

Imaginary Homelands

8 – 10 March 2018

International Conference of the Department of Germanic and Romance Studies

University of Delhi



Venue: Room no. 22
Department of Germanic
and Romance Studies,
University of Delhi.
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In his essay *Imaginary Homelands* ("Imaginary Homelands" -- "Essays and Criticism 1981-1991") Salman Rushdie voices the political and cultural plight of the migrant and of the writer as an exile, migrant or expatriate in particular. The latter creates from fragments of memory, akin to the broken mirror which may actually be as valuable as the ones supposedly unflawed, an Imaginary Homeland.

If this Imaginary Homeland exists due to the migrant -- whether from one country to another, from one language or culture to another or even from a traditional rural society to a modern metropolis— then in contemporary times the idea of a homeland is increasingly becoming inhabited in imagination.

While on the sub-continent the exigencies of imperialism and capitalism rendered more than 5 million humans homeless in the first half of the twentieth century, during the same time Europe witnessed a high scale of exile and homelessness due to the fascist ideologies of the ruling regimes.

Homeland as a trope in the printed and visual text has followed trajectories that evolved in context to the notion of the nation and the nation-state since the rise of Modern Europe. Since then in Europe national boundaries have repeatedly changed, with the European Union substantively reducing the traditional significance of national boundaries and engendering a pan European identity.

However, most of the erstwhile colonies of the West, where according to Benedict Anderson the nation and nationalism developed in context to colonialism, are markedly grappling to cement the contours of the nation state and confer a national identity to their people. Both these developments, despite their differences challenge the established concepts of the homeland.

A place called home with its ideal of a fixed, rooted space is also being redefined by the waves of migration from *homeland* to *homeland* in the wake of the contemporary forms of globalization. The philosopher, Vilém Flusser, raises questions about the viability of ideas of national identity in a world whose borders are becoming increasingly arbitrary and permeable. Flusser argues that modern societies are in flux, with traditional linear epistemologies being challenged by global circulatory networks and a growth in visual stimulation. The resultant nomadism, rootlessness and homelessness further contribute to the homeland becoming an increasingly imagined space.

The idyllic, pastoral homestead of the farmer, the bourgeois sentimental celebration of the nation, the ideologies of homeland demonising the Other and the recent habitat of humans in the virtual world, have all been articulated in the various genres of literature, film, painting, sculpture, music as well as in the theories of Space, State, Nation, Empire, Entangled Histories, Cosmopolitanism, Culture, Migration and Exile Studies.

The conference aims to provide space for a nuanced engagement with the idea of Homeland, imagined or real, from its inception to its current manifestations across multiple literary and cultural formulations.

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PROGRAMME

Thursday, 8th March 2018

10:00-10:15	Introductory Remarks	<i>Shashwati Mazumdar</i> <i>University of Delhi</i>
10:15-10:45	Keynote Address	<i>Prabhu Mahapatra</i> <i>University of Delhi</i>
10:45-11:15	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
11:15-12:45	Panel 1 Carola Hilmes <i>Goethe-Universität Frankfurt</i> P K Yasser Arafath <i>University of Delhi</i> Sugata Nandi <i>West Bengal State University</i>	<i>Chair: Amar Farooqui</i> The Autobiographical Essays of Emma Kann Grandma in <i>Dhoti</i> : Love, Pain and 'Return' of the Early Mappila Settlers in Malabar Permanent Exile: Unattainable Homelands in 'East-West'
12:45-13:45	LUNCH BREAK	
13:45-15:15	Panel 2 Margit Köves <i>University of Delhi</i> Angharad Mountford <i>University of London</i> Alka Dutt <i>University of Delhi</i>	<i>Chair: Kusum Aggarwal</i> The Custom-officer and God: Form and the fiction of home Greda Meyer and Poems of a Non-Existent Heimat Lost Souls and Imaginary Homelands

Friday, 9th March 2018

10:00-11:30	Panel 4	Chair: Shaswati Mazumdar
	Bruno Hamm-Pütt <i>University of Potsdam</i>	Willy Haas or the productive absence of Heimat
	Aparajita Bhattacharya <i>University of Delhi</i>	Remembering a Lost Homeland: Recollecting and Revisiting Partition of India through Museums
	Menka Singh <i>University of Delhi</i>	Being a Mujahir
11:30-12:00	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
12:00-13:30	Panel 4	Chair: Tanya Roy
	Gopa Nayak <i>Jindal Global University</i>	Imaginary Homeland in the Digital Age
	Jigyasa Hasija <i>Jamia Millia Islamia</i>	Popular Ecofeminist World Film Theory: Unwrapping a multifarious concept
	Pietro Laretta	Italian Heros for the Indian Homeland
13:30-14:30	LUNCH BREAK	
14:30-16:00	Panel 5	Chair: Farida Irani
	Ena Panda <i>University of Delhi</i>	Homeland Fragmented in Monique Proulx's Short Stories
	Alisha Ali Khan <i>Jamia Millia Islamia</i>	Poetics of Gender and Diaspora and the Female Expatriate Writer: Study of Short Fiction by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
	Aarti Paul <i>University of Delhi</i>	Reimagining the lost homeland: An analysis of Nathacha Appanah's works

