



BITS Pilani
K K Birla Goa Campus

Iaclals



Celebrating 20 Years of Excellence

IACLALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Organized by

**Association for Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies in India
&
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus**

Wit, Humour and the Carnavalesque in Literature and Performance

15, 16, and 17 February 2024



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2024

REGISTRATION | VENUE: DLT LOBBY | 8:30 – 9:00 AM

INAUGURAL SESSION | VENUE: DLT-9 | 9:00 – 9:30 AM

- **Welcome Address: KA GEETHA**, Conference Convenor & Head, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus
- **Introduction to IACLALS: SWATI PAL**, Vice Chairperson, IACLALS
- **Opening Remarks on the Theme of the Conference: M ASADUDDIN**, Chairperson, IACLALS
- **Chief Guest's Address: SUMAN KUNDU**, Director, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus
- **Vote of Thanks: AMITENDU BHATTACHARYA**, Organizing Secretary, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

KEYNOTE SESSION | VENUE: DLT-9 | 9:30 – 10:15 AM

Keynote Address: EV RAMAKRISHNAN, Bilingual Writer & Critic

Carnavalesque in Contemporary Indian Fiction: The Interface Between Subversion and Affirmation

Chair: SENATH WALTER PERERA, Former Chairperson, SLACLALS, Sri Lanka

TEA BREAK | VENUE: DLT LOBBY | 10:15 – 10:30 AM

BUSINESS SESSION 1

SESSION 1A | VENUE: DLT-9 | 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Centre-staging Humour: Stand-up Comedy

Chair: NILAK DATTA

1. **RUNA MENEZES** The Pun, Punch and Punchline: Comedy's New Avatar in Contemporary India
2. **ASHWATHY NAIR** Locating Kunal Kamra's Humor: Personalizing Politics and De-fetishizing the State
3. **TARA SALDANHA** #maidturnedcomedian: Deepika Mhatre's Stand-up Comedy as Life Narrative
4. **GAYATHRI M** Crossing Generations of Comedy: Chakyar Koothu and Modern Stand-Up

SESSION 1B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **10:30 – 11:45 AM**

Rhyming Wit: Humour in Indian Poetry

Chair: KALYANEE RAJAN

1. **S CHITRA** Wit and Humour in the Akam Poems of Tamil Cankam Literature
2. **MOHD AQIB** Hierarchy of Emotions in 19th and 20th Century Urdu Literary Cultures: Reading Humour and Gravity as Ideological Practices
3. **ASMAT JAHAN** Decolonising the Minds: Akbar Allahabadi's Satirical Poetry as a Form of Resistance
4. **VENKATESH PUTTAIAH** Humour as a Counter to Authority in Eunice De Souza's *A Necklace of Skulls*

SESSION 1C | **VENUE: D-101** | **10:30 – 11:45 AM**

Comic Capers: Humour in the Graphic Medium

Chair: GEETHA BAKILAPADAVU

1. **HEMAVATHI BS** Blistering Barnacles! What the Wit & Why the Humour!
2. **NIBEDITA MUKHERJEE** The Rhetoric of 'Powered' Humour: The Female Cartoonists Sketch Back
3. **BARNASHREE KHASNOBIS** Comics Go Green: *Rationis Capax* through Green Humour in *Pugmarks and Carbon Footprints*
4. **NAMRA SULTAN** Comedy Born Out of Tragedy: Wit, Humour and the Comic Imagination in Joe Sacco's *Palestine*

BUSINESS SESSION 2

SESSION 2A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **11:45 AM – 01:00 PM**

Brand Wit: Humour in Advertising

Chair: RAMPRASAD JOSHI

1. **SANGEETA SHARMA** Use of Humour in Advertising
2. **MERIN JOSE & SABITHA ZACHARIAS** Kinesthetic Incongruity and Brand Humour: A Study of Selected Advertising Commercials
3. **NEENU KUMAR** Utterly-Butterly Delicious Tale of Wit and Humour in Amul Advertisements
4. **ANANDITA PAN** Not for the Faint Hearted: Humour, State, and the Subversive Impact of Amul Girl

SESSION 2B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **11:45 AM – 01:00 PM**

EnGendering Humour

Chair: NATASA THOUDAM

1. **ISHITA GAUTAM** *Andaaz Apna Apna*: Dolly Alderton, John Kennedy Toole and the Misogynist Joke
2. **ISHITA BAJPAI & JAYATEE BHATTACHARYA** Interweaving Humour with Queer Masculinities and Gender Roles in the Transmigration Danmei Novel *The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System*
3. **ANJU MATHEW** "Can the Feminists Troll?": Critical Analysis of Gendered Trolling in Kerala's Digiscape
4. **KAVYA KRISHNA KR** Mono Acting Social Satire: Gender, Humour and Affect in Women's YouTube Vlogging practices in Malayalam

SESSION 2C | **VENUE: D-101** | **11:45 AM – 01:00 PM**

Humour & Post/Colonialism

Chair: PRIYANKA TRIPATHI

1. **BARNALI SAHA** It's a Hoot: Wit, Humour and the Bengali Babu in Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hootum Pyanchar Naksha*
2. **USHA NEKKALAPUDI** Wit, humour and Satire in the England-returned *Barrister Parvatheesam*: Migrant Experience as a Telugu Travelogue
3. **KAMAYANI KUMAR** Cartoons: An Ethnographic Commentary on Partition of India
4. **DIPANJAN CHATTERJEE** Language of the Kolkata Derby: Partition and Carnavalesque Spaces

LUNCH BREAK | **VENUE: DLT LOBBY** | **01:00 – 01:45 PM**

BUSINESS SESSION 3

SESSION 3A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **01:45 – 03:00 PM**

The Postcolonial Carnavalesque

Chair: KA GEETHA

1. **SENATH WALTER PERERA** The Carnival as Camouflage in Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* and Carl Muller's *The Jam Fruit Tree*
2. **YASHVI SRIVASTAVA** Comedy and Crisis: Political Commentary in Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*
3. **URMI SENGUPTA** 'Tricky Trickster Tales': Wit and Humour as Tools of Decolonization in Indigenous Literatures of Canada
4. **SHARIQ KHAN** Memes as Carnavalesque in Sheena Patel's *I'm A Fan*

SESSION 3B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **01:45 – 03:00 PM**

Classic Mavericks: Wit & Subversion in the Western Canon

Chair: SUSAN S DEBORAH

1. **SUKRITI BHUKKAL** Carnavalesque Revelry and Social Subversion in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*: A Study of Gender, Power, and Liberation

2. **AYESHA IRFAN** Bernard Shaw's Intellectual Comedies and the Shavian Wit and Humour
3. **SWATEE SINHA** Theorizing the Popular: Wit and Humour in Samuel Beckett
4. **SABREEN AHMED** Locating the Carnavalesque and Public Laughter in Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

SESSION 3C | **VENUE: D-101** | **01:45 – 03:00 PM**

Funny Pictures: Humour in Indian Cinema

Chair: RAYSON K ALEX

1. **DHANYA AP** Unmasking Prejudices: An Analysis of the Use of Wit & Humour in Malayalam Cinema
2. **JAHNAVI S DAS** Laugh till You Drop: A Study of Black Humour in Bollywood Films
3. **CHETNA RAWAT** Exploring the Dark Side of Laughter: Black Humour in *Karwaan* and *Goodbye*
4. **MAZIAH SHAAZ** Goan Rhapsody: An Analysis of Carnival, Wit and Humor in Select Films Set in Goa

BUSINESS SESSION 4

SESSION 4A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **03:00 – 04:15 PM**

Humour & the Chequered Histories of Northeast India

Chair: HEMJYOTI MEDHI

1. **REETU RAJ KASHYAP** The Modern Assamese Tradition of Humour and Assam's Cultural Left of Mid-20th Century
2. **DEBASHREE DATTARAY** The Carnavalesque as Cultural Memory: Resistance in the Karbi Youth Festival of North East India
3. **SYLVIA SAGOLSEM** Humour as Cultural Expression: Insights from Manipuri Folk Narratives
4. **NATASA THOUDAM** The Meitei-Kuki Conflict in (Political) Cartoons of *The Sangai Express* (Meiteilon Edition)

