

It gives me immense pleasure to write this editorial note as a freshly-appointed Academic Fellow of the Forum. Since its inception in 1989 and the establishment of the Centre in 2005, the endeavour has been to foster a rich dialogue among intellectuals, academicians, research scholars and students. To this end, the Forum has organized several academic events such as conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures and symposiums.

Its signature program, the Annual International Conference that was inaugurated in 1998 at Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha has continued uninterrupted ever since. Along the way, more programs were added and some jettisoned. The Forum has always been at the forefront when it comes to the generation of critical discourses around current ideas that engage the minds of intellectuals within the rubric of humanities and social sciences. The ultimate goal of the Forum is to expand the boundaries of critique and work towards an understanding of the material and cultural discourses that emerge through interdisciplinary, creative and critical dialogues resulting in a collaboration of the different elements.

The library that is housed in Alkapuri, Baroda boasts of a collection of almost nine thousand books. The Balwant Parekh Centre for General Semantics inaugurated in 2009 functions in tandem with the Forum in mutually engaging ways. Together, they provide a quiet place for reading and thinking that would encourage contemplations on ways to connect theory to praxis and thereby to social transformation. Although we would like more students and researchers to use this facility, yet, we are happy that the few who do use it benefit greatly from the resources we provide.

This report covers the period April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023 during which we have had lectures, seminars and the annual conference. The library has added more books. We plan to gain visibility in the digital space by re-activating our Facebook page, opening an account on Instagram and creating a brand-new website. We are also preparing for our annual conference to be held at Alleppey, Kerala, during March 2024.

We look forward to the sustained patronage of our existing members and hope to add more in the coming years.

■ **Gita Viswanath**



Events



Events in 2022:

- William D. Pederson, Professor Political Science & the founding Director of the International Lincoln Center at Louisiana State University Shreveport delivered a talk, “Abraham Lincoln as America’s First Green President,” on December 29 at the Centre for Contemporary Theory. He argued that although most books on Lincoln highlight his democratic leadership during the American Civil War, we need to see him as a leader with passionate “Green” inclinations that he revealed through his support for scientific farming.



- In collaboration with The Department of English, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam & International Lincoln Center for American Studies, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, USA, the Forum organized its 25th International Conference during December 20-22 at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati, Assam on “A Requiem for Theory! Eschatological Ruminations.” The word requiem points towards its dual connotations. On the one hand, it implies mourning and on the other a celebration of death through song. Will the grand edifice we call “Theory” built by philosophers and thinkers from within academia and without, crumble to dust? This was the central question posed during the conference.



- A talk on “South-South Solidarities” with Uche James Iroha was arranged in collaboration with Conflictorium, Ahmedabad on July 11. The visual artist Iroha uses images of the body to address issues of economic imperialism, race, class and gender.

Events in 2023:

- Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda, in collaboration with The Department of Political Science, Berhampur University, Odisha and International Lincoln Center for American Studies, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, USA organized a National Seminar during 24-26 March 2023 at St. Vincent Retreat, Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha, on “The Politics of Compassion: Lincoln, Marti, Gandhi, King, Mandela.” Using insights from Harold D. Lasswell, Abraham Maslow, James C. Davies and MacGregor Burns, the seminar sought to engage with the idea of the possibilities of a moral leadership.



- A National Workshop with Stephen Muecke was organized on the theme “Critical Zones” during 6-7 March 2023, at the Centre for Contemporary Theory, Baroda. Stephen Muecke is Adjunct Professor at the Nulungu Research Institute of Notre Dame University, Broome, an Emeritus Professor of Ethnography at the University of New South Wales, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. The Workshop was dedicated to continuing the legacy of Professor Bruno Latour, who died in Paris on 9th October, 2022. This workshop emphasized the fact that every problem may be solved provided we begin with its adequate description that led the participants to describe the critical zones that they occupied.
- A two-day National Seminar on “Autobiography as Affective Archaeology: Exploring Jayanta Mahapatra’s Creative Oeuvre” was held during 12-13 February 2023 at The Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University (MSCB University), formerly North Orissa University (NOU). The Seminar was devoted to celebrating the work of the bi-lingual writer Jayanta Mahapatra whose creative and critical reflections of the world around him spans over half a century. His “Autobiography,” in Odia, marks the zenith of his creative career.



