains productive throughout. For Chandi, Premawathi, and Rangi, as servants in their plantation, it becomes a tool of social oppression. Despite the strong ties that unite both families, their bodies are socialised, and consequently so is their connection with affect. The weight of history—as a continuum imprinted in the body—shapes how each character relates to emotions, and thus the separation of the families seems unavoidable. However, despite its ending, *The Flower Boy* is far from providing a solely bleak understanding of affect: while it emphasises its sociological side, the novel also depicts affects as a potentially healing force when embraced, capable of creating connections that challenge social norms.

Núria Andrés Curto is an English Studies graduate from the Universitat de Barcelona, who also spent a year studying at Trinity College Dublin. Her end-of-degree paper focused on the relationship between affect and gender during the Victorian period. Since then, she has been interested in how Affect Theory may lead to alternative ways of living that challenge pre-established social narratives.

CLÀUDIA MARTORI RIBALTA (Universitat de Barcelona)

The Presence of the Posthuman in Ratheesh Balakrishnan Poduval's film *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* (2019)

Within the context of the Posthuman, Ratheesh Balakrishnan Poduval's film *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* (2019) presents dualities and contradictions in contemporary India. Poduval's film uses Payyanur, in rural Kerala, as a vehicle to portray Indian traditional values and ideas in contraposition with a contemporary context of globalisation which clashes with these traditional values. Technology is another vehicle used to portray this reality in India, as the film presents an old, traditional Malayalam man who is forced to co-live with a helper android. The relationship built between the two comes in the form of a mix of comedy and drama, and illustrates interesting points about the way technology improves the quality of life of human beings and provides them with connection, especially in rural and isolated areas in India where health and other services are limited. Posthuman ideas are discussed throughout the film; Poduval explores the notion of identity that humans give to interactive androids such as the one that the film shows, as well as the view of those as equals once that an interspecies relationship is built with them. Further, despite the fact that India is a strong technological point in the world and thus is a very international country language-wise, the film is almost entirely in Indian Malayalam-language in order to reinforce the regionality of the social conflict. Thus, the aim of this paper is to analyse and explore the presence of posthuman ideas in *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* and the positive implications of technology and the Posthuman illustrated in Poduval's film.

Clàudia Martori Ribalta is a PhD student at Universitat de Barcelona with a doctoral thesis that focusses on posthumanism and transhumanism in the work of Jeanette Winterson. She has been educated at Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, and the University of Manchester. Her research interests are contemporary literature and philosophy, artificial intelligence, and film.

SAIMA RAFIQUE (Independent Scholar)

Understanding Muslim Feminine Identity in Deputy Nazir Ahmed's *Mirat-ul-Uroos*

The colonial officials culturally viewed the Oriental “women” as passive subjects or victims of male dominance within the confines of their homes. Their concern for them as sufferers of unfair gender dynamics stemmed sympathy or led to a self-imposed mission to liberate these vulnerable individuals from their cultural customs (domestic roles) or oppressive patriarchal control. In 1868, William Muir (who was Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces at the time) released an official notification regarding the creation of high quality books in the vernacular for public instruction, with particular emphasis on appropriate literature for women, who in the colonial discourse, were central to a progressive society. In response to this official announcement regarding the educational books that are useful or beneficial, Deputy Nazir Ahmed submitted his first novel, *Mirat-ul-Uroos* (1869), that was recognized as a meritorious work. Against its conventional characterization as a “reform” novel, this paper argues that “The Bride’s Mirror” can be viewed, through the use of the call, to construct a feminist position in order to de-construct gender related criticism through reinvigorating identity that was deeply rooted in the core beliefs. The novel revitalizes identity in its true interpretations by adhering to the Islamic teachings. This study concludes that Asghari’s character represents a multicultural feminist identity that embodies education, moral principles and their applicability as intrinsic for its uniqueness. Deeply rooted in the Islamic values, this character enjoys decision making, equity, and mutual communication and her successful conjugal life illustrates the freedom of choice that benignly or explicitly challenges the negative stereotypes often attributed to “Muslim women” as marginalized others.