Saturday, 10th March 2018

10:00-11:30	Panel 6 Rama Paul <i>University of Delhi</i> Zainab Abrar & Sk. Raqeeb Raza <i>Jamia Millia Islamia</i> Ramesh Kumar <i>University of Delhi</i>	Chair: Vijaya Venkataraman Displaced Subjects and Exiled Memories: A Reading of Luisa Valenzuela's <i>Novela Negra con argentinos</i> Identity and Power: The Negotiation of Multicultural Identities through Detective Fiction In search of a homeland to belong: "The moon and the fires" by Cesare Pavese
11:30-12:00	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
12:00-13:30	Panel 7 Ibrahim Wani & Saima Farhad <i>Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai) and University of Kashmir</i> Iram Qureshi <i>University of Kashmir</i> Mitia Nath <i>University of Delhi</i>	Chair: Maneesha Taneja Imagining Kashmir and the New Cultural Turn: Exploring Articulations of Home and Belonging Hybridizing Spaces: Agha Shahid Ali as a Transnational Bricoleur Poet Finding a Nation, Losing a Home: Reading Dispossession, Loss, and Isolation in Intizar Husain's <i>Basti</i>
13:30-14:30	LUNCH BREAK	
14:30-16:00	Panel 8 Deepali Yadav <i>Banaras Hindu University</i> Abiral Kumar <i>Delhi University</i>	Chair: Simpy Sinha Reality or Fiction?: The Hotel at the End of the World and the Visual Story of North-East India Re-Imagining the Homeland: the immigration and emigration of the Chinese-Indian diaspora in India
	Closing Remarks	Shashwati Mazumdar

ABSTRACTS

Carola Hilmes, Institut für Deutsche Literatur und ihre Didaktik, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

The Autobiographical Essays of Emma Kann

In 1933 Emma Kann (1914-2009) emigrated to England and came back to the continent in 1935, when she stayed for a short while in the Netherlands and afterwards in Belgium. In 1940 she escaped to France where she was arrested and spend one month in Gurs, a rather famous camp north of the Pyrenees. She was arrested not because she was Jewish but because she was German. In 1942 she went to Cuba and in 1945 she reached the United States where she lived for about 35 years. In 1981 she re-migrated to Germany and stayed at the Lake Constance for the rest of her life.

The poetry of Emma Kann is fairly unknown, her autobiographical essays and the stories of her childhood in Frankfurt am Main are even unpublished; they are stored in the Archives of Exile in the German National Library. A shortened version of her “Autobiographisches Mosaik” is scheduled for publication at the end of this year. In my paper I will discuss where to find the homeland of Emma Kann: in Germany or in the States, in Frankfurt, in New York or in Konstanz. Quite likely we will find the imaginary homeland in her poetry. Kann’s philosophical reflection on the notion of homeland and the use of homeland as a trope in her poetry and prose should be presented in my paper.

P K Yasser Arafath, Department of History, University of Delhi, Delhi

Grandma in Dhoti: Love, Pain and ‘Return’ of the Early Mappila Settlers in Malabar

This paper tries to analyse how the early Mappila settlers in Wayanad, a hill district in northern Malabar region, identify themselves with their *nadu* (home land). Beginning from the early 18th century, this region has witnessed a large number of ‘plainland’ Mappila Muslims, settling there as spice traders and plantation workers. In the second decade of the 20th century a third kind of settlers- Mappilas from southern Malabar who escaped colonial prosecution, following a long phase of agrarian unrest and anticolonial struggles- reconfigured the nature of Muslim settlements in the region. Hardly concerned about the idea of ‘return’, Muslim settlers devised certain mechanisms to preserve their ‘home region’. From naming their settlements/

houses/locality to strictly following sartorial and dietary behaviors to establishing matrimonial alliances, the settlers tried to preserve the memory of their homeland/*lost land*.

The first Muslim settlers were part of the *first wave shafiite agrarian expansion* and they reproduced their 'homeland' in the hill by designing piety spaces such as *serambi* (piety houses) and *dargha* (sufi shrines). My preliminary investigation shows that they began to express their cultural personage strongly, as they experienced new conflictual situations. It happened as the cultural contours of the region became more assorted in the wake of an extensive plantation based migration in the second half of the 20th century. Subsequently, Mappila settlers infused into their cultural everyday a strong element of performative traditions from their 'homeland'. New performatives established two kinds of networks-a kinship network among the 'settlers' in the region itself and an emotional grid with the people in their *lost-land*.'