Events in 2023 in collaboration with Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda

- A National/International Seminar titled “World War I; Modernism(s); and Time Binding” was organized collectively by the Department of English, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur; Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda; and Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda at the Department of English, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur during January 27-28, 2023. World War I considered the world’s first modern war offers a vantage point in history to examine the term “modernism” with its variegated trajectories and postulations. Terms such as “modern,” “modernism,” and “modernity” were coined from the crucible of the destructive force of the Great War hitherto unknown, unseen. Who better than Alfred Korzybski to invoke in a context such as this? Having served as an intelligence officer during WWI, he developed a field called General Semantics in which time-binding is a basic principle, which he described as “the capacity of an individual or a generation to begin where the former left off.”



A Report on the steps taken to revive the *Journal of Contemporary Thought*

7 September 2023

The Editorial Committee of the Journal of Contemporary Thought was reconstituted at the General Body Meeting of the Life Members of the Forum on Contemporary Theory held in Guwahati, on December 20, 2022. The Committee (comprising Bijay Kumar Danta as Editor-in-Chief; Samik Malla as Managing Editor; Nandana Dutta as Member; Prasad Pannian as Member; Sanjay Mukherjee as Member) has been working to revive the Journal. A brief account of the steps taken so far may be found here:

1. **Constitution of the Advisory Committee (Members and Reviewers)**

Further to the decisions taken at the Annual General Body (AGM) Meeting of the Forum on Contemporary Theory at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati, on 20 December 2022, it was suggested that the Advisory Committee be expanded to include more reviewers and advisors. However, as the constitution of the committee has to be approved by the AGM, it was agreed that the previous advisory board be retained for the initial issues, adding Prafulla C Kar as well as two new members (Kailash C Baral and D Venkat Rao) elected by the AGM at Guwahati to the board.

2. **Series, Numbering, Funding & Printing**

It has been agreed that a new series is to be launched with minor changes in layout and design, as necessary. However, the old numbering is to be continued with a note of explanation in the editorial section. The Editorial Committee understands that the Forum on Contemporary Theory has offered to cover the expenses of the next two issues. It was noted that it would be most convenient to retain the existing printing house at Anand, Gujarat. Sanjay Mukherjee has agreed to take care of the logistics related to printing the journal in coordination with the FCT.

3. **Content of the Journal**

The Journal would ideally be between 70-80 thousand words in total. It would tentatively include a review essay on the current state of theory, 3 book reviews, 7-10 scholarly articles and an interview with a theorist or an academic who has contributed significantly to the development and dissemination of theory. For formatting and typesetting, the stylistic legacy of the previous volumes would be followed.

4. **Journal Website & Email**

The EC has secured a new domain name for the Journal's website (link: <https://www.jctportal.com/>), hosted by Google Sites. The recurring subscription is renewable annually. Necessary steps have been taken to enlist it on Google Search Console and optimise it by redirecting traffic through Cloudflare. Several social media handles have been created for increasing the reach of the Journal. They include Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter and LinkedIn. Furthermore, a

separate e-mail account (jct.submissions@gmail.com) was created by the Managing Editor specifically for the submission of articles and other subsequent correspondence with the authors.

5. Call for Papers (CFP)

The CFP is in circulation, and submissions are currently open. Essays that cannot be considered for the current issue will be automatically passed on for review/processing for future volumes with intimation to the authors. Several networks of H-Net (H-Announce, H-Asia, H-World) and UPenn are carrying the CFP. Scholars have started submitting manuscripts for review. It was suggested that the first two issues of the journal be kept thematically open, with special issues being potentially considered for later issues. The CFP is also to be uploaded on SALA, MELOW, ACLALS and other forums for higher visibility.

6. Peer Review Format

It has been decided that a double-blind peer review would be instituted, not only for the unsolicited submissions but also for the invited papers. Complete transparency would be maintained to ensure fairness and unbiased selections. Several review formats were discussed, including a grading option on a scale of 1 to 10 along with the standard options of “accepted without changes”, “revise and resubmit” or “rejected”.

7. Document on Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

An Ethics Policy has been drafted and uploaded on the JCT website ([link here](#)). As decided by the EC, the Journal is committed to transparency, probity and responsibility and is guided by the policies of ethics and integrity outlined in it. The policies are applicable to its stakeholders including the Editorial Committee, contributors and peer reviewers. The Journal follows the general policies of ethics and integrity outlined by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Further, it has been decided that there would be zero tolerance for plagiarism of any sort, and the Turnitin similarity index for an article – discounting textual quotations – should not exceed 4-5%.