SESSION 4B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **03:00 – 04:15 PM**

Drawing Giggles: Humour in Visual Narrative Arts

Chair: ASMAT JAHAN

1. **VISHAL PANDYA** Beyond the Punchline: Irony and Satire in Contemporary Art
2. **JAYA UPADHYAY** The Comic and the Grotesque: Reading the Critique of 'Babu Culture' in the Art of Dharmanarayan Dasgupta
3. **SHILPA SHIRISHKUMAR TANNA** Comic(s) Capers: Carnavalesque Tropes in Sarnath Banerjee
4. **AARCHA PRADEEP** Wit, Humour, Satire & Social Critique: An In-depth Study of VT Thomas's Comic Series *Bobanum Moliyum*

SESSION 4C | **VENUE: D-101** | **03:00 – 04:30 PM**

Indi-wit: Humour in Bhasha Literatures

Chair: EV RAMAKRISHNAN

1. **SOHINI GAYEN & ARNAPURNA RATH** Colloquialisms and Humour in Select Short-Stories of Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay
2. **ALVIN JOSEPH** Wit, Humour, and Carnavalesque Elements in Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's Novels
3. **THARA GANGADHARAN** Humour and Biopower: An Analysis of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's Short Stories
4. **KALYANEE RAJAN** Examining the Depiction of Witty Women and their Response to Marriage in Ismat Chughtai's Fiction
5. **DIKSHA BENIWAL** Hiding in Humour: A Study of Ajay Navaria's "*Apne Apne Mukhaute*"

TEA BREAK | **VENUE: DLT LOBBY** | **04:15 – 04:40 PM**

POETRY READING SESSION | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **04:40 – 05:30 PM**

Chair: KALYANEE RAJAN

----- *End of Day 1* -----

DAY 2: FRIDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2024

BUSINESS SESSION 5

SESSION 5A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **09:00 – 10:15 AM**

Comic Transactions: Humour Across Time & Culture

Chair: RAYSON K ALEX

1. **SUBHAYU CHATTERJEE** Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Abhijanadushmantam*: An Attempt to Point Out the Silences
2. **RAHUL AHLUWALIA** The Trails of Odysseus: Vestiges of a Joycean Labyrinth
3. **JAYA YADAV** A Modern Prometheus?: Analysing Humour, Popular Culture and Representation in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* Series
4. **KALPLATA** Rabelaisian Renaissance: Dissecting Gender Dynamics within the Carnavalesque Landscape of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

SESSION 5B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **09:00 – 10:15 AM**

Antiseptic Wit: Confronting Social and Political Realities through Humour

Chair: PAROMITA BOSE

1. **SRIDHI DASH** Humour as Resistance: Faturananda's Literary Critique of Society and Politics
2. **SAYANTANI CHOWDHURY** Satire and Cultural Criticism in a Little Magazine: Revisiting Diptendra Sanyal's *Achal Patra*
3. **YAMINI** Harishankar Parsai: Satirizing the Performance of Nationalism
4. **AHMED SHABIN KK** Circumventing Censorship: Satire and Black Humour in Perumal Murugan's Writings

SESSION 5C | **VENUE: D-101** | **09:00 – 10:15 AM**

Wit Unbound: Humour in the Western Classics

Chair: SHOBHA M

1. **S. RAVIKUMAR & P. BOOMIRAJA** Wit and Humour in Classical Literature
2. **SHIPRA G. VASHISHTHA** An Analysis of the Role of Wit and Humour in Classical Comedy
3. **PIYUSH RAVAL** Humour and the Conflict between Old and New Comedy in Aristophanes' *The Frogs*
4. **S GOPINATH** Scatological Humour in *Gulliver's Travels*

TEA BREAK | **VENUE: DLT LOBBY** | **10:15 – 10:30 AM**

MEENAKSHI MUKHERJEE MEMORIAL PRIZE SESSION

MMM PRIZE | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **10:30 – 11:30 AM**

Chairs: M ASADUDDIN & SWATI PAL

VED PRAKASH "Examining the Domain of Caste, Gender and Sexuality through Select Films of Jayan K. Cherian"

In conversation with **SWATI PAL**

BUSINESS SESSION 6

SESSION 6A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **11:30 AM – 01:00 PM**

KidWit: Humour in Children's Literature

Chair: AMANDEEP KAUR

1. **GARGI GANGOPADHYAY** The Pleasure of Topsy-Turvy Worlds: The Carnavalesque in Bengali Children's Literature

2. **SABEREE MANDAL** Sukumar Ray: A Critical Analysis of Humour in Bengali Poems
3. **PAROMITA BOSE** The 'Nonsense' World of Sukumar Ray
4. **SHEFALI KOHLI** Beyond the Real: Exploring Carnavalesque and Magical Realism in Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*
5. **UMME UMMARAH KHAN** Unmasking the Comedy in the Tragedy: Exploring Wit and Humour in Children's Literature through Lemony Snicket's Works

SESSION 6B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **11:30 AM – 01:00 PM**

Castes of Humour

Chair: ANANDITA PAN

1. **NANCY TYAGI** Humour as a tool for the Marginalised: A Reading of Anti-Caste Literature
2. **PRIYA VERMA** 'Filthy Mahars!' Analyzing Dalit Assertion and Satire in Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*
3. **JHARANA RANI DHANGADAMAJHI** Religion or Subversive Performativity: Unravelling the Carnavalesque in Dalit Rituals of Odisha
4. **DILSHA K DAS** Reconstruction of Identity in Thira and Theyyam: Performance and the Performer
5. **DIVITA SINGH** From Margins to Mainstream: A Study of Blue Comedy through the Paradigm of New Dalit Resistance, Revolt and Assertion

SESSION 6C | **VENUE: D-101** | **11:30 AM – 01:00 PM**

(No) Laughing Matter: Humour's Role in (De)Normalizing Stereotypes

Chair: KALYANEE RAJAN

1. **ALEENA KHAN & MOHD FARAZ ZUBERI** Being Funny About Who I Am: Identity Stereotypes to Create Humour
2. **JASRAH FAROOQ** Blackface Minstrelsy: Fetishisation of Black Race in the Garb of Humour
3. **NARENDRA KUMAR** Racist Humour, Cultural Surveillance and Trauma in Caryl Phillips' *Dancing in the Dark*
4. **MANISH SOLANKI** Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*: Satirical Revisionism and Subversion of Gender Stereotypes
5. **NEHA DAGAR** Wit and Humour in Folk Songs Challenging Traditional Gender Roles and Stereotypes: An Example of Jakari

LUNCH BREAK | **VENUE: DLT LOBBY** | **01:00 – 01:45 PM**

BUSINESS SESSION 7

SESSION 7A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **01:45 – 03:00 PM**

Wit & the Other: Humour's Multifarious Entanglements

Chair: NIBEDITA MUKHERJEE

1. **AMANDEEP KAUR & JAGVIR SINGH** The Humour of the Absurd: Roy Andersson's "Living Trilogy"
2. **SHOBHA M** The Significance of Scatological Humour: A Case Study of the Film *Piku*
3. **ASMITA KUNDU** The Carnavalesque of Queer Historicity: Horror and Wit in *Plain Bad Heroines*
4. **A SOWMYA** Casting Aside of Caste Centres in Comic Shorts

SESSION 7B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **01:45 – 03:00 PM**

Wisecracks: Humour in Everyday Life

Chair: PRIYANKA TRIPATHI

1. **IPSITA SENGUPTA** In connect, disconnect: Exploring pluripotency of wit and humour in a comparative study of select representations of the adda, eighteenth century and contemporary
2. **ALEENA MANOHARAN** The Comic Mode in Aboriginal Literature
3. **AMRITA SHARMA** Voices from Urban India: Understanding Carnavalesque through select web productions by *The Viral Fever*
4. **NEELA PARVEJ** Wit, Humour and Language in Digital Folklore: Exploring the linguistic Dynamics of Online Humour in the Digital Age