Saima Rafique holds a Master’s degree in English Literature from the University of the Punjab, which she earned with a distinction. She also completed her Master’s degree in Construction and Representations of Cultural Identities (CRIC) at the University of Barcelona. She has worked in the sector of education in Pakistan and Kuwait. Her initial contribution was a poem titled “Home,” published in the electronic journal *Blue Gum*. Her fiction book on intercultural education is finalized and prepared for publishing. Two further books focusing on intercultural knowledge are near completion. She is also the author of several books on enhancing children’s comprehension in their everyday surroundings, and she is currently planning to undertake a PhD that amplifies research into understanding Muslim feminine identity in the works of Deputy Nazir Ahmed.

GRETA PERLETTI (University of Trento)

Vital Matter and Colonial Resistance: More-than-Human Agency in Early Indian Poetry in English

This paper explores how early Indian poets writing in English mobilize more-than-human agencies as forms of resistance to the disembodiment and extractive logic of colonial influence and domination. Drawing on new materialist theorists such as Stacy Alaimo and Jane Bennett, the paper focuses on selected poems by Toru Dutt and Henry Derozio to examine how non-human entities (such as trees, flowers, musical instruments, and landscapes) are animated as co-agents in poetic acts of memory, resistance, and cultural resilience.

Rather than passively reflecting a Romantic and Victorian aesthetic tradition that often reduced nature to picturesque backdrop or metaphor, these poets tactically manoeuvre within and against a lyrical discourse historically grounded in aestheticization, anthropocentrism, and the (traditionally male) idealization of nature. In poems like "Our Casuarina Tree," "The Lotus," "To India—My Native Land" and others, Dutt and Derozio engage with natural and material forms not simply as symbolic devices but as vital, affective presences: with what Jane Bennett would call "vibrant matter."

These more-than-human figures are not merely scenery but active participants in enacting remembrance, mourning, and resistance. By doing so, Dutt and Derozio carve out a space for an anti-colonial poetics that affirms ecological entanglement and cultural survival. Their work challenges the epistemic violence of colonialism by restoring agency to bodies – both human and non-human – that the empire sought to silence, commodify, or erase.

This paper would like to contribute to broader conversations in postcolonial ecocriticism, materialist theory, and South Asian literary studies by foregrounding the political and ontological stakes of poetic engagement with the more-than-human.

Greta Perletti is Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Trento, Italy. Her research focuses on nineteenth-century literature, interdisciplinary discourse, and colonial knowledge formations. She has published on Margaret Harkness's travel writing on India and will be co-editing (with Prof. U. Jana, Delhi University) a special number of the Journal *LEA* devoted to *Transimperial Encounters: Networks of Cultural and Literary Exchange Between India and Europe, 1870-1947* (due to be published in early 2027).

CLAUDIA SILVA (UNED)

Women's Bodies Shaped by the Ephemeral Practice of Kolams

In the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, there is a ritual cultural practice that women perform every morning at the threshold of their homes: the drawing of "kolams".

A "kolam" is a geometric design made on the ground with rice powder as an invitation to the deities to enter the house, a "welcome" to visitors, and a warder of negative energies that could harm the family (Gell, 1998, Ingold, 2006). The rice powder used in these painted prayers also provides food for small animals (Nagarajan, 2019) and it is a reminder of the ephemeral: the wind blows, the rain falls, feet walk on these beautiful designs that are destined to disappear during the day.

The nature of the kolam practice is transversal: women of all social status from both rural and urban environments, are part of this collective. Regardless of the caste or religion in which these female bodies are enculturated, Tamil women unleash their creativity to be part of the celebration and gratitude for life.

I have been studying the practice of kolam for over 12 years, from an audiovisual and anthropological approach. Some of the women who have been my "informants" belong to the Tamil diaspora: their stories speak of bodies and internal rhythms shaped by the years they spent painting kolams with their elders, and also, how returning to painting kolams outside India has "rooted" them, even acting as a mental "savior" in situations of isolation due to the migration process.