8. Indexing

It was learnt that the Journal, prior to 2017, was indexed in the MLA International Bibliography. On the other hand, the committee was informed that UGC-CARE will require at least two issues to be published prior to considering the inclusion of the Journal on their list.

9. Digitisation of Back Volumes

The possibility of building a cumulative index of articles published on the pages of the Journal is being considered. The Editorial Committee learnt that the Convener of the FCT has consented to the proposal to digitise and archive the back volumes. The Committee is actively working to get it done. Discussions are afoot with Dr Kokila Tank, the Head of

the Department of Library & Information Science at Saurashtra University, Rajkot, about the procedure to host, access and maintain the database.

10. **Expected Timeline**

It has been decided that papers for the current issue will be solicited till the end of October, following which the review process for the first issue will start in full steam. The final deadline for releasing is current issue of the Journal is to coincide with the upcoming Annual Conference of the Forum at Alleppey during 13-16 March 2024.

11. **Membership Outreach**

The Editorial Committee has undertaken an initiative to update the FCT membership list. A Microsoft form is being circulated for the same. Additionally, a WhatsApp group has been created to ease the process of bridging the significant gap. This report has been compiled by the Editorial Committee of the Journal of Contemporary Thought. Bijay Kumar Danta, Editor-in-Chief, Samik Malla, Managing Editor, Nandana Dutta, Prasad Pannian, and Sanjay Mukherjee, Members of the Board.

■ *Compiled by the Members of the Committee*

New Appointment



Dr Gita Viswanath was appointed as Academic Fellow, FCT on July 15, 2023. Gita has a PhD in Literature and Film Studies from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. She was awarded the Teacher Fellowship from University Grants Commission, New Delhi in the year 2000. Her study, *The 'Nation' in War: A Study of Military Literature and Hindi War Cinema*, was published by Cambridge Scholars, UK in 2014. She is the recipient of a South Asia Regional Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council, New York in the year 2006 and South Asia Regional Fellowship Comparative Research Grant by the Social Science Research Council New York in 2007. She has taught in the departments of English at Tolani College of Arts and Science, Adipur, Kutch from 1995 to 2002 and Maharaja Sayajirao University from 2003 to 2006. She has presented papers on film and literature in conferences and seminars in India and abroad. She has also published papers on cinema in journals and edited volumes, two novels, a children's book, short stories and poems. She has made two documentary films that are available on YouTube. She is the co-founder of an online film club called Talking Films Online that organizes weekly discussions on films and month-long film festivals.

A one-and-a-half-day National Seminar on “Disciplinarity & Difference”

20-21 August 2023, Centre for Contemporary Theory, Baroda.

Concept Note

Disciplines, as Michel Foucault reminds us, are techniques for ordering multiplicities and organizing difference. As fields of study, they classify knowledge into discrete domains, defining their different objects, concepts and procedures of inquiry and validation. Difference is therefore discipline’s condition of possibility; in that it marks the divergences that give rise to disciplinary classifications. But difference also gives rise to a practice that seems to complicate the principle of disciplinarity itself in the way new inquiries emerge from within disciplinary borders. This equivocal relation between discipline and difference has generated a range of non-disciplinary practices, such as trans-disciplinary, crossdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and even anti-disciplinary projects. What are the differences between them, in what contexts do they arise, and what relation do they bear to the disciplines that they bring together in intersectional or oppositional linkage? The objective of this seminar on “Disciplinarity and Difference” is to explore these and other questions as well as methodological issues related to border crossings between the humanities and the human sciences and the sciences of society. Since this also happens to be one of the emphases of the Forum on Contemporary Theory, the seminar welcomes reflections on new directions it may take in promoting research across the two disciplines. Sub-themes

Fields and boundary mechanisms in the formation of disciplines
Figurations of the human in the humanities and human/social sciences
Forms and methods of disciplinary convergence between the humanities and human sciences
Convergence of the humanities and the human sciences: e.g., cultural studies, medical humanities/health humanities, legal humanities, human geography, provenance research, critical museum studies
Convergence within the human sciences: e.g., political sociology, migration/refugee studies, health sociology, urban studies, women’s studies
Critical interdisciplinary studies in the humanities and human/social sciences.