SESSION 7C | **VENUE: D-101** | **01:45 – 03:00 PM**

Wit & Humour in the Twice Born Fiction

Chair: ANSHU SURVE

1. **S MOORTHI** Wit and Humour in RK Narayan's Novels
2. **M NATARAJAN** Khushwant Singh: A Facetious Commentator of Men & Matters
3. **ANNALISE BENJAMIN** Laughing in the Face of Prejudice: The Transformative Power of Humor in Contemporary Indian Discourse on Race and Ethnicity
4. **HARSHKUMAR CHANDRAKANT GHAGHADA** A Battle of Wits: Roy's Indigenous Approach in *The God of Small Things*

TEA BREAK | **VENUE: DLT LOBBY** | **03:00 – 03:15 PM**

BUSINESS SESSION 8

SESSION 8A | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **03:15 – 04:15 PM**

Funny Aesthetics: The Praxis & Politics of *Hasya Rasa*

Chair: EV RAMAKRISHNAN

1. **NIBEDITA JENA & RAMESH C. MALIK** Critical Appraisal of Catharsis: A Study of Odia Comedies

2. **SREENATH VS** Tamāśa and Śuddhahāsyam: Understanding the Dynamics of Humor in Mimicry
3. **GARIMA HARINIWAS TIWARI** Exploring Wit, Humor, and *Hasya Rasa* in Mahesh Dattani's Plays

SESSION 8B | **VENUE: DLT-10** | **03:15 – 04:15 PM**

Seriously Funny: Disability & the Power of Humour

Chair: FATIMA RIZVI

1. **YUSUF AYAZ** The Fool-Lunatic Complex: A Study of Humor and Madness in Renaissance Society
2. **DEEPANWITA DEY** Madness, Humour and Trauma in Jerry Pinto's *Em and the Big Hoom*
3. **JAYA SARKAR** Crip Humour: Exploring Subversion of Stereotypical Portrayals of Laughter at the Impaired

SESSION 8C | **VENUE: D-101** | **03:15 – 04:15 PM**

Hilarious Hoot: The Sitcom Spectacle

Chair: KAVYA KRISHNA KR

1. **SOUMYANEEL DASGUPTA** Interrogating the Transformative Poetics of Sitcoms: Humour as a Medium of Resistance and Transgression in *Seinfeld* and *Young Sheldon*
2. **CHITRA BAJPAI** *The Big Bang Theory*: The Verbal Humour in Television Sitcoms
3. **ROLI MISHRA & ARUNDHATI SHARMA** A Theoretical Analysis: Unravelling the Quantum of Femininity in *The Bing Bang Theory*

GENERAL BODY MEETING

GBM | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **04:15 – 05:00 PM**

TEA BREAK | **VENUE: DLT LOBBY** | **05:00 – 05:15 PM**

BOOK RELEASE SESSION

BOOK RELEASE | **VENUE: DLT-9** | **05:15 – 06:00 PM**

Chair: SWATI PAL

----- *End of Day 2* -----

DAY 3: SATURDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2024

BUSINESS SESSION 9

SESSION 9A | VENUE: DLT-9 | 09:00 – 10:00 AM

Folk Funnies: Wit in Traditional Performances

Chair: SUSAN S DEBORAH

1. **ANSHIKA NIRANJAN** Humour in Marriage Folk Songs of Bundelkhand Region: with Special Reference to Districts Jalaun and Hamirpur
2. **MEGHAL KARKI** Rethinking Humour, Licence and the Carnavalesque in the Indian Context, with Reference to Kumaoni Holi
3. **BHUMIKA SINGH** Unmasking Wit and Humour: Investigation of Wit and Humour in Select Mask Traditions of India

SESSION 9B | VENUE: DLT-10 | 09:00 – 10:00 AM

Humour in the Folk Traditions of Bengal

Chair: SWATI PAL

1. **SANJUKTA NASKAR** The Cult of Baul in Contemporary Times
2. **MIR MASUDUL HOQUE** The Folk Carnavalesque: Resistance and Subversive Wit in Bengal's Alkap Tradition
3. **SUBHANKAR DUTTA** Performance and the Comic Replicas: Humour and Social Satire in the *Sawng Jatra* of *Gajan* Festival

SESSION 9C | VENUE: D-101 | 09:00 – 10:00 AM

Humour in the Folk Traditions of Gujarat

Chair: PIYUSH RAVAL

1. **ANSHU SURVE** Harmonizing Humor and Social Critique: A Comprehensive Analysis of Gujarati *Dayro*
2. **VARIA DRASHTI RUSHABHBHAI** Delving into the Delicacies of Thought: Wit and Intellectual Profundity in Jhaverchand Meghani's Gujarati Folk Narratives

TEA BREAK | VENUE: DLT LOBBY | 10:00 – 10:15 AM

CD NARASIMHAIAH PRIZE SESSION

CDN PRIZE | VENUE: DLT-9 | 10:15 AM – 12:30 PM

Chairs: **M ASADUDDIN & FATIMA RIZVI**

1. **SANYOGITA SINGH** Humour and Hurt: Narrative as Counter-strategy in Krishan Chander's *Ek Gadhe ki Aatmkatha*
2. **ASHIMA SHRAWAN** Deciphering Humour: Exploring the Enigma of *Hasya Rasa* in *Natyasastra*
3. **POOJA DUGGAL** Stand-up Comedy as a Catalyst for Social Change: Wit, Humour and Caste
4. **SRESTHA BHATTACHARYA** Humour, Carnavalesque and Counter-Memory in the Literary Works of Suniti Namjoshi
5. **TASNIM NAZIFA CHOUDHURY** The Construction of the Comic Frame in Stand-Up Comedy

LUNCH BREAK | VENUE: DLT LOBBY | 12:30 – 01:10 PM

CDN PRIZE | VENUE: DLT-9 | 01:10 – 01:30 PM

CDN PRIZE WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT & AWARD

- Announcement of CDN Prize Winner
- Comments by Floor Judges

VALEDICTORY SESSION | VENUE: DLT-9 | 01:30 – 02:30 PM

Chair: **KA GEETHA**

- Valedictory Address: **AMRUTA PATIL**, Graphic Novelist
- Concluding Remarks: **M ASADUDDIN**, Chairperson, IACLALS
- Vote of Thanks: Secretary, IACLALS
NILAK DATTA, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

----- *End of Day 3* -----

Day 1: Thursday, 15 February 2024

SESSION 1A CENTRE-STAGING HUMOUR: STAND-UP COMEDY

Time: 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: **NILAK DATTA**, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

RUNA MENEZES, Assistant Professor of English, Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University

The Pun, Punch and Punchline: Comedy's New Avatar in Contemporary India

ABSTRACT: Of all the forms of art and cultural expression that the world has unravelled, few genres of performance have intrigued and tickled as much as the modern Stand-up Comedy. With a penchant for caustic and self-deprecating humour, the current brand of stand-up comedians/comediennes have evolved to a level of finesse and expertise, hitherto unseen. The sheer numbers of stand-up comedy artists springing up, have led to greater competition and a relatively sophisticated level of humour and satire. Tongue-in-cheek humour, often directed at live audiences, hilarious improvisations and enviable presence of mind: These characterize the modern, metropolitan, Indian stand-up comedian/comedienne. This paper examines the art, strategies and techniques used by a selection of Indian stand-up comedians/comediennes through the lens of the “Incongruity Theory” of humour, as propounded by Francis Hutcheson and further developed and reinterpreted by scholars such as James Beattie. It also investigates another welcome offshoot of the stand-up comedy culture: namely the rise of an intellectual, knowledgeable and well-informed audience: one that is not only appreciative of the humour, but also reflective of a society that refuses to take things at face value. The paper delves into the psyche of the modern Indian viewer of stand-up comedy, by applying Reader Response theory and analysing viewer reviews and feedback on selected video-streaming and OTT platforms. With a slew of programs and series on all media platforms devoted to stand-up comedy, it is a burgeoning industry today. In taking a closer look at the stand-up comedians in India, this paper focuses on the performer, and how their performance, persona, passion and ideology have shaped the art of stand-up comedy today, while reflecting the exigencies of the audience.