Sugata Nandi, Dept. of History, West Bengal State University, Kolkata

PERMANENT EXILE: Unattainable homelands in 'East-West'

This essay is a study of the way the idea of homeland figures in a celebrated Bengali novel titled 'Purbo-Poshchim' (East-West) published in 1989. Written by Sunil Gangopadhyay, arguably the best known Bengali creative writer since the 1960s, it is a two part magnum opus and ranks among the most popular and influential novels of contemporary Bengali literature. It is a story of two generations of a Bengali middle class family, which is uprooted from its ancestral home in east Bengal after Partition in 1947 part of which migrates to the West in search of a better life in the late 1960s. In the first part of the novel, Pratap, the protagonist becomes a refugee in Calcutta as his family is forced to migrate to the city in 1947 following Partition. He endures extreme hardships to look after his family and to gain respectability in what is a hostile and alien city to him. He never feels at home in it, even though he reconciles with the fact that he will never be able to return to/regain his homeland. His son, Atin, the protagonist in the second part of the novel, is a bright youth who receives good education and joins the Maoist Naxalite uprising in late 1960s in Calcutta. He migrates to the USA and settles there to escape violent death suffered by many of his comrades at the hands of the police. He willingly becomes an American citizen yet continues to imagine himself as a Bengali from Calcutta and secretly yearns for an impossible return to his homeland. I argue that through the father-son duo, Pratap and Atin, Gangopadhyay sought to

establish that for a refugee homeland connotes a loss which forces him/her to live in a state of self-imposed permanent exile in an alien land which never becomes his/her own.

Margit Köves, Dept. of Finno-Ugrian, Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi

The Custom-officer and God: Form and the fiction of home

“We know very well that packing is the second most important thing in one’s life. That under the most important there lies a fibre trunk which one has to stuff with the most important” (Attila Bartis, *Lazarus Apocrypha*)

In the panel discussion on *Imaginary homelands* Attila Bartis suggested that the notion of home is linked with identity and time. Bartis was born in Transylvania, he left Romania in 1984 after the death of his mother. When he left he associated his place of home with the geographic location, but later he realized that an important place was occupied by the loss of his mother. The paper deals with the shifting notion of home along with the changes of time, perception of reality, and the intimacy and estrangement that can take place with time and movement. It also takes up the issue of how the connection with archaeology, the partial nature of vision (what Rushdie calls “broken mirrors”) is connected with the fragmentation of form in the case of some Hungarian writers, in particular in the work of Attila Bartis.

Angharad Mountford, Dept. Institute of Modern Languages Research School of Advanced Study, University of London, London

Gerda Mayer and Poems of a Non-Existent Heimat

In her autobiography, *Prague Winter*, Gerda Mayer, a poet who escaped to Britain through the Kindertransport in 1938, refers to where she lives not as home, but rather as “Home”¹, suggesting that this concept is very much a constructed, rather than real one. Instead of being a physical, tangible place, and rather an expectation or ideal with qualities known only to her, Gerda’s perception of her homeland is thus a fictionalised construct that exists only in her imagination.

Whether real or imagined, however, Gerda expresses loss with regard to “home” and her homeland after having emigrated to Britain. Mourning the place where she grew up as a child, and where she once felt she belonged, Mayer explains that “[...] I grieve for my lost

¹ Gerda Mayer, *Prague Winter*, (London: Hearing Eye, 2005) p.9

tree;/ Far away the wind bore me.’² However, upon returning to the childhood home she dreams of, it is evident that the homeland in Gerda’s mind is at odds with the real, geographical place.

The evident discrepancy between her perceived homeland and the reality of it is a result of her ‘selectively idealized memory of the past’³ which informs her perception of this imaginary homeland. Through the lens of nostalgia, and also that of childhood, Mayer’s homeland is a very different one to the homeland she revisits as an adult after decades in Britain.

Ideas of ‘home’ and belonging in German-speaking cultures are very much tied up with the concept of the Heimat: this idealised notion of the German homeland can be described as the place ‘where one feels at home [...] [but] becomes aware of it only after one has lost part of it.’⁴ Thus, this paper will analyse the poetry of Gerda Mayer, focusing on her conception and portrayal of her lost homeland.

Through having an imagined homeland, however, and the later realisation that a tangible and geographically factual one may not exist, Gerda looks to find a new, if additional, homeland in Britain, although it is clear that she experiences very different feelings towards the old and new Heimaten. Through this new homeland in Britain, Gerda Mayer is able to experience the feelings associated with Heimat, namely connectedness, shelter and safety, which to a large extent fulfils the function of a homeland, whether real or imagined.