Convener: Dilip Kumar Das Professor of Cultural Studies (retd.), School of Interdisciplinary Studies, EFLU, Hyderabad



**National Workshop, December 14-17, 2023, Baroda on
“The Critic as Amateur,” convened by Prof Saikat Majumdar.**

CONCEPT NOTE

The Critic as Amateur

The act of reading is central to the discipline of literary study. Along with the adjacent fields of linguistics and philology, philosophy and religious studies, the interpretation of literary texts, too, traces its origin to the secularization of hermeneutics. It is no surprise that some of the defining debates in literary study have been about methods of reading. While these debates have shaped the discipline since its very institutionalization at the university, notably with Formalism and New Criticism, the understanding of interpretation as an act of digging below the surface of the text was revived with particular vigour by Frederic Jameson’s 1981 work, *The Political Unconscious*, bringing together capital and the unconscious, Lacan and Freud, as the hidden impulses behind discourse.

Recent decades have brought some disenchantment with the traditional models of close reading driven by the quest for layers of meaning hidden underneath the text. Distant reading has invoked digital humanities to read vast groups of texts for large patterns, while surface reading has revealed fatigue with the depth driven interpretation, returning to immediate elements of the text, sometimes reminiscent of Susan Sontag’s suspicion of deep interpretation and her celebration of the erotics of the surface.

With these unfolding debates in our background, this course will focus on a particular contemporary trend of what Jeffrey Williams has called “the new modesty in literary criticism” – the return of the figure of the amateur as a reader and critic. The emergence of literary criticism as a discrete pursuit and that of literary study as an academic field required them to become specialized activities distinct from older forms of dilettantish amateurisms that shaped belletristic culture. But attention to the reading lives of marginal and minoritized readers, such as the working class (Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Lives of the British Working Classes*), women (Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*), the colonized (Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*), as well as various kinds of “non-literary” readers (Merve Emre, *Paraliterary*), has renewed focus on the non-specialist reader and their contribution – both historical and potential – to the academic discipline of literary study.

It has become increasingly clear that literary criticism is likely to remain productively suspended between professional labour and amateur play. For instance, unexpected forms of reading, writing, and learning historically unfolded on the margins of the global British Empire, leading to intriguing accounts of autodidactism and critical self-making left by writers, thinkers, and activists under repressive or exclusionary systems of education enacted by different phases of imperialism. With such examples in mind, we will examine postcritique’s attention on the amateur reader.

We will try to find out if established modes of interpretation can be enriched by varieties of non-specialist reading – whether ignorance can sometimes be a richer mode of reading than scholarly knowledge. We'll look at recent histories of scholarly criticism that have revived these questions, attend to the disenchantments of critique and the possibilities of postcritique, consider the dialectic of the amateur and the professional in the making of the colonial and postcolonial reader in India, and conclude with the place of the amateur in the undergraduate classroom of English literary study.

■ **Saikat Majumdar, Workshop Convener**

Saikat Majumdar, a novelist and critic, is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Ashoka University. He is the author of *Prose of the World*, *College: Pathways of Possibility*, the forthcoming *The Amateur: Self-Making and the Humanities in the Postcolony* (2024), and the co-editor of collection, *The Critic as Amateur*. He has published four novels: *Silverfish*, *The Firebird*, *The Scent of God*, and most recently, *The Middle Finger*, a contemporary college campus novel that seeks to retell ancient myths. His new novel, *The Remains of the Body*, will appear in 2024. He has been a Fellow at the Wellesley College Humanities Center, the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study, and the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study in South Africa. Majumdar's research interests cover topics including literature of modern and contemporary world, modernism, colonial and postcolonial studies, the novel and narrative theory, critical university studies, the history of criticism, fiction and non-fiction writing. More about him and contact information at <https://saikatmajumdar.com/>

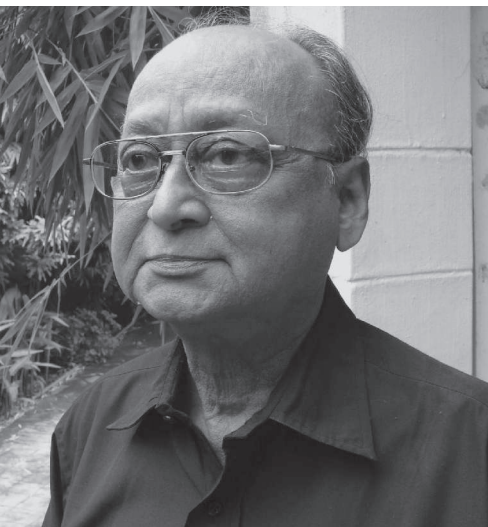


**FCT in collaboration with
South Asian Literature and Cultural Forum (SALCF), Berhampur, Odisha
and Saheed Bhagat Singh Degree College, Khandadeuli, Ganjam, Odisha
Organizes**