KEYWORDS: Performance, wit, humour, stand-up, comedy

ASHWATHY NAIR, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

Locating Kunal Kamra's Humor: Personalizing Politics and De-fetishizing the State

ABSTRACT: At a time when national and international media are revealing the cracks in the democratic system and sentiment in India, Stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra breaks down the public perception of the State and the power it holds. With reference to his recent special, titled 'Kunal Kamra Stand-up-2023', which the comedian released in six parts on his YouTube channel, I study how he begets humor by displacing political figures from the political public sphere and imagining them within contexts of the private, the personal, and the ordinary. The laughter that arises in response to characterizations of the powerful via elements of ordinary public life is testament that the citizens of the country see a vast gap between themselves and the State. I observe that by critiquing the autocratic tendencies in the government's relationship with the people, Kamra pushes for a democratic line of thought, where his humor familiarizes the ones in power by suspending them from the high horses they ride in the public imagination. Rife with satire that entertains and evokes laughter, Kamra's humor breaks down the fetishistic view of the state and its agents. (The fetishism in my use here, referring to a perception of the State as being so powerful that it appears to be distant and inaccessible to the public, and not necessarily as a positive enchantment with the State). I argue that by presenting the powerful as ordinary, by interspersing the public with the personal, and by facilitating laughter against the follies of the State, Kamra who has often received flak for his social critique on social media platforms, is reimagining through humor, a democratic India.

KEYWORDS: Humour, stand-up comedy, Indian politics, personal narrative, fetishism

TARA SALDANHA, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

#maidturnedcomedian: Deepika Mhatre's Stand-up Comedy as Life Narrative

ABSTRACT: The title of this paper draws from a hash-tag used by Deepika Mhatre, a domestic worker-turned-comedian from Mumbai, on social media platforms. Also, Mhatre begins her performances by introducing herself as a "stand-up comedian, ex-maid." This along with the hashtag manifests the key points of interest of this presentation: the possibilities of the medium of stand-up comedy as a life narrative mode, especially for marginal subjects. This paper examines how Mhatre mobilises her life trajectory, from her years working in domestic work to her current engagement with stand-up comedy, in her performances. It proposes that Mhatre's self-representation via comedy is poised to entertain, but also implicates her audience in her experiences as a domestic worker. The sites of inquiry include recordings of her performances available online, as well as her live performances and public appearances where possible. This research responds to recent moves within life narrative studies to acknowledge and forward interest in 'automediality'— the study of the function and implications of form and medium on life narration. Reading this way reveals how Mhatre uses stand-up comedy to respond to and counter long-standing figurations of domestic workers, while interrogating established models for narrating their lives, and autobiographical forms in

general. Significantly, taking stand-up comedy as a life narrative mode serves to proliferate sites from which Mhatre's, and other marginal lives might be read.

KEYWORDS: stand-up comedy, life narrative, automediality, domestic worker

GAYATHRI M, Independent Researcher

Crossing Generations of Comedy: Chakyar Koothu and Modern Stand-Up

ABSTRACT: Laughter is a timeless and universal human phenomenon that may be used as a powerful tool for self-reflection entertainment, and conveying of important ideas. This research compares and contrasts two distinct comic traditions: modern stand-up comedy, a modern kind of humour, and Chakyar Koothu, which has its roots in Kerala's cultural legacy. This paper explores these traditions by including Henri Bergson's Theory of Laughter, which highlights the significance of incongruity in humour, and Arthur Koestler's observations about the use of humour to resolve cognitive incongruities. Chakyar Koothu and Modern Stand-Up both use comedy to attract audiences' interest, stimulate critical thinking, and convey important ideas. A symbol of Kerala's vibrant oral tradition, Chakyar Koothu uses sarcasm and humour to captivate listeners and encourage critical thinking. Blending cultural criticism with religious themes, it serves as a medium for addressing social issues and promoting revolutionary change. On the other hand, Modern Stand-Up comedy is a modern subgenre that uses innovative and interesting humour to highlight important social concerns. Both styles use words, gestures, and facial expressions to provoke laughter and communicate important ideas. The paper also takes Scott A. Mitchell's Media Saturation Theory into consideration, which emphasises how the development of humour has been influenced by digital media and worldwide connectedness. Both focus on the power of laughter to bring people together and create a feeling of community among their audiences. Aristotle's "Catharsis Theory," which emphasises the significant influence of visual arts on human brains and emotions, is incorporated into this theoretical framework. This research highlights the development of humour through storytelling, bridging the gap between historical and modern humour. It highlights the ways in which witty visual storytelling may be used to promote social responsibility, change, reform, and in-depth observation. The fact that humour is a global storytelling language is evidence of both its everlasting strength in narrative and its ability to influence society via laughing.

KEYWORDS: Chakyar koothu, stand-up comedy, wit, humour, catharsis, theory of laughter, saturation theory, cognitive incongruity

SESSION 1B RHYMING WIT: HUMOUR IN INDIAN POETRY

Time: 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: **KALYANEE RAJAN**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College, University of Delhi

S CHITRA, Principal, Government Arts and Science College, Koothanallur, Thiruvarur, Tamil Nadu

Wit and Humour in the Akam Poems of Tamil Cankam Literature

ABSTRACT: Literature of the Cankam (Sangam) period which roughly dates back two millennia is oriented towards nature. It speaks of a growing civilization on the banks of rivers and mountains with pristine and lush in their beauty. The distinctive feature of Cankam poetry deals with the ecosystem which is an integral part of the lives of the people of the ancient Tamil society. Celebration of the river Vaiyai in the eleven songs of the Paripatal illustrates the extraordinary relationship that exists between nature and the natives of the Tamil land. Paripatal is a class by itself which has fifteen poems on Tirumaal and Murukan as devotional hymns and the remaining nine on the river Vaiyai flowing through Maturai, which can be classified as Akam poetry. The festivities that mark the pudhu punal or freshes of the river Vaiyai is a celebration of camaraderie, friendship, pomp and pageant interspersed with wit and humour. Nature had been a veritable source of inspiration to most of the poets. Rivers had always been centers of civilization which drew the attention of ancient bards. The Vaiyai (also known as Vaigai) river became the proud symbol of Madurai City, its ruler and almost all the poets who have written about it have graphically described the coming of the freshes in the river after the heavy rains in the Western mountains. The Vaiyai poems in the Paripatal illustrate the prosperity of the Pandiya Kingdom and also the full-blooded and vigorous love life of the young men and women of the day. They may be classified under the akam or poems of the interior domain as most of them portray the wife sulking on hearing about her husband sporting on the river bank with his concubine whereupon the husband coaxes his wife in various ways. The Vaigai freshes festivity interwoven with humour is discussed in this paper along with other Akam poems.

KEYWORDS: Cankam Literature, Akam Poems, Wit and humour, River Vaigai/Vaiyai, festivities

MOHD AQIB, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Hierarchy of Emotions in 19th and 20th Century Urdu Literary Cultures: Reading Humour and Gravity as Ideological Practices

ABSTRACT: Humour is placed lower than gravity in the hierarchy of emotions that seems to operate in the oral performances of Urdu poetry during the classical period. This is contrasted by the pattern observed in the public spaces of poetry performances in the ensuing period of socio-political change. Alongside this transformation, there is a recasting of the image of the early classical poet Mir Taqi Mir at the cost of the poet's own

through contemporary editions of his autobiography, indicating a re-ordering of emotional practices. The image of Mir, thus (re-)constructed, is revised again in the later twentieth century, suggesting a further change in social predilections towards emotions. In this context, the proposed paper explores the underlying choices of emotions for their suitability to varying standards of aesthetic taste and their associations with distinct literary genres in Urdu by looking at the editions of Mir's autobiography in original (Persian) and its Urdu and English translations, and the changing face of Mushaira in the middle classical and modern periods. The paper seeks to understand: 1) Why does Mir put "vulgar" jokes at the end of his rather "serious" autobiography, *Zikr-e-Mir*, and why do different editors include or exclude these jokes in their later editions? 2) Which forces determine the order in which poetry portraying distinct emotions is performed in public spaces in the classical and modern periods? While seeking answers to these questions, the paper attempts to see emotions of humour and gravity as ideological practices and identify their relative positions on the generic map of Urdu literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