Alka Dutt, Dept of English, University of Delhi, Delhi

Lost Souls and Imaginary Homelands

Every moment that passes in life, is lost forever. Past time can be re-visited through imagination. Sub-conscious mind never forgets happiest moments and memories of childhood. Salman Rushdie might write from a foreign land, he might think that he is one of the minorities or a person without value to country where he was born; truth is that not only is he the true son

² Gerda Mayer, ‘All the Leaves Have Lost Their Trees’, in *The Knockabout Show*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978)

³ Peter Blickle, *Heimat: a critical theory of the German idea of the homeland*, (London: Camden House, 2002) p.29

⁴ Peter Blickle, *Heimat: a critical theory of the German idea of the homeland*, (London: Camden House, 2002), p.4

of India, but more alive and attached to Indian soil than most who happen to inhabit the land in present times. Writer's consciousness keeps alive the past to revitalize new generations. Their work is a proof; it acts as historical, political, social, cultural and traditional evidence of all that today's Society stands upon; be it the greenland or the deserted wasteland of human soul. Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands* reveals the writer's pain, loss, and hurt feelings besides much more. Emigrated writers need to realize that one can be a member of his own community in one's homeland, and yet alienated from it because times have changed. Globalized world has taken away unique identity of what was once considered to be true identity of a country and its countrymen. Human nature has actually changed. Virginia Woolf had remarked upon this during her time. One need not visit deep past to understand this gruesome truth; one can just think about past few years and all the differences will appear on mind's screen. Proposed paper would like to delve into problem of hungry souls who need to create replicas of lost homes through their imagination. The paper would like to shed more light on all that has been lost than just the 'homelands'. Solutions might be difficult, but not unreachable to quench this hunger.

Bruno Hamm-Pütt, University of Potsdam, Potsdam

Willy Haas or the productive absence of *Heimat*

Willy Haas or the productive absence of *Heimat* in his monumental work *Principle of Hope*, author Ernst Bloch links the concept of *Heimat* with that of childhood: *so entsteht in der Welt etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint und worin noch niemand war: Heimat*. Bloch evokes an imaginary homeland¹ which can only be discovered in memory and is thus necessarily already ended. At the same time, he depicts the human search for lost time as a historical-philosophical force: *so entsteht in der Welt etwas*.

It is possible to read Bloch's figure as a theory of hermeneutics in nuce ; it establishes a nexus between past, present and future. But interpreting the passage as a theory of hermeneutics simultaneously raises the question of its universalisation: *scheint es allen in die Kindheit?* In my contribution I would like to compare Bloch's figure with the autobiography of the journalist and critic Willy Haas, published under the title *Erinnerungen* by Paul List Verlag, Munich, in 1957. To some extent, autobiographical writings display an elective affinity with the aforementioned nexus, since they frequently aim to reflect on the past in such a way that the meaning of one's life is assumed, so that the reflection is a message for future generations. But

following the reconstruction of Haas' past reveals a remarkable blind spot around the motive of Heimat, even where it is discussed as a topos. What might be the source of Haas' avoidance? From the first chapter onwards, Haas' *Erinnerungen* display his genuine experience of exclusion, along with his dedicated effort to develop a counterstrategy. Outlining his counterstrategy enables me not only to address Haas' discontent towards a certain notion of Heimat, but also to expose his imaginary foundation of a cosmopolitan identity - Willy Haas' home.

Aparajita Bhattacharya, Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi, Delhi.

Remembering a lost Homeland: Recollecting and Revisiting Partition of India through Museums

The end of colonial rule in the subcontinent came with a catastrophic price called 'partition'. The following exodus displaced and traumatized human life across the borders. Seventy years down the line while those generations of partition survivors are gradually waning attempts are made to remember the human experiences of partition by creating special museums to document memories of the event through in camera interviews, photographs, suvenoirs, memorabilia and personal papers among a few. With the opening of Partition Museum in Amritsar (2017) a painful but long hushed out chapter of 'freedom at midnight' is finally commemorated. While different nations of the world have demonstrated the confidence to curate unpleasant, rather brutal experiences of their past through museums like Holocaust, Hiroshima tragedy, Apartheid and even an event as contemporary as 9/11, independent India have somehow followed a very 'safe' mode of documenting history disconnected with memory and human emotion relegating museums into unexciting dull spaces in this process. The present paper seeks to argue how museums in India can serve as fascinating spaces of remembering, celebrating and debating in equal measures bringing in unheard voices, unnoticed sources from the margins to the centre stage. The personal narratives of partition need to be told, heard and preserved because it is only in this nostalgia and mourning the lost 'homeland' exists.