Claudia Silva is an audiovisual producer and anthropologist. She has worked on cultural exchange and ethno-education projects with indigenous communities from Colombia. Since 2013 she has been developing "*Kolam: An Ephemeral Women's Art of South India*", an outreach and research project developed from visits made to Tamil Nadu. Originally from Bogotá-Colombia, she currently lives in Madrid. <https://claudiasilva.org/> (webpage under development)

FRIDAY 28

11:00–12:00 – Aula Joan Maragall

Violence and Resistance Initiatives in Indoceanic Narratives From Multiple Perspectives

Chaired by **Esther Jiménez Rodríguez** and **Aina Díaz Llabrés** (Ratnakara)
With **Jorge Diego Sánchez**, **Juan Ignacio Oliva**, **Maurice O'Connor** (Ratnakara)

In this round table, we are interested in addressing the depiction of both violence and initiatives of resistance in literary works from the Indian subcontinent using an Indoceanic theoretical background and several perspectives and disciplines (postcolonial studies, ecocriticism, environmental materialism, blue humanities, silence studies, trauma studies, etc). Our focus lies on the analysis of narrative techniques, style, structure, metaphors, and symbology that might be used to represent ideas of violence, destruction, and/or collapse. Simultaneously, we would like to discuss how fractured bodies and structures might shape the stories and narration present in the works we analyze. These fractured bodies may take the form of women's bodies, watered bodies, wounded bodies in war, etc. Equally important is the presence of resistance and restoration initiatives in these Indoceanic narratives. We intend to explore its rendering in the works we are dealing with. Extending the idea of water, we aim to address the notion of "body" while connecting it to collapse and initiatives of restoration. Specifically, from a thalassentric perspective, we argue that understanding water as a body that functions—among other motifs and roles—as a historical and ecological archive offers the potential to both record and restore memory. In conclusion, we propose examining specific works that address violence and collapse, while offering initiatives of resistance and restoration in Indoceanic literature.

ROUND TABLE

THURSDAY 27

16:45–17:15 – Aula Joan Maragall

Chair: **Jorge Diego**

Shihan De Silva Jayasuriya, ed. *Global Portuguese: Literary, Historical and Anthropological Approaches* (Brill, 2025)

Global Portuguese results from conferences convened at the University of London School of Advanced Study to highlight legacies of Portuguese empire in postcolonial societies. Its chapters trace Portuguese legacies from the early modern to contemporary period through history, anthropology, language, literature, linguistics, and cuisine. There are sections devoted to sociolinguistic and anthropological method, and studies on Thailand, Sri Lanka, Goa, Macau, Brazil, Angola, Indonesia, São Tomé, and Zambesia.

Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry, ed. *Remembering the Past: Critical Perspectives on the Anti-Sikh Violence of 1984* (Orient Blackswan, 2025)

The systematic pogrom targeting Sikhs in 1984, in the national capital and elsewhere in India, remains a deeply painful episode in India's post-independence history. In October of that year, as the nation was still grappling with the repercussions of Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi became a pretext for shocking anti-Sikh violence that lasted several days, resulting in over 3,000 deaths in Delhi alone, and the dispossession of many more. Over four decades on, it is crucial to understand the impact of this violence and its aftermath. What caused this rupture in the secular fabric of the country? How were mobs emboldened to act violently for days, with little fear of accountability? How can civil society work towards repairing the fissures created by such an occurrence? *Remembering the Past* brings together a nuanced set of essays that address these questions, and the historical, political, social, and literary aspects of the carnage of 1984.

BOOK PRESENTATIONS

POETS' CORNER

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

FRIDAY 28

15:45–16:45 – Aula Capella

Chair: **Isabel Alonso** and **Dolors Ortega**

Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry's latest collections are entitled *Poems on the Anti-Sikh Violence of 1984: Survivors of Chaurasi* (2025) and *Calling from the Heart* (2025).

Gemma Gorga López (Barcelona, 1968) is a tenured professor in the Department of Hispanic Philology at the University of Barcelona. Alongside her teaching work, she has developed a career as a poet writing in Catalan and as a translator of Indian poets writing in English (Dilip Chitre, Kamala Das, and Arun Kolatkar). She published the essay *Indi Visible* (2018), which was translated into Spanish under the title *India Invisible* (2020).