KEYWORDS: Urdu poetry, *Zikr-e-Mir*, Emotion, Humour, Gravity

ASMAT JAHAN, Associate Professor, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Decolonising the Minds: Akbar Allahabadi's Satirical Poetry as a Form of Resistance

ABSTRACT: The Revolt of 1857 marks the beginning of resistance and cultural conflict between East and West. The earliest traces of this conflict may be found in literature of the period following 1857. Two distinct streams of thought emerged in response to the growing Western influence on Indian society and culture. Those who actively responded to the changing socio-political and cultural climate and the exigencies of their age may be termed as conformists and dissenters. In the first group there were thinkers and reformers like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Ram Mohan Roy who were strongly advocating conformity to the West and in the second group, there were poets and thinkers like Akbar Allahabadi, Altaf Hussain Hali, and Muhammad Iqbal who became the staunch critics of growing Western influence. Akbar resorted to satire as an instrument to register resistance against growing colonial hegemony and wrote poems that mocked at colonial practices and customs. These poems were written to evoke a feeling of respect for Eastern values and culture and discourage people from a blind conformity to the Western ideals. He artistically uses wit and humour to expose the nexus between language and power in particular to address issues related to the growing cultural and moral decline. He was one of the earliest poets who could foresee the dangerous consequences of falling into the trap of colonial cultural hegemony and wrote poems that condemn the importance of English language and exposes how language is used as a political tool to hegemonise Indian society and culture to eventually drive the people away from their own cultural values. The paper proposes to examine the use of humour and satire in select poems of Akbar Allahabadi to investigate how Akbar uses satire as an instrument to reflect the changing socio-cultural and political consciousness of his time. The paper will also examine the reasons why Akbar did not receive the critical attention

that he truly deserves despite the fact that he was one of the earliest poets in Urdu who attempted to decolonize the minds.

KEYWORDS: Akbar Allahabadi, Satire, Humour, Resistance, Nation

VENKATESH PUTTAIAH, Associate Professor, Department of English, Maharaja College, University of Mysore

Humour as a Counter to Authority in Eunice De Souza's *A Necklace of Skulls*

ABSTRACT: Humour is alien to the world of women – this is a prevalent belief in the masculine world, a bias that Eunice de Souza exposes with the dazzling humour of her poems. In de Souza's short and sharp lyrics, male is one of the forms of authority. Other forms of authority include parents, elders, people in positions of power, religion, and the church. This paper examines Eunice de Souza's poems to delineate the way the persona of a woman navigates the terrain of various forms of authority with wit and humour, offering us refreshing perspectives. Humour is often a strategy to counter dominance in de Souza, and it operates in surprising ways, whether in an open street or within the confines of a house. In some of the poems, incidents of long ago are retrieved from memory and presented to the readers. At the time of the incident, the narrator was presumably a young girl. Although she is a grown-up woman now, the impressions presented are the recordings of a young girl, realised in unsentimental stanzas of simple diction. The fact that the poems are rooted in their locale is revealed through words and phrases that are typical of Goan Christians' way of speaking English. Markedly, sexuality remains an overriding feature of the poems, with complexities surrounding it consistently contributing to the humour. The nature of humour itself ranges from satire to self-ironic wit. This paper aims to demonstrate how wit and humour are integral to Eunice de Souza's poetry by analysing poems from her first anthology *Fix* (1979) and her later collections *Women in Dutch Painting* (1988) and *Ways of Belonging: Selected Poems* (1990) represented in *A Necklace of Skulls: Collected Poems* (2019).

KEYWORDS: Eunice de Souza, humour, woman, authority

SESSION 1C COMIC CAPERS: HUMOUR IN THE GRAPHIC MEDIUM

Time: 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Venue: D-101

Chair: GEETHA BAKILAPADAVU, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

HEMAVATHI BS, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Dr S Gopalraju Government First Grade College, Anekal, Karnataka

Blistering Barnacles! What the Wit & Why the Humour!

ABSTRACT: Lamenting the present scenario where slapstick comedy has become the reigning genre in comedy I would like to delve into the world of comics where wit and humour were the very soul enticing the reader. The three comics chosen are *The Adventures of Asterix* by Rene Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, *The Adventures of Tintin* by the Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi and *Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Watterson. Though many other comics like Peanuts by Charles Schulz, Hagar the Horrible by cartoonist Dik Browne, Garfield by Jim Davis, Dennis the Menace by Hank Ketcham, our own Tinkle comics with their ever-green Shikari Shambhu, Tantri the Mantri and Suppandi vie for attention, I have chosen the above mentioned three comics for they are replete with wit and humour at times subtle and sometimes loud. The paper doesn't limit just to the story line and content but also looks at the comics as a text. The illustrations and the accompanying grawlix add humour in a subtle manner. For instance, Herge with his inimitable line drawings present humour without nudging or prodding the reader. and the illustrations of the trio Asterix, Dogmatix and Obelix is just the perfect blend of comical effect one can feel while reading the comics. Bill Watterson's Calvin and Hobbes is far from being mere comics. the illustration, the wild stretch of imagination and the exasperation of the grown-ups guide the reader to a path of enlightenment, obviously with generous dose of wit and humour. The paper would experience a lacuna if Dr Seuss is not included, hence a few of his works are taken to relish gentle and adorable humour and the rich imagination he fills his creations. *The Cat in the Hat* to start with has a tinge of humour though the narration starts with traces of melancholy. The paper ventures into the world of comics to present the wit and humour the writers and illustrators have successfully incorporated in their works.

KEYWORDS: Wit, humour, illustration, slapstick, comics

NIBEDITA MUKHERJEE, Professor, Department of English, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, West Bengal

The Rhetoric of 'Powered' Humour: The Female Cartoonists Sketch Back

ABSTRACT: Cartoons were initially perceived as "any preparatory sketch for tapestries, or for frescoes, or for paintings" (Chute 2017, 70). But after the publication of the "Substance and Shadow: Cartoon, No. 1" in London's *Punch* magazine on July 15, 1843, it obtained its popular connotation of being a "humorous drawing". Prof Roger Sabin endorsed this view stating that above all cartoons were intended to be funny. Thus, using satirical sketches and caricaturing public figures became a mantra for the popularity of a cartoonist. This satire was blatantly racist and Indians often became the subject of ridicule for white cartoonists. But with the fervour for nationalism arising, the Indian cartoonists started turning back the "provincializing gaze" of the English to them (Khanduri 2014, 48). The British retaliated by calling these cartoons humourless as it challenged their superiority and power. They called such cartoons "nonsensical" and "facetious" (Khanduri 2014, 60) and that it had "neither wit nor humour" (Times of India Feb 17, 1909). In time, the world of cartooning in India gained prominence but it was a

closed male circle which was not only satirist but also sexist. So, when Manjula Padmanabhan and Maya Kamath began creating cartoons, the male bastion failed to accept this onslaught onto their power structure. The two women cartoonists refused to follow the set custom of producing humour by ridiculing the female and hence their cartoons were designated as “unfunny” and “humourless”. Referring to the humour theorist John Morreall who stated that human society has comprehended humour as a form of joy that was derived from feelings of superiority over others, the present paper intends to confront this charge of being “unfunny” and “humourless” by referring in detail to the cartoons of Manjula Padmanabhan and Maya Kamath.