Menka Singh, Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, Delhi

Being a Muhajir

The proposed paper aims to look at the Muhajir community in the wake of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. About eight million people or roughly a quarter of India's

population migrated to Pakistan mainly the Sindh district, and they came to be known as the Muhajirs or the Mohajirs. This group of migrants spoke Urdu language and took along with them, their culture and their customs. However, they were perceived to be different as they were not the 'natives' of Pakistan. Their education, language, urbaneness and liberalism further alienated them from the rest of the community. However, political changes from the 1980s demanded that the Muhajir community evolve its ethnic nationalism to a new brand of Mujahir nationalism. This was done through the constitution of the MuhajirQuami Movement (MQM) in 1984. This led to the evolution of the imagined identity of the Muhajirs as a distinct Sindh group. The Muhajirs claimed this new Urdu speaking Sindhi identity by linking the patron saint of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif, to their own spirituality. Thus, the Muhajir community managed to entrench their identity within the territorial space of Pakistan. This paper by employing the example of the Muhajirs would show the changing nature of identity and homeland. While the first group of Muhajirs lamented India in particular the urban locales of Delhi and Lucknow as home, the latter generations consciously manufactured an alternative homeland through the spiritual association with Shah Abdul Latif to integrate themselves as Muhajir Sindhi Pakistanis.

Gopa Nayak, English Language Centre, Jindal Global University

Imaginary Homeland in the Digital Age

Access to internet in mobile phones has led many to live in an imaginary homeland not only in developed nations but in developing ones like India. With easy and cheap access to internet this imaginary homeland is now based on the digital world that is a virtual world and could be far away from the real.

From games to politics everything takes place in this virtual world. Children play imaginary war games; adults indulge in real politics; business partners come together to yield real profits and digital love culminates in real marriages. All this happens in this imaginary homeland created in the digital world of the internet.

The benefits of this imaginary homeland in terms of entertainment and enjoyment are many. They include celebration of important personal events such as birthdays and anniversaries. The sharing of joy during celebration of festivals such as Christmas and Pongal.

Are there any dangers lurking around these newly built imaginary homeland set up in the digital world? This paper makes an attempt to look into the good bad and the ugly signs of this imaginary homeland set up by many in this digital age. The social and cultural implications of this changing set up of an imaginary homeland based on the digital access is discussed in this paper.

Jigyasa Hasija, Dept of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Popular Ecofeminist World Film Theory: Unwrapping a multifarious concept

The paper will attempt to posit popular movies across the globe with an ecologically feminist bent, as one of the possibilities to organise World Motion Picture theory. The three methods used here – theory as a subject, a practice and an assessment – will first understand it as a system and second make an effort to establish it. Finally, the objective will be to truthfully define Ecofeminist World Cinema as an effortless concept: What is its audience, its ‘politics’ and its power process, if any? Why is it still given negligible attention? Can Hollywood’s hegemonic grip be done away with? More so, as the term itself is made up of two of the subsidiary theories of literature – Ecofeminism and Global Film, will it be able to move away from dichotomies? The paper will echo thin parts of Lucia Nagib’s understanding of Polycentric Multiculturalism as cutting across theory according to relevant movements of a particular time frame with no one specific culture’s movie as fundamental. It will also borrow from Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim’s book on re-charting the identity of World Cinema.

The idea is not to ‘fix’ any provincial peripheries; rather it is a contemporary challenge to ascertain authenticity. There is no doubt about the fact that a study of this topic will address the Postcolonial, yet it will be more of a caress than a clinch. Due to the fact that it is still work-in-progress and part of a gargantuan umbrella term, this document is a tentative step towards, hopefully, an explicit plus frank foundation of reorienting global films.

Interdisciplinarity has amassed a following that has today become fantastically important due to pressure from academia to go beyond research and dig out newer, better and more complex areas to study. In the light of this statement, the paper will hopefully lead to a positive rethinking of how Ecofeminist World Cinema may be read.

Pietro Lauretta, Dept. of GRS, University of Delhi, Delhi.

Italian Heroes for Indian homeland

Narrative has played an important role on the formation of identity and self-image of people and large-scale identities, such as nation.

Narrative as a rhetoric technique uses as well great personalities in building up the imaginary of a homeland.

It is quite interesting to see the role and limits that key personalities of Italian Risorgimento had for some leaders of Indian Independence.