National Seminar on “Jayanta Mahapatra: A Tribute to the Man and his Work”

During January 7-8, 2024 at St. Vincent Retreat, Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha

To memorialise the large body of work left behind by the great Indian poet from Odisha, Jayanta Mahapatra, the Forum is organising a two-day National Seminar from January 7-8, 2024. Apart from being a renowned poet, Mahapatra was a close friend of the Forum. He took keen interest in its activities and attended some of the conferences as and when time permitted. Winner of several prestigious awards like the Jacob Gladstein Memorial Award of Chicago's Poetry Magazine (1975), the Japan Foundation's Visitor Award (1980), and the Sathitya Akademi Award for Poetry (1981), and



Padmashri Award (2009), Jayanta Mahapatra, a writer in both English and his native Odia, has published fourteen collections of poems in English. He has also published several translations of poems from Odiya and Bengali into English. His magnificent memoir *Bhor Motira Kanaphool* came into being in 2022. Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry is a serious quest of his inner world, characterized by highly imagistic meditations, mostly drawn from objects of nature like rivers, birds, fields and the two rivers of the Mahanadi and Kathajodi, the two life-lines with which his beloved Cuttack is sandwiched. Jayanta Mahapatra's *magnum opus*, *Relationship* (1981) recounts not only the glories of the history and culture of Odisha, but also makes an attempt to identify his self with his homeland of Odisha through its myths and legends. Even though Jayanta Mahapatra is often rooted to the locale of Cuttack, his hometown, he makes an outreach to the suffering of the people – old men, women and children - of different parts of the world.

This Seminar comes as a sequel to the Forum's earlier National Seminar, "Autobiography as Affective Archaeology: Exploring Jayanta Mahapatra's Creative Oeuvre," held in Baripada during 11-13 Feb, 2023. The Seminar was a living tribute to the creative talent of the poet to which he with his robust presence could react to the rising issues with a quick and lively response whereas the present Seminar is a posthumous event offering a fitting homage to the world-renowned poet, whose poetry has crossed the boundaries of the East and the West. The uniqueness of the present Seminar lies in the fact that while the first one had the major thrust on his "just" published autobiography in Odia, *Bhor Motira Kanphula* (2022), the present one is more broad-based, incorporating the whole oeuvre of the poet's creativity like his Poetry, Essays, Memoir, Speeches and Interviews, both in English and Odia, and seeks to understand the intricate vision of the poet about life itself.



■ **E Raja Rao, Former Professor of English, Berhampur University, Odisha**

■ **Gita Viswanath, Academic Fellow, FCT**

Key-note Speaker:

Dr Soubhagya Kumar Misra will deliver the keynote address. A Central Sahitya Akademi awardee (1986), and a recipient of Gangadhar National Award (2013), and the author of several volumes of poetry Mishra was also a Professor of English at Berhampur University in Odisha.

Abstract Submission Deadline

We invite papers, both in English and Odia, on various facets of Mahapatra's oeuvre from scholars, researchers, and faculty involved in his corpus of writings. An abstract or proposal, not exceeding 300 words may be sent to forumbaroda@gmail.com with a copy each to prafullakar@gmail.com and derridae@gmail.com by **Dec. 6, 2023**. The abstract should have a suitable title and keywords along with the name and institutional affiliation of the presenter.

Last Date of Registration: Dec. 15, 2023 (Non-refundable)

All participants need to register directly with our Bank, the particulars of which will be provided on request. The Registration fee is non-refundable.