KEYWORDS: Cartoons, humour, satire, patriarchy, sexist

BARNASHREE KHASNOBIS, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru

Comics Go Green: *Rationis Capax* through Green Humour in *Pugmarks and Carbon Footprints*

ABSTRACT: Humour has been a corrective force in the society. Situations of surprise accompanied with irony invariably identify the anthropological dimensions of past, present, and future, contributing to critical evaluations of human actions. Jonathan Swift (1726) had insisted in *Gulliver's Travels* on the rational faculty of human beings, *rationis capax* through the portrayal of animal rationale that varied due to epistemological limits. Rohan Chakravarty through his cartoons, represent the rigidity of human rationale in denying the effects of Anthropocene and a planetary climate change. His humorous rendition of imbalance in ecology through compilation of cartoons, offers crystalized understanding of interference of *anthropos* into nature. Through figurative speech, puns, tropes, and paradox, Chakravarty pictorially depicts extinct and endangered species. *Pugmarks and Carbon Footprints* (2023) from his Green Humour Collection, a compendium of gag cartoons and comic strips recognizes the complexities of political laws and social institutions in natural depletion. His satirical take on the plunder of ancient rocks, fishing industry, and extinction of species across geographical boundaries through comic cartoons is a retelling of the confined *rationis capax*. Henri Bergson's work on the methods and functions of humour, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1911), can be read in correspondence with Chakravarty's farcical comedy. Bergson laid out the strategical resources of comic – repetition, inversion, and reciprocal interference of series which can be juxtaposed with Chakravarty's cartoons as the species engage in socio-political banter, wordplay, and self-deprecating humour. This paper assesses the creative representation and versatile function of humour in raising awareness on planetary shift in climate through selection of cartoons from *Pugmarks and Carbon Footprints: A Green Humour Collection*.

KEYWORDS: Function of Humour, Green Humour, Cartoons of Climate Change, Ecological Imbalance through Humour

NAMRA SULTAN, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, University of Delhi

Comedy Born Out of Tragedy: Wit, Humour and the Comic Imagination in Joe Sacco's *Palestine*

ABSTRACT: To the world of Comics Studies, which fervently persists in dissociating the connotation of “comic” from the form of comics and (unsurprisingly christened) graphic narratives, the proposition of this paper may signal towards the regressive. However, amid the multiple ways in which the seriousness of comics has been emphasized by Comics Scholars, the perspective that this paper studies Sacco’s text with not only enhances the seriousness of the text but also places it in a category of criticism that has been applied to serious works of literature, often written in the vein of comedy/satire with a larger goal of social critique and change. In accordance with this, Joe Sacco’s *Palestine*, which has received much critical acclaim, has been appreciated for a lot of reasons but seldom for its wit and humour. Sacco uses a comic tone to lay bare for the reader the contrast between the hegemonic Western narrative propagated by the Western media about the Middle East with the very different realities he encounters on ground. The grand narratives constructed by the Western world through the “infallible” genre of journalism are dismantled as Sacco takes a step back to reveal through his text the process of journalism and the subjectivities it is fraught with. Sacco’s humour often turns dark when he portrays his desperation as a journalist for some atrocity to occur just so he can report it. Eccentricity, which is a principal category of the carnivalesque, is employed by Sacco as he depicts eccentric habits and customs of Palestinians that reduces their Otherness. Such a portrayal humanizes Palestinians and presents a contrast to the statistics and numbers they are otherwise reduced to in Western media. However, Sacco’s visual wit is biting and spares no one as he draws grotesque faces with bulging eyes or an oversized mouth left open to show very visible teeth. This paper will be an exploration of Sacco’s comic tone which he uses throughout his text in order to not only report, but to present the “animal” people of Palestine in all their frail and flawed humanity, the use of visual humour and his overall effective use of the genre of journalism in the format of comics to reveal comedy that is born out of tragedy.

KEYWORDS: Comic Studies, The Middle East, Comics journalism, Humour, Tragedy

SESSION 2A BRAND WIT: HUMOUR IN ADVERTISING

Time: 11:45 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: **RAMPRASAD JOSHI**, Associate Professor, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

SANGEETA SHARMA, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus

Use of Humour in Advertising

ABSTRACT: Humour plays a prominent role in advertising as it touches the viewers' hearts, creating a lasting impression on the mind. Maslow's need-based triangle emphasises the importance of utilizing emotions in advertisements. By adopting humour in advertising, the communication clutter can be broken, bringing uniqueness to the ad and encouraging brand preference and liking. Uniqueness can be achieved through humour as it improves the advertisement's effectiveness. Some brands have adopted humour in their media campaigns in different ways. The five most prominent ways of adding humour in advertising are slapstick humour, sarcasm and irony, puns and wordplay, satire and parody, and deadpan humour. The paper attempts to find out how humour increases the effectiveness of advertising campaigns.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Advertising, brand preference, ad campaign

MERIN JOSE & SABITHA ZACHARIAS, Assistant Professors, Department of English, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Kochi, Kerala

Kinesthetic Incongruity and Brand Humour: A Study of Selected Advertising Commercials

ABSTRACT: Humour, which arises very often from the absurd takes up various forms including wit, satire, sarcasm and irony. It can be highly subjective as well as culture specific. Ingenious wordplay, unexpected twists and contradictory juxtaposition act as compelling sources of humour. In the contemporary scenario of digitization and mediatisation, humour has turned out to be a potent tool to impress the message onto the psyche of the target group. The present paper is an attempt at exploring the ways in which humour is utilised in advertising commercials to grab the attention of the audience, thereby increasing brand familiarity. The primary focus is on the Snickers ad series with the brand proposal "You're not you when you are hungry". The series presents a humorous take on 'hunger pangs' and uses incongruous juxtaposition to evoke humour. The method of creating humour is explored further with reference to Immanuel Kant's *The Theory of Laughter*. The paper thus proposes humour to be an effective tool of persuasion in the field of marketing.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, brand humour, incongruity, advertising commercials

NEENU KUMAR, Professor, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi

Utterly-Butterly Delicious Tale of Wit and Humour in Amul Advertisements

ABSTRACT: Wit is a clever literary device used to make the reader/ audience laugh. It is intelligent. The quality of saying/ writing the right thing at the right time is often seen as wit. It is also defined as an innate ability of being able to use words and ideas in an ingenious manner so that it results in humour. Humour is the propensity of putting

words/ experiences together in such a manner that they evoke laughter and entertain. It is also explained as the 'quality of being amusing and/ or comic. Wit and humour are often seen as having similar attributes. Both are used for comic purposes, invoking laughter. Wit highlights intelligence through the use of humour whereas the latter does not. Fun-filled mirth always ensues from humour. Wit allows a person to view a situation distinctively and retort with a comment suitable to it. Wit can be funny, clever, ironical/ satirical while humour is always funny and induces a smile, a chuckle or outright laughter. The present paper deals with Amul advertisements and the little girl, who is a symbol of 'utterly-butterly' cuteness. These advertisements are not only relevant to the times the times they were made in but also have a universal appeal. The prominent features of these advertisements are the picture of a girl, the text and the slogan. The girl is an epitome of sweetness while the slogan refers to the event/ people. This is linked with the butter in a textually witty manner.

KEYWORDS: wit, humour, Amul advertisements, picture, slogan

ANANDITA PAN, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER Bhopal

Not for the Faint Hearted: Humour, State, and the Subversive Impact of Amul Girl

ABSTRACT: The possibilities of comedic representations are reflective in the way they utilize the potential of humour to add an additional layer of meaning. The addition of humour often helps alleviate instances of persecution while making the readers/audience aware of issues of social and political relevance. Humour has predominantly been perceived as a mechanism to oppose hegemonic control. In literary and visual media, humour has emerged as an important social medium to represent sensitive issues. The discursive power of humour is established through the hierarchization of subject and the object of humour (who is laughing at whom and why). The destabilizing possibilities of political satires have been explored in terms of presenting critiques to a nation (Purdie 1993; Attardo 2014), and also in ways in which humour is used by conflicting nations to often denounce each other (Minchenia et al, 2019). In this paper I look at the character, Amul Girl, a mascot of the Amul company, who has been hailed for being the voice of critique. Amul, claiming to represent the Taste of India, deployed its character Amul Girl to provide a comedic twist in an attempt to highlight and question major political and social events of the nation. As such, Amul Girl stands as a witness India at the turn different historical junctures. This paper engages with the subversive possibility of Amul Girl in engaging with the state. I explore the following questions: Does humour contribute in destabilizing the state power, or does it lead to making light of the issues? Has the Amul Girl contributed in creating awareness of complex socio-political events among the people? Does her identity as a young girl help deflate representations that may otherwise be subject to persecution?

