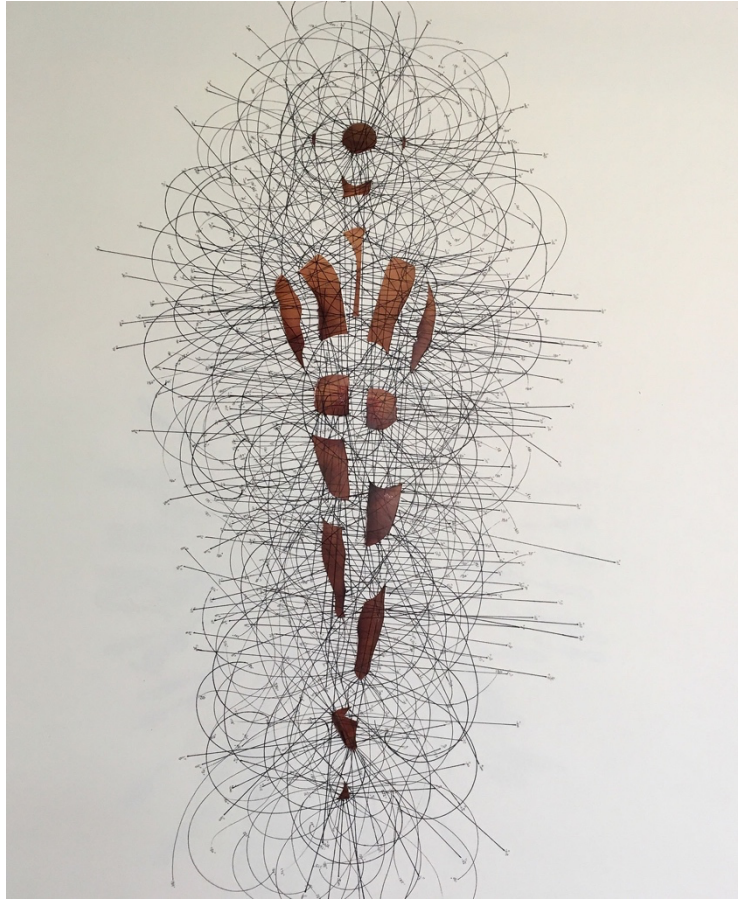


**Department of Germanic and Romance Studies  
University of Delhi  
International Conference: 14-16 March 2024  
CALL FOR PAPERS: “Bodies that matter”: Deconstructing Corporeality**



How are human bodies perceived? How are they be staged or used? How are these bodies affected/ governed/ altered by external forces? The awareness of the self is experienced most intimately through the physical and organic entity that is the human body and yet different forces of the world system are continually shaping, modifying and perceiving the human body. In fact, any creation of knowledge is essentially predicated by the human body. The body takes into cognizance the complexities of social and economic life even when human beings assume that they are distant, removed or powerless against these realities. The recognition and affirmation of any reality actually happens through the visceral cognition of the human body – eyes that see; ears which hear and recognise sounds; thoughts that are formed, provoked, and hypothesized in the head; limbs, muscles, sinews and tendons that stretch and work so that social and economic life may carry on; or that the same organs endure or combat when they wish to transform the existing patterns of life or reality. Thus, in all our cognitive perceptions, the human body assumes a centrality and is actively involved in the knowledge production. Therefore, it is pertinent to admit that the human body is an integral element of textual production, and “... (is) produced within the discourse, the body is also generative of discourse” (McLaren, p. viii)<sup>i</sup>. And simultaneously, it is significant to acknowledge the nexus between the human body and history and we need to undertake an endeavour to map this interconnectedness.

Bodies perform every day – instinctively and socially/politically as well. They are more than mere organic and physical organisms as they interact with others and thereby make sense of their own self. The bodies essentialise themselves by assuming traditional gender and sexual identities. They also challenge the conventional assumptions by adopting/aligning with differing gender identities, contesting the normative

traditions and aiming for a transformation that transcends the corporeal limits into the social and political realms.

Bodies corporeally contend for power – waging wars, murdering, imprisoning, torturing other bodies and leading to the submission of those other bodies. Bodies are also systematically perceived and segregated according to race, caste and religion pointing to power relations between groups and individuals. However, these actions often also elicit different modes of resistance to the power contention, be it violent or non-violent, but always manifested via bodily presence – guerrilla warfare or political demonstrations and sit-ins, etc. Protests then embody the physical bodies into political instruments of a *collective*. The bodily resistance also acquires a distinct dimension at an *individual* level when the physicality is consciously marked or altered in one's own flesh to make a public claim for identity. Bodies carry these chosen marks such as tattoos, piercings or implants which become instruments of construction or deconstruction of the self, challenging and/or distorting the assigned physical and sexual identities.

In the capitalist mode of production, bodies have been alienated from means of production via primitive accumulation and subjected to exploitation. These working bodies are being socially and economically regulated and controlled. The practices of the modern nation-states have extended further to subjugate the body of the individual as well as the entire populace via technology and administration of power through disciplinary sites such as schools, prisons, hospitals (what Foucault terms as “biopower”).

Beyond the disciplinary regulation of the state, there is an eventual desire that all human bodies ought to fit within certain patterns and behaviourally conform to certain social and political customs. Then what happens to the idle bodies? How to comprehend the disabled, aging, sick or dying bodies? These bodies who defy the established social norms are then submitted to ‘disciplining’, regulation, stigmatization and even repression.

Humanities and social sciences have discursively engaged with these aspects intensely and a plethora of texts – literary and otherwise – have portrayed, theorised and problematised the human body in its various textual avatars. The three day conference proposes to examine different aspects of the human body as a site and subject of knowledge production as well as the inter-relatedness of the human history with the human body.

We invite papers on the theme from all disciplines on the issues outlined below, but not necessarily limited to these:

- Bodies, Corporeality and Politics.
- Construction of Femininity, Masculinity and/or Trans-bodies, Queer Politics and the Body.
- Challenging Social/ Political/ Cultural Normativity through Corporeality.
- Working Bodies: their Subjugation and their Resistance.
- Disciplined and Docile Bodies.
- Bodies and manifestations of leisure
- Individual and collective bodies
- Bodies in Space
- Idle bodies and its contestations with hegemonies.

The conference will be organised from 14-16 March, 2024 at the Arts Faculty, University of Delhi.

Abstracts of not more than 300 words, in Word file (Font size 12, Times New Roman, single spacing), that include the paper title, your academic affiliation, and contact information, must be submitted by email to [annualconference2024grs@gmail.com](mailto:annualconference2024grs@gmail.com) by 31 January 2024.

---

<sup>i</sup> McLaren, Peter (2005) 'Foreword' in Sherry B. Shapiro, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Body: A Critical Praxis*, Taylor and Francis, New York and London