Ena Panda, Dept. of Germanic and Romance Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi

Homeland fragmented in Monique Proulx's short stories

Monique Proulx, one of the leading Canadian Francophone writers, in her short stories, deals with complex questions of citizenship, federalism and cessation in the context of the Francophone Canada. Questioning the socio-political events that led to the separatist movements in Québec, she tries to reimagine a home for the French Linguistic minority in the larger Canadian Federal framework. The paper is an attempt to understand how the writer depicts the quest of her protagonists to create a space for themselves within the anglophone Canada. In opposition with the separatist voices that paint Québec as a homogenous habitus of French speaking communities, her stories tend to redefine the Francophone homeland as a heterogenous admixture of various cultures and languages that preserve their specificities despite its assimilatory appeal. Refusing to produce any clear-cut solution to the prevalent political discourses of Québec in the Eighties and Nineties, her stories reflect the dilemma of exclusionary paradigms of conceiving homeland, based on one language and culture.

Alisha Ali, Dept. of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Poetics of Gender and Diaspora and the Female Expatriate Writer: Study of Short Fiction by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Diaspora Literature delineates displacement, existential rootlessness, quest for identity as its major themes. It also addresses issues related to amalgamation or disintegration of cultures.

As narratives of diaspora are torn between two places and two cultures and often languages, the female writer navigates a new literary space through broken psyche of the women

immigrants and translates that into writing. The contact between different cultural and linguistic groups contributes to an increased need to develop symbolic expressions of identities and to the formation of mixed identities that are hybrid and complex, especially the female identity. This research paper will explore how women's writing within a diasporic setting sheds light on not only the fictional characters but also the female writer as an immigrant and the struggle to fill the void of a longing homeland. This shall consider textual analysis of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni as an expatriate female writer suggesting and fusing the study of linguistic style or language of literature under an immigrant setting by focusing not simply on micro-contexts such as the effects of words or language in general, across sentences or conversations but also with the macro-contexts of larger social, cultural and gendered patterns.

Aarti Paul, Dept. of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi

Reimagining the lost homeland: An analysis of Nathacha Appanah's works.

In the absence of any indigenous population, Mauritius was colonised by the French and the British and was the destination of many Indians who migrated there in the 19th century as indentured labour in search of a better future. Their experiences passed on from one generation to another in the form of anecdotes become a basis for Nathacha Appanah Mouriquand, an indo-Mauritian writer and a self-proclaimed descendant of these immigrants, to explore the History of her people through her novels *Les Rochers de Poudre d'Or* (2003) and *Le Dernier Frère* (2007). While through her works Appanah engages with the history and identity of her people she also reimagines the lost homeland through her narratives and plunges deep into the cultural and historical memory of her people to create a collective identity of her community.

Rama Paul, Department of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi

Displaced Subjects and Exiled Memories: A Reading of Luisa Valenzuela's *Novela Negra con argentinos*.

Argentine writer Luisa Valenzuela's 1990 novel, *Novela Negra con argentinos* is the author's pursuit to make sense of the destructive nature of exile, something that Said would have called 'unhealable'. Unlike many exile writings that function within the logic of diluting the inherent trauma to privilege the writing itself as a transcendental experience, Valenzuela invokes and

retains certain *tension* that exists between the deep loss embedded in the actual experience of exile and the possibility of exile writing having a liberating potential. Writing about Argentina, Valenzuela's works do not look for any conclusions or resolutions to the conditions of exile. Just as Said says "On the twentieth-century scale, exile is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible... to think of the exile informing this literature as beneficially humanistic is to banalise its mutilations..." (Said, p174), Valenzuela's novel refuses to chalk out rational definition of any kind nor seek any answers to this exile. Instead, she takes us off on a journey of radical poetics and sexual/textual ethos in *Novela Negra* that does nothing to resolve the inherent crisis engendered by the idea of exile. There is no 'here' (exile) versus 'there' (home) in the novel. It is replete with chaotic episodes that defy logic at every turn and is penned in a radical aesthetics that accentuates not just the inner workings of violence and the effects of trauma of exile but also the failure of conventional aesthetics, linguistic, social and political categories. This paper will thus try to study this "radical poetics" of *Novela Negra* that looks beyond the subjects of exile to the "repressed subjective and cultural unconscious" (Cordones-Cook).