- (1) Outstation Participant from India with accommodation: Rs.2500/- (Rupees two thousand five hundred only)
- (2) Participant from India without accommodation: Rs.1500/- (Rupees One thousand five hundred only)
- (3) Student Participation (Limited): Rs.600/- (Rupees Six hundred only)

The Registration Fee will cover accommodation, and food. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed. For details of bank transfer, please contact Prof. P.C. Kar/ Gita Viswanath

For further information, please contact:

1. **Prafulla C. Kar**
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2. **Gita Viswanath**
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E-mail: forumbaroda@gmail.com
3. **E. Raja Rao**
Local Convener, Former Professor of English, Berhampur University, Berhampur, Odisha
E-mail: derridae@gmail.com

**Annual International Conference,
March 13-16, 2024, Alleppey, Kerala on
“Global Capitalisms”**

**will be held in collaboration with Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory (3CT),
University of Chicago, USA and
Bharat Mata College, Thrikkakara, Kochi, Kerala.**

Concept Note

This is a call for papers to participate in a conference in Alleppey, Kerala, co-organized by the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory (3CT), University of Chicago, in collaboration with the Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda, on the theme of “Global Capitalisms.” The conference will be held during March 13-16, 2024.

The theorization of capitalism has been fundamental to understanding the relationships between economy, society, and politics, at least since the eighteenth century. We aim to revisit and reinvigorate this theoretical project at a world-historical conjuncture that is marked by multiple crises of capitalism, the emergence of Southern economies such as India’s as major global players, and the challenges these present for contemporary politics.

Any adequate theorization of the contemporary requires an empirically attuned and theoretically sophisticated understanding of the dynamics, forms, and trajectories that global capitalism takes today. There have been a range of approaches adopted from across disciplinary perspectives, ranging from economics to philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, literature, to do so. Many of the most pertinent critiques have emerged out of lineages of scholarship indebted to the works of Karl Marx.

In the twentieth century, these theorizations have increasingly come to be located within the framework of global relations of power and production, including those shaped by colonialism, then in the aftermath of decolonization, and more recently in the neoliberal turn and its attendant globalization. Yet capitalism is not singular, its forms and manifestations have changed across place and time, and the political challenges that come in its wake constantly demand its retheorization. This must take the form of revisiting philosophical understandings of the dynamics of capital, as well as elaborating new empirical manifestations in terms of regional impact, sectoral specificity, mutations in form, and sociological implications.

Specifically, we aim for a collective retheorization of Global Capitalisms at this world-historical conjuncture that is marked at once by:

The multiple crises of capitalism, witnessed in rising inequality, corporate hegemony and the consolidation of monopolies, rising authoritarianisms, impending climate catastrophe, the political effects of neoliberal austerity and

deindustrialization, and the bubbles and bursts of speculative enterprises, which demand a *longue durée* attentiveness to the ways in which forces and relations of production have globalized with differential effects in different parts of the world.

The growth of emergent markets in the global South, which creates new axes of power and hierarchies of difference that reconfigure older colonial, metropolitan-periphery, lines of cleavage; and the challenges presented for politics in view of large-scale structural transformations in the operations of capital, which demands new forms of internationalist solidarity that respond to problems from the local to the planetary scale.

We invite papers and presentations that might address any of the following themes.

- Corporatism and racialized monopoly capitalism
- Practices of global extractive enterprise
- Financialization and its global manifestations and implications
- Histories of mercantile culture and empire and their enduring postcolonial residues
- The reconstitution of class
- Relations between capitalism and kinship, including in relation to histories of migration and diaspora
- Relationships between capitalism and affect
- Old and new forms of international solidarity-making such as the rise and fall of leftist political movements.
- Any other relevant theme

The conference will include presentations by a number of scholars from the University of Chicago, including Chiara Cordelli, Daragh Grant, Sarah Johnson, Jonathan Levy, Josephine McDonagh, Kaushik Sunder Rajan, and Lisa Wedeen.

3CT (<https://ccct.uchicago.edu/>) is a space for the critical discussion and reimagination of social, political and cultural process in the world today. “Global Capitalisms” has emerged as a central topic of inquiry for 3CT and will be one of its focal interests over the coming two-year period. The Forum on Contemporary Theory (<https://fctworld.org/>) has been a key venue for critical theory conversations in India for over three decades, including through annual conferences that have brought together international scholars with scholars and students in India.

■ ***Kaushik Sunder Rajan,***
Conference Convener and Keynote Speaker



Kaushik Sunder Rajan is Professor of Anthropology, Co-Director of the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory, and Associate Faculty Director of the Pozen Center for Human Rights, University of Chicago. His work lies at the intersection of Medical Anthropology and Science and Technology Studies (STS), with commitments to social theories of capitalism and postcolonial studies. His first two books focused on the global political economy of the life sciences and biomedicine, with an empirical focus on the United States and India. Alongside, he has an abiding commitment to conceptualizing and developing stakes and modalities for multi-sited ethnographic research and teaching. His most recent book, *Multisituated: Ethnography as Diasporic Praxis*, was published by Duke University Press in 2021.