KEYWORDS: Humour, Amul Girl, Representation

SESSION 2B EnGendering Humour

Time: 11:45 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: **NATASA THOUDAM**, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Arts, IIT Jodhpur

ISHITA GAUTAM, Independent Researcher

Andaaz Apna Apna: Dolly Alderton, John Kennedy Toole and the Misogynist Joke

ABSTRACT: “...life is neither comedy, nor tragedy all the way through; it’s tragicomic,” says artist Krishen Khanna in his painting exhibition *The Bandwallahs*. This paper attempts to look at the tragic potential of comedy in text and film by analyzing Dolly Alderton’s autobiography *Everything I Know about Love* (2018), John Kennedy Toole’s novel *A Confederacy of Dunces* and the Hindi cult comedy film *Andaz Apna Apna* (1994). The paper looks at how the tragic elements in life give way to humour, how laughter is evoked at somebody’s misery and problematizes the ‘object’ position of a joke: how the subject position of the person at whose expense a joke is cracked goes on to decide whether the joke may be read as racist, sexist, anti-caste or plain misogynistic. It thus looks at how complex an individual’s ‘subjectivities’ might be and how enmeshed these are in intersectional (Crenshaw) matrices of class, caste and gender and how being sensitive to these can engender better jokes. The mental health concerns that jokes garb cannot be understated; John Kennedy Toole died by suicide years before his novel *A Confederacy of Dunces* was published and posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Jokes are often reflective of the societal pressures of the age in which they are conceived and this paper attempts to dive deep into their sociological origins. Ignatius Reilly, the protagonist of *Dunces* “swivels the random thoughts of his demented mind” even as he muses on his erratic employment, on what is on TV and on the cultural artifacts of his age. Academic Katie Kadue looks at “rape jokes” in 17th century poetry and how these underlie the unquestioning prevalence of misogyny and its omnipresence. The paper also attempts to read Rajkumar Santoshi’s popular film *Andaz Apna Apna* in the light of Kadue’s research on misogyny and argues that the gendered nature of jokes is not lost even in translation as a joke is delivered with comic timing on the screen, transforms and acquires new sociological contexts as it is consumed by the masses in a cinema hall.

KEYWORDS: Tragedy, comedy, John Kennedy Toole, *Andaaz Apna Apna*, comic novels

ISHITA BAJPAI, Ph.D. Candidate, Amity University, Noida

JAYATEE BHATTACHARYA, Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida

Interweaving Humour with Queer Masculinities and Gender Roles in the Transmigration Danmei Novel *The Scum Villain’s Self-Saving System*

ABSTRACT: First published in 2014, the Chinese Danmei novel *The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System* by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu comprises of the popular trope of transmigration, a trope where one's soul is transported into another body. The trope often includes a viewer from the real world getting transmigrated into a fictional world based on a novel, film or television programming from the real world. This research paper analyses the way the novel incorporates the use of self-referential wit and meta-humour to call out the tired tropes and stereotypes related to Stallion novels, a Chinese literary genre dealing with stories that centre around male power fantasy involving a hyper-masculine alpha protagonist and his romantic tryst with a harem of women. The paper highlights how the novel through its witticism and comicality seeks to metamorphose a standard Stallion novel into a more nuanced novel where aspects of traditional masculinities are juxtaposed with Queer and alternate forms of masculinities. The transmigration trope is used not only to poke fun at conventional gender dynamics, but also to subvert them and champion gender fluidity, which this paper attempts to describe. Eve Sedgwick's concepts regarding gender fluidity and breaking gender binaries by using humour as a tool of subversion form part of the theoretical framework used in the examination of the novel for this research. Her ideas have been taken to probe into the aspect of gender-bending and inspect the role of humour in enhancing the emotionalities to the novel. Additionally, the paper examines how the novel overthrows the norms of heteronormativity and traditional gender roles and expectations by embracing the sensitivity and vulnerabilities of its central male characters. By showing how the protagonists in the novel assiduously diverge from the way male protagonists in Stallion novels are typically characterised, i.e., as extremely virile, stolid, emotionally apathetic, and impassive, the paper reflects on how the idea of toxic masculinity is resisted, often involving the use of humorous ploys and self-aware sarcastic remarks and how new empowering Queer identities and masculinities are shaped.

KEYWORDS: Queer Masculinities, self-referential humour, meta-humour, toxic masculinity, gender fluidity

ANJU MATHEW, Ph.D. Candidate, VIT, Vellore

“Can the Feminists Troll?”: Critical Analysis of Gendered Trolling in Kerala’s Digiscape

ABSTRACT: Aristeia Fotopoulou (2016), in their seminal study on digital activism, averred that online spaces bring forth possibilities of both empowerment and vulnerabilities. This paper examines the interrelationship between gendered dissent and the precarity of online ‘trolls’ from an intersectional framework. The ‘victim’ and wittiness of these trolls significantly influence the latter’s virality and the affective and fluid assemblages they form in digital terrains. Framed by affective feminist studies, my paper undertakes a critical analysis of specific social media events that occurred between May 2020 and June 2023 in Kerala’s digiscape that resulted in the profusion of ‘feminist’ trolls and critically reflects on the linkages between online feminist trolling and “precariousness” (Butler 4). Establishing that there exist intersectional paradoxes in forging feminist dissent through trolls in digital spaces, this analysis unpacks the role of “feminist trolling” in the construction of gendered counter-publics. The paper, while

acknowledging the importance of these trolls in fostering feminist resistance, problematizes their unexamined endorsement and highlights the absence of significant discussions on post-trolling repercussions on society at large. Taking off from the works of Meena T Pillai (2022) and J Devika (2022), the paper argues that unexamined social media trials in the name of ‘calling out’ restrict modalities of dissent and sheds light on an absence of platforms to negotiate alternative viewpoints.

KEYWORDS: Trolls, Dissent, Feminism, Gendered Counter-publics, Resistance

KAVYA KRISHNA KR, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanistic Studies, IIT (BHU), Varanasi

Mono Acting Social Satire: Gender, Humour and Affect in Women’s YouTube Vlogging practices in Malayalam

ABSTRACT: In the Indian context most of the women vloggers create contents related to cooking, fashion, beauty, child care, etc. which are stereotypically considered as feminine. This paper will be looking at a particular genre of women’s YouTube vlogging practice in Malayalam where women vloggers perform self-scripted and directed mono acts/mono acting dramatic skits in the genre of social satire in their YouTube channels. These women YouTubers are middle-class educated home makers. They do solo performances of five to ten characters in a skit. The skits are shot inside or in and around their household using mobile phones. Their exceptional acting, scripting, costuming and direction skills, slowly gained popularity in the form large number of subscribers and comments; acquired them the status of ‘micro-celebrities’ and gained them commendable income through monetization of their YouTube channels. Most of the skits take a progressive stand on questions of gender and they do so by using satire as a genre. The theme of their mono act skits are usually the challenges middle-class women face inside traditional patriarchal families/ society or critique of societal hypocrisies/follies. The tone of the skit is humour, irony or sarcasm rather than a tone of protest or direct critique. The paper reads satire as mode of constructive social criticism sugar coated in laughter which helps the vloggers communicate their gender ideologies without hurting the sentiments of their families and of middle-class audience. In that sense, satire/humour are the mediums through which the women vloggers negotiate between their ‘public’ and ‘private’ selves in the age of digital media.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Digital Media, Vlogging, YouTube, Satire, Monoact

SESSION 2C HUMOUR & POST/COLONIALISM

Time: 11:45 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: D-101

Chair: **PRIYANKA TRIPATHI**, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Patna

BARNALI SAHA, Assistant Professor, School of English Studies, Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, New Delhi

It's a Hoot: Wit, Humour and the Bengali Babu in Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hootum Pyanchar Naksha*