- Said, Edward (2000) *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press
- Cordones-Cook, Juanamaria (1995), "Novela negra con argentinos: The Desire to Know". *World Literature Today*, Vol 69, No. 4, Focus on Luisa Valenzuela (Autumn, 1995)

ZainabAbrar/ Sk. Raqeeb Raza, Dept.of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Delhi

Identity and Power: The Negotiation of Multicultural Identities through Detective Fiction

Diaspora fiction is a genre which mixes memory and desire of the emigrant writer to give a semblance of power and control to not only the said writer but to the readers as well. In the conception of diaspora fiction, identity plays a significant role as it becomes a tool to re/negotiate uncertain terrains. On the other hand, Detective Fiction is a genre which is based on clear cut lines of good vs evil where the good is always aligned or works under the influence of State in order to uproot the evil or the Other which threatens the cohesion and structure of the society. Through the dual framework of diaspora and detective fiction Ausma Zehanat Khan, a Pakistani Muslim human rights lawyer settled in Canada who has spent years studying the Srebrenica disaster in Bosnia where hundreds of Muslim males were slaughtered, gives

power to her emigrant Muslim detective. She dwells on the idea of justice in a foreign land and how identity is formed not only through the formulations by others but also through self-realization. In light of this, the paper aims to examine how the multicultural state of Canada which accommodates many nationalities and faiths becomes a ready vessel to not only welcome but promulgate her Muslim detective. Taking cues from Salman Rushdie's 'Imaginary Homelands', the paper would aim to examine how the writer's existential crisis of being uprooted from her home country finds resonance in her writing a detective story where the detective (a vessel of the government), for a change from the usual power dynamics, belongs to a minority faith as well as a minority race.

Ramesh Kumar, Dept. of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi

In Search of a Homeland to Belong: "The Moon and the Bonfires" by Cesare Pavese.

The protagonist of the novel *The moon and the bonfires*, was a foundling who was fostered in poverty in a rural community in northwest Italy called *le langhe*. Having made his fortune in America for twenty long years he decided to return to the place where he grew up in search of his past and people with whom he spent his childhood and adolescence. However, in 20 years, so much has changed, he found only one of his old friends Nuto, both visited the places they used to go in the past and relived the old moments through memory. He tried to reconnect with the past and relate it to what he finds remaining in the present. The protagonist was nostalgic for the time when he was nobody and desired for a simpler place to live in he is unable to settle. The novel begins with a clear sense of rootlessness of the protagonist: "I don't know where I was born. There isn't a house or a piece of land or any bones in this part of the world about which I could say, "This is what I was before I was born." I don't know if I come from the hill or the valley, from the woods or from a house with balconies."

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Imagining Kashmir and the New Cultural Turn: Exploring Articulations of Home and Belonging.

The idea of Kashmir as a distinct place has been centered through discursive positionings in various cultural, political and religious milieus. Placed in these milieus, Kashmir is associated

with a range of images and imaginings; from that of heavenly desire, rustic geographies and competing divinities, to that of spectacularities of violent conflict and political dissent. In this paper, we seek to problematise and complexify some of these bounded and fixed positionings. In doing so, we ask questions like; What are the various articulations of place and belonging for Kashmir? How is the idea of home articulated and by whom (from within or outside)? And how are these articulations appropriated or unsettled in new cultural expressions?

To explore these questions, the paper is divided into two sections. The first section gives an overview of dominant articulations on Kashmir; positions of place, nation, belonging, exile and homeland, explored with reference to the emergence of the notion of *Kashmiriyat*, its centering, and in the ‘break’ from *Kashmiriyat*, and in the associated politics for this trajectory and trajectorising.

The second section of the paper identifies a period of contemporary cultural expression in Kashmir – a new turn. This turn is primarily identified through new writing in English; in this we explore few sections of books like *The Country without a Post Office, Of Gardens and Graves, The Many Faces of Kashmiri Nationalism, Curfewed Night* etc. The cultural turn is also identified through the influence, adoption and reconfiguration of cultural forms mediated through globalisation and technology, particularly music. In this, our focus is on the text of two songs; a blended multilingual song by the band *Alifanda* new rendition of a folk song by *AbhaHanjura*.

Across these texts, we observe that ideas and notions of belonging are being unsettled, rediscovered and reconfigured. Also, texts by the ‘local’ as well as the one who writes from outside (but lives within) intermingle and intersect to create new locations for home and identity.

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Hybridizing Spaces: Agha Shahid Ali as a Transnational Bricoleur Poet.

Agha Shahid Ali (1949—2001), a “Kashmiri—American” poet, has been widely deemed to be a writer who brought the disrupted socio-political landscape of Kashmir on the map of world poetry. While some of his poems derive literary sustenance from an imagination that evokes the past, the periods when conflicts were at its peak in Kashmir and underscores repercussions of the concomitant insurgency, yet his poems are a far cry from being pigeonholed as fossilized

resistance literature or regarded as being radical engagements with the idea of home. Owing to his relocation from Srinagar to Delhi and eventually to America, and his secular upbringing, his poetry explores and re-explores liminal spaces and cultural exchanges. Ali's poetry overrides the notion of home as a mythic place and represents a kind of mediation and coming to terms with the inhabitation of a nonethnic space. His interrogative attitude towards Islamic fundamentalism, and invoking images from Islam both contemptuously and deferentially also places him at a non-affiliated position. Additionally, whether by deeming English as a non-native language for himself but rendering his poems in it or his introduction of ghazal into the mainstream American literature or the allusions he made in his works to places, religions, cultures, languages and histories across the globe, the notion of classical diaspora eventually stands nullified and redundant in his poems.