Sunder Rajan's current research project, provisionally titled *Just Health?: Constitutionalism and Postapartheid Dis-ease*, concerns the ways in which a politics of health in South Africa plays out through the law, consequent to the guarantee of a fundamental right to health in the South African Constitution. He is also involved in a performance-based collaborative endeavour with writer Stacy Hardy (Polokwane, South Africa), and composer Neo Muyanga (Cape Town, South Africa), *Pulmonographies*, which attends to imperialism and anti-imperialist resistance as speaking to a "politics of breath."

Abstracts of approximately 300 words may be sent to gita.viswanath@gmail.com with a copy each to ksunderr@gmail.com and thomaspathil@gmail.com

Venue: Lake Palace – a luxury 5-star backwater resort, Alleppey, Kerala

Please note the following date: **Last date for registration and abstract submission:** Decemer 15, 2023

Registration Fee: (Non-refundable)

Indians:

16,000/- INR for double occupancy room
30, 000/- INR for single occupancy room
6,000/- INR for Local participants

For details of bank transfer,
please contact Prof P C Kar/Gita Viswanath
prafullakar@gmail.com
gita.viswanath@gmail.com

Foreigners:

500/- USD for single occupancy room
250/- USD for SAARC country members
for single occupancy room

P C Kar, Convener, FCT
Kaushik Sunder Rajan, Conference Convener
P J Thomas, Associate Professor (Retd.)
St. Berchmans College, Changanaserry, Local Convener

- The Friday Show: Every alternate Friday, we will screen a film and follow it up with a discussion.
- Online Lecture Series: Once a month, the Forum will organize an online lecture by experts in wide-ranging areas of humanities and social sciences.

Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda

Since its inauguration in 2009, Balvant Parekh Centre has been organizing programs aimed at knowledge production and dissemination in the specialized field of General Semantics and human sciences. Scholars and students from different parts of the world have benefitted from the programs of the Centre. The publications of Balvant Parekh Centre further its goals in fulfilling the production and dissemination of knowledge. The major publications include books on General Semantics and associated areas, *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*, the Memorial Lecture booklets, Newsletter and Annual Report.

Obituaries

In Jayanta Mahapatra's demise, the world has lost not only a great poet but also a great friend and supporter of the Forum. He attended a few of our seminars and was always enthusiastic to meet with scholars and students. At the grand old age of 94, he breathed his last on August 27, 2023 in his beloved Cuttack. He has the honour of being the first Indian poet to win a Sahitya Akademi award for English poetry. He was awarded a Padma Shri, in 2009, but courageously returned the award in 2015 to protest against rising intolerance in India. Mahapatra was part of a trio of poets who laid the foundations of Indian English Poetry, which included A. K. Ramanujan and R. Parthasarathy. He differed from the others in not being a product of the Bombay school of poets. Over time, he managed to carve a quiet, tranquil poetic voice of his own, different from those of his contemporaries.



FCT is deeply pained by the sudden demise of Mr Ajay Menon on May 18, 2023, while on a holiday in Egypt. He served the Centre as Administrative Officer ever since its inception in 2005. He endeared himself to all with his quiet, unassuming, and diligent style of functioning. May his soul rest in peace and may his family have the strength to bear the loss. We, at FCT, miss him every day.



Reach out to us at: prafullakar@gmail.com OR forumbaroda@gmail.com OR www.fctworld.in

NATIONAL WORKSHOP

DECEMBER 14-17, 2023

WORKSHOP THEME

The Critic as Amateur

WORKSHOP CONVENOR

Prof Saikat Majumdar

BIO NOTE

Saikat Majumdar, a novelist and critic, is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Ashoka University. He is the author of *Prose of the World: College Pathways of Possibility*, the forthcoming *The Amateur: Self-Making and the Humanities in the Postscript* (2024), and the co-editor of the collection, *The Critic as Amateur*. He has published four novels: *Shantika*, *The Priest*, *The Son of God*, and most recently, *The Middle Finger*, a contemporary college campus novel that seeks to tell ancient myths. His new novel, *The Remains of the Body*, will appear in 2024. He has been a Fellow at the Wellesley College Humanities Center, the Jawaharalal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study, and the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study in South Africa. More about him and contact information at <https://saikatmajumdar.com/>

SUBMISSIONS

Interested Participants may please note that the Workshop is intended to be rigorous. A mandatory reading list will reach you well in time before the Workshop. Please submit an abstract in approximately 300 words of your presentation based on the Workshop theme to gitavivewar@gmail.com before October 5, 2023.