Hemal Jayasuriya is a published poet and is acknowledged in the International Who's Who in Poetry. He obtained a PhD from Trinity College, University of Cambridge. Hemal also obtained a MA in Systems in Management, Lancaster University and a MSc in Computer Science from Heriot-Watt University. Prior to that, Hemal obtained a BSc Honours in Biophysics from Flinders University, Australia. He is a Life Fellow of the Cambridge Philosophical Society and a member of the Aristotelian Society. His articles are published in international scientific journals. His poems are published in academic journals and books. Hemal is inspired by the material and immaterial in the world which shapes his poetry. He is fascinated by cosmology and scientific phenomena in the world.

Saima Rafique's initial poetic contribution was a poem titled "Home," published in the electronic journal *Blue Gum*. Her fiction book on intercultural education is finalized and prepared for publishing. Two further books focusing on intercultural knowledge are near completion. She is also the author of several books on enhancing children's comprehension in their everyday surroundings, and she is currently planning to undertake a PhD that amplifies research into understanding Muslim feminine identity in the works of Deputy Nazir Ahmed.

WEDNESDAY 26

11:00–11:30 Welcome coffee and exhibition opening

– First floor, Claustre de Lletres

Exhibition: “Dones de l’Índia”

Photographies by **Lluís Vilaró**

12:30–13:30 Guided Tour UB Historic Building

– Meeting at Vestíbul de l’Edifici Històric

(Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585)

13:30

Cava Reception in the Faculty Garden

– Jardí Aribau

21:00

Conference Dinner – Restaurant la Lluna

(Carrer Santa Anna, 20, Barcelona)

THURSDAY 27

17.45

Guided Tour: “A Walk through Barcino”

– Meeting at Plaça Villa de Madrid

FRIDAY 28

17:00 – 17.45 Odissi Workshop with Güngür Arts

– Aula Capella

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

PARTICIPANTS

Anuradha Acharjee

(Universidade de Vigo)

Isabel Alonso Breto

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Núria Andrés Curto

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Cristina Arbués Caballé

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Sue Ballyn

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Sreya Chatterjee

(University of Leeds)

Albert Crespo

(Tour Guide)

Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry

(Central University of Gujarat)

Bianca Cherechés

(Universidad de Zaragoza)

Regiane Corrêa de Oliveira Ramos

(Universidade Estadual de Mato Grosso do Sul)

Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya

(University of London)

Aina Díaz Llabrés

(Universitat de Lleida)

Jorge Diego Sánchez

(Universidad de Salamanca)

Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru

(University of Bucharest)

Kathleen Firth

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Roger García Coll

(Laia Foundation)

Carolina García Rodero

(Organizing Committee)

Itisha Giri

(Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Gemma Gorga

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Maria Grau Perejoan

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Sonia A. Haiduc

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Felicity Hand

(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Dolores Herrero Granado

(Universidad de Zaragoza)

Jacqueline Hurtley

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Hemal Jayasuriya

(Poet)

Esther Jiménez Rodríguez

(Universitat de Lleida)

Núria Mina-Riera

(Universitat de Lleida)

Claudia Martori Ribalta

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Alejandra Moreno Álvarez

(Universidad de Oviedo)

Antonia Navarro Tejero

(Universidad de Córdoba)

Maurice O'Connor

(Universidad de Cádiz)

Juan Ignacio Oliva

(Universidad de La Laguna)

Maricel Oró-Piqueras

(Universitat de Lleida)

Dolors Ortega Arévalo

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Óscar Ortega Montero

(Wits University)

Marta Ortega Sáez

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Mercedes Padial

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Greta Perletti

(University of Trento)

Bill Phillips

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Berenice Piñero Fernández

(Organizing Committee)

Esther Pujolràs-Noguer

(Universitat de Lleida)

Saima Rafique

(Independent Scholar)

Cornelis Martin Renes

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Brototi Roy

(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Jorge Ruano Pérez

(Independent Scholar)

Carolina Rubio

(Güngur Arts)

Esther Sánchez-Pardo

(Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Juan Sanz Amor

(Universidad de Valladolid)

Haritha Savithri

(Writer)

Teresa Segura-Garcia

(Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Raisa R. Serrano Muñoz

(Universidad de Córdoba)

Poonam Sharma

(University of Leeds)

María Elena Sierra

(Universitat de Barcelona)

Claudia Silva

(UNED)

F. Berna Uysal

(Hacettepe University)

Lluís Vilaró

(Photographer)

Juan Miguel Zарандона

(Universidad de Valladolid)

NOTES