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Finding a Nation, Losing a Home: Reading Dispossession, Loss, and Isolation in Intizar Husain's *Basti*

My paper aims to examine the interrelationships between the ideas of "home" and "homeland", nationality, and exile, through a reading of Intizar Husain's 1979 novel *Basti*. Drawing from the nostalgia, sense of loss, and grief that informs the novel, my paper will argue that the Partition of 1947 problematised notions of "homeland", as well as national and cultural identities, around which nation-states are constructed, enabling a powerful contradiction to emerge between one's stated nationality, and one's homeland. The paper will seek to demonstrate that the novel, in its depiction of a family's dislocation, and subsequent dissociation with its community during the Partition, captures the crisis experienced by the millions who left behind a "homeland" to gain a promised "nation-state" and a "nationality", and therefore, illustrates the conflict between the two often elided terms. Borrowing from Judith Butler's discussion of grief and mourning in her work *Precarious Life*, my paper will argue that in the grief of the narrator over the loss of his "home", resides a truth about the significance of the community (multicultural as it may be) in the being of an individual, a role that the political construction of the nation-state can hardly perform. As a result, when the narrator leaves his home (*basti*) in Rupnagar (India) behind, to find a new nationality in Lahore (which remains unnamed throughout the novel), he experiences an estrangement akin to that of an exile. But can one be an exile in one's own country?

Through an engagement with these questions in the context of *Basti*, my paper will attempt to demonstrate how Partition narratives remain one of the most potent interrogations of official definitions of nationalities and homelands.

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Reality or fiction? *The Hotel at the End of the World* and the visual story of North-East India

The North-eastern region of India bears the brunt of being considered as the ‘Other’ in its own country. Ranging from the way of life, food habits, physiognomy and geographical location, the area has been excessively exoticized in popular culture. The unexplored real of the north eastern states shifts further beyond reach when such popular narratives are of visual nature which force themselves on the minds of viewers as the universal truth. In my paper, I wish to see how the politics of visibility is played through the genre of graphic novel for depicting the ‘real’ north east. As the genre is unique combination of words and pictures, yet different from comic books which is primarily meant for children’s entertainment, graphic novel not only requires complex understanding but at the same time involve significant histories or culture of a given place or time. The title of Parismita Singh’s graphic novel *The Hotel at the End of the World* hints at the prevalent notion of north-east region being situated at some remote corner of the world which is taken to be an outside space. The paper will examine the success/failure of the graphic novel to the popular understanding of north east India. How has author depicted north-east through the visuals? What was the necessity of writing a graphic novel about north east as numerous studies have been done on the same region? How is this text similar/different from the existing studies?

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Re-Imagining the Homeland: The immigration and emigration of the Chinese-Indian Diaspora in India

Robin Cohen writes, “Diasporas are often formed not only by one traumatic event, but by many and different causes, several only becoming salient over an extended historical period. This can lead to double or multiple displacements and in atypical cases to a ‘travelling culture’” (Cohen 142). The Chinese-Indian diaspora has experienced something similar since their arrival into the host land, India from 1770s to the departure from their homeland, India

in late 1950s. Their myths regarding Kolkata and Achew – the founding father of their settlement – and their rituals such as the dragon dance, function as “integral parts of their story of displacement and their personhood. These themes reveal the importance of ‘diaspora’ in defining a people’s sense of themselves and their place in the world” (Khan, 146). The 1962 war brought in another wave of migration for the Chinese-Indians, this time out of India. Suspected of holding anti-national allegiances and spying, about 3000 Chinese-Indians were arrested and sent to various internment camps (Trudy Harris Report, 2014). Thousands were deported back to China, making them Chinese-Indian-Chinese, while several migrated to Canada, becoming Chinese-Indian-Canadians. The “double-hyphenated” existence here becomes “the dash between [three] surrounding wor[l]ds” (Mishra, 433). This imagining and reimagining of homelands is related through several stories in Kwai Yun-Li’s *The Last Dragon Dance in Chinatown*. This paper analyses her stories in an attempt to understand the processes of immigration and emigration of the Chinese-Indian diaspora pre and post Sino-Indo war of 1962. It studies the migrant’s re-imagination of the homeland by structuring a narrative of belongingness through folklore and myth. The conclusion focuses on the status of hyphenated imagined homeland(s) which the Chinese-Indian emigrants embody as well as the “contrapuntal perspective” it affords them. (Said, 18)