REGISTRATION FEE

Rs. 6000/- (Six thousand only). This will cover workshop kit, tea and lunch. Travel and accommodation expenses will NOT be reimbursed.

WORKSHOP VENUE: Centre for Contemporary Theory, 301/302, Shikha Shakti Complex, Opposite Vaidyaratnam Railway Station (Rear Entrance), Faramji Road, Alkapuri, Vadodra 390007



Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda
(A Member of the Consortium of the Humanities Centers and Institutes)

Seminar

Disciplinary & Difference

20-21 August 2023

Venue: C-304, Centre For Contemporary Theory, Siddhi Vinayak Complex, Faramji Road, Alkapuri, Baroda 390007



Last Date for Registration 10 August 2023

10 August 2023 Last Date for Abstracts

Mail abstracts to deekaydas@gmail.com

CONCEPT NOTE

The act of reading is central to the discipline of literary study. Along with the adjacent fields of linguistics and philology, philosophy and religion studies, the interpretation of literary texts has traced its origin to the secularization of hermeneutics. It is no surprise that some of some of the defining debates in literary study have been about methods of reading. While these debates have shaped the discipline since its very institutionalization of the university, notably with Formalist and New Criticism, the understanding of interpretation as an act of digging below the surface of the text was revived with particular vigor by Frederic Jameson's 1981 work, *The Political Unconscious*, bringing together capital and the unconscious, Lacan and Freud as the hidden impulses behind discourse.

Recent decades have brought some disenchantment with the traditional models of close reading driven by the quest for layers of meaning hidden underneath the text. Distant reading has invoked digital humanities to read vast genres of texts for large patterns, while surface reading has revealed fatigue with the depth-driven interpretation, returning to immediate elements of the text, sometimes reminiscent of Susan Sontag's suspicion of deep interpretation and her celebration of the erotics of the surface.

With these unfolding debates in our background, this course will focus on a particular contemporary trend of what Jeffrey Williams has called "the new modesty in literary criticism" – the return of the figure of the amateur as a reader and critic. The emergence of literary criticism as a discrete pursuit and that of literary study as an academic field required them to become specialized activities distinct from older forms of dilettantish amateurs that shaped belletristic culture. But attention to the reading lives of marginal and minoritized readers, such as the working class, transnational flows, *The Intellectual Lives of the British Working Class*, women (Janice Radway, *Reading Between the Lines*), the colonized (Gopal Vinayak, *Masks of Consciousness*), as well as various kinds of "non-literary" readers (Merve Emre, *Posttheory*), has renewed focus on the non-specialist reader and their contribution – both historical and potential – to the academic discipline of literary study.

It has become increasingly clear that literary criticism is likely to remain profoundly suspended between professional labor and amateur play. For instance, unexpected forms of reading, writing, and learning historically situated on the margins of the global British Empire, leading to intriguing accounts of autodidacticism and critical self-thinking led by writers, builders, and activists under repressive or reactionary regimes of education enacted by different phases of imperialism. With such examples in mind, we will examine postcolonial's attention on the amateur reader. We will try to find out if established modes of interpretation can be enriched by varieties of non-specialist reading – whether ignorance can sometimes be a richer mode of reading than scholarly knowledge. We'll look at recent histories of scholarly criticism that have revived these questions, attend to the disenchantments of critique and the possibilities of postcritique, consider the dialectic of the amateur and the professional in the making of the colonial and postcolonial reader in India, and conclude with the place of the amateur in the undergraduate classroom of English literary study.

– Saikat Majumdar



The Fonsecan Madonna



BY
Savia Viegas

Artist &
Fiction Writer

RESPONDENT



Parul Dave Mukherji

Prof, The School of
Arts & Aesthetics, JNU

ONLINE
LECTURE

23 NOV
3 PM IST

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A postcolonial reading of a diverse craft economy in Kolkata

By **Rishika Mukhopadhyay**

Lecturer
Development Geography
University of Southampton

ONLINE

LECTURE

03 OCTOBER

3 PM IST

10.30 AM GMT

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