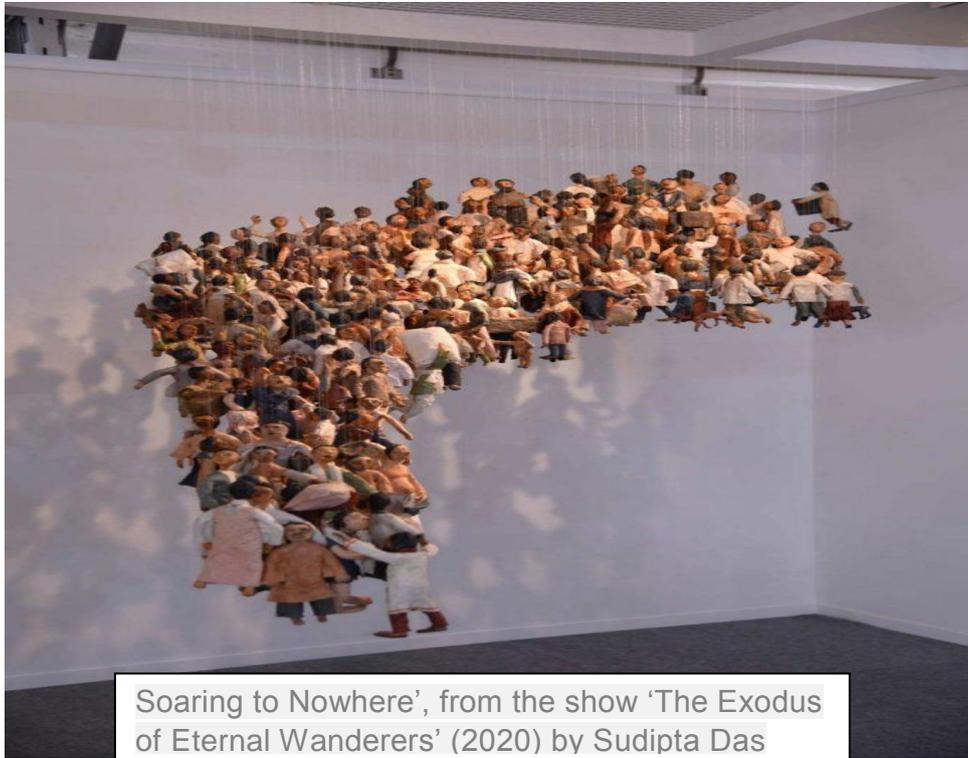


Department of Germanic and Romance Studies  
University of Delhi

International Conference: 18- 20 March 2021

**CALL FOR PAPERS: No place to go? Perspectives on displacement, belonging and non-belonging**



Displacement is by no means a modern phenomenon and has occurred in different stages of human history. However, the sheer magnitude of forced or unforced displacement in contemporary times, caused by climatic changes, food insecurity, urbanisation, industrialisation, developmental projects, political and military strife, religious and ethnic persecutions, violence and human rights violations among a wide array of reasons has brought into focus its effects.

Cultural productions, ranging from literature to art and cinema, have had to contend with this phenomenon to find new ways of imagining lives, places and objects transformed by displacements. Contemporary studies on displacement trace broadly four types of displacement, namely, physical/spatial, cultural, psychological/affective and intellectual/metaphoric. Narratives of displacement often revolve around exilic conditions associated with a sense of irreparable loss, a certain material, psychological, cultural or existential void that can never be filled. The nostalgia for a “paradise lost” binds exiled characters to a past that is lost forever. Spatial uprooting thus tantamounts to temporal dislocation of sorts, whereby the displaced persons witness a constant oscillation between an idealised, elusive future and an idealised past etched in memories, thus emphasizing the unbearable uncertainty of the present.

Spatial and temporal disorientation aside, deracinated souls also face cultural and social disorientation. The process of reintegration in a new socio-cultural milieu is undoubtedly challenging, swinging between disregard towards the cultural values of the host or the fear of

cultural assimilation and acculturation. They locate themselves in the diasporic world, operating in an in-between space that some like Bhabha have termed as “the third space of enunciation”.

Undoubtedly, postcolonial thinkers have attempted to decode how transcontinental as well as internal displacement of people in order to serve colonial establishments of the European colonial powers and neo-liberal economic policies pursued by advanced capitalist nations have shaped these exilic conditions, by imposing endless misery, homelessness, marginalisation and psychological trauma on the colonised or the postcolonial nations. Displacement in the postcolonial world, hence, can also be described in metaphorical or philosophical terms as pointed out by Bammer, Said and Mignolo, who have argued that the epistemic and discursive violence of modernity significantly transformed various cultural communities by imposing the western way of life and replacing languages, religions, cultural practices, value systems or philosophical traditions, alienating communities from their own cultural sites.

Can such complex phenomena be solely understood from the perspective of loss? How do displacements redefine cultural boundaries, insularities and dominations in contemporary literary or cultural texts? What role does it play in creating narratives of aporia, slippage, creolité and métissage of identities? Are such strategies useful to deal with cultural relativism, fundamentalism and related supremacist tendencies in our times? How do writers, artists, filmmakers shape these debates? How are the gaps and voids of displacement reconfigured as sites of creative explorations of identities necessarily hybrid and fragmentary? In what manner is the dialectics of belonging and non-belonging addressed with a more cosmopolitan élan?

This Conference proposes to examine these complex questions related to multiple forms of displacement and its representation in the contemporary world from an inter-disciplinary perspective. We invite papers on the theme of displacement from all disciplines on the issues outlined above, but not necessarily limited to these.

[Abstracts of not more than 300 words that include the paper title, your academic affiliation, and contact information, must be sent to [displacement.grs@gmail.com](mailto:displacement.grs@gmail.com) by 31 January 2021.