ABSTRACT: Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hootum Pyanchar Naksha* stands as a remarkable literary work, providing a vivid portrayal of humor and wit within the context of the Bengali Babu culture during the 19th century. The text is astonishing in its assurance and sophistication. This paper delves into the multi-layered facets of humor, shedding light on the social, cultural, and linguistic nuances that define the Bengali Babu's world. Through a meticulous analysis of Sinha's work, this study seeks to unravel the intricacies of humor and wit as tools for both entertainment and societal commentary. The paper seeks to problematize Hootum's rendering of the image of the Bengali Babu as a Falstaffian caricature given to licentiousness and dissolution. It's the incongruencies and discrepancies of the age and its representative, the Bengali Babu, that evoke the loudest peal of laughter in Sinha's work. Drawing from critical perspectives, the research investigates how humor in *Hootum Pyanchar Naksha* often serves as a subversive mechanism commenting on a rapidly changing colonial Bengal. It confronts the cultural stereotype of the Babu as a poseur and a fop. Additionally, the paper examines the role of humor as a coping mechanism in a society undergoing rapid transformation under British colonial rule, shedding light on the psychological dynamics of laughter amidst change. Furthermore, this paper explores the linguistic dexterity displayed by Sinha in his use of wit and wordplay. His utilization of double entendre, puns, and satire adds depth to the narrative and engages the reader in a playful yet profound manner. The study elucidates how Sinha's linguistic choices contribute to the construction of humor and the representation of the Bengali Babu. Additionally, the paper comments on Hootum's name and his role as an observer, a spectator, and a reader of the Calcutta scene, much like Dickens's *Boz* and observes how Hootum ultimately, much like the Babu he derides, is ultimately an imitator himself, thus problematizing his satirical vantage point. In conclusion, this paper seeks to enrich the understanding of humor's role in literature, particularly in the context of the Bengali Babu, and invites further exploration into the realm of wit and satire in Bengali literature of the 19th century.

KEYWORDS: Wit and humour, Bengali literature, indigenous literature, *Hootum Pyanchar Naksha*, Dickens, *Boz*

USHA NEKKALAPUDI, Professor, Department of English, Krishna University, Andhra Pradesh

Wit, Humour and Satire in the England-returned *Barrister Parvatheesam*: Migrant Experience as a Telugu Travelogue

ABSTRACT: Scholarly interest in Indian migrants' travel and assimilation to Britain has increased in recent times but little research has followed migrants on their return and the impact of this foreign experience on their social, economic, and political identities in India in the early twentieth century. After 1904, scholarships were introduced by the Government of India for studies in technical subjects in Britain and this helped many elite Indians to opt for higher education in British universities. This migrant experience helped them to experience British society and culture and their perceptions underwent a dramatic change after their return to India with their qualifications. This paper explores wit, humour and satire as literary devices to experience the colonial legacy in the United Kingdom in Mokkalapati Narasimha Sastry's *Barrister Parvatheesam*. Written in three parts and published in 1924, this Telugu travelogue describes the experiences of a naïve village youngster Parvatheesam on his journey to Madras, Colombo, and England for legal studies where the colonized Indian was involved in a tense relationship with the metropolitan, involving admiration and comparison. This travel helped him to broaden his mind about Western culture, politics, and law. His witty narration sliced with humour evokes direct comparisons between the Indian and British culture, education system, homesickness and nostalgia for home, and the British image of liberal humanism. Some aspects of racial discrimination and ridicule in the dominant culture are implicit in his criticism of the colonial system and the projection of Indian values, thereby building a counter-narrative against the British hegemony with his subversive humour. In the third part of the book, Parvatheesam returns to India to practice Law in Madras High Court but later joins Indian Independence Movement inspired by the Mahatma. Behind the veil of simplicity, Sastry's autobiographical writing emerges as a strong medium of nationalist thought.

KEYWORDS: Wit, humour, satire, colonialism, Indian culture

KAMAYANI KUMAR, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Aryabhata College, University of Delhi

Cartoons: An Ethnographic Commentary on Partition of India

ABSTRACT: Partition of India is history, or so it seems for though 75 years have elapsed, it would not be an exaggeration to state that the geopolitical impact of violent division, the cartographic anxieties it has generated, and its post and prosthetic memories are still raw and unsettling. As a culturally traumatic event, it refuses to be dated and it is evident that the 'telling is far from over'. This paper will focus on political cartoons published in the leading dailies in the years building up to the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. These cartoons constitute a very rich commentary on 1947. As a visual art form of caricature, these cartoons not only wittily represent the politically turbulent situation, but also comment, satirize, and influence the public sphere in a significant way. In doing so it also shaped and negotiated the political agenda and ideology. The witty and incisive interjections offered by the political cartoons published in national dailies such as *Dawn*, *The Tribune*, *Amrit Bazaar Patrika*, *Hindustan Times*, and the British Raj *Civil and Military Gazette* between 1946-48 not only constitute a culture of parody, a tool of resistance and social criticism but offers very rich perspectives on the political turmoil in the years preceding the Partition and makes our understanding of the Partition more meaningful

and pertinent. This paper through a critical exegesis of these cartoons as visual ethnography seeks to examine how through 'harmless' humor they subversively shaped public consciousness and ideology. Through a very powerful visual syntax, these cartoons helped to create a Habermasian public sphere and validate perceptions of Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Mother India', in a very vital and engaging way. In this context these cartoons had a distinctive impact on the building of events leading to the Partition of the India subcontinent.

KEYWORDS: Partition, Cartoons, Subversion, Public Sphere

DIPANJAN CHATTERJEE, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Language of the Kolkata Derby: Partition and Carnavalesque Spaces

ABSTRACT: The grim affair of Bengal partition which rendered millions homeless is still a ghastly memory in the families of East Bengal refugees who had to leave their home and cross miles and settle down in what is now known to be West Bengal. Ever since the first attempt in 1905, the Hindu population of East Bengal started migrating to West Bengal. During 1947, during the birth of Pakistan, migration and resettlement peaked resulting in creating innumerable numbers of new colonies in various parts of Bengal. There was nothing sweet about a painful deracination from past home, loving neighbours, familiar surroundings, staple diet; a loss of jewellery, handloom, and owned lands, to start a life of appalling poverty and banal survival along with social othering, excommunication and neglect. However, in the case of the Kolkata Derby, frequently compared with Old Farm Derby which also showcases a footballing battle between natives and immigrants, the very sordid experience of Bengal Partition is turned upside down. In the spirit of carnival barring a handful of stray cases of violence from the past, the natives, supporters of the Mohun Bagan club go on a feat of slang rampage hurling abuses and offensive curses to the East Bengal crowd representing the refugees only to be met with an equally passionate barrage of invectives directed at the Mohun Bagan fans. During this rivalry dominated by a war of words, people on both sides unleash a vocabulary meant to offend and demean the opposition, bringing references from cultural stereotypes to eating habits to unfiltered tags such as '*udbastu*' (refugee). Sexual words and sexual profanities abound, referring to male and female genitalia, and this language of sex and violence adds an indispensable layer of carnivalesque humour to the overall maddening atmosphere of the Derby gallery. Dirty couplets and comically inclined phrases are coined afresh each footballing season targeting whatever it is that offends the passionate sentiments of the club fans. From club senior management to sponsorship tags such as 'ATK' or 'Emami', nothing is sacred. Football and politics are intricately related in contemporary times. The linguistic expressions of the Kolkata Derby scratching on Partition wounds and refugee crisis ending with triumphant profanities from the supporters expose the violent underlying tensions and how language in a carnivalesque space helps to release disturbing emotions through unbridled humour and unfettered Dionysiac energy.

KEYWORDS: Partition, Language and Vulgarity, Space and the Carnavalesque

SESSION 3A THE POSTCOLONIAL CARNIVALESQUE

Time: 1:45 – 03:00 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: KA GEETHA, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

SENATH WALTER PERERA, Professor Emeritus, Department of English, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

The Carnival as Camouflage in Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* and Carl Muller's *The Jam Fruit Tree*

ABSTRACT: *Running in the Family* and *The Jam Fruit Tree* are notable for foregrounding hedonistic behaviour which their authors contend was characteristic of the Burgher community in Sri Lanka. For Muller, the Burghers are always keen to “put a party” regardless of the situations they find themselves in; while Ondaatje, in describing the merry making after the horse races in *Running in the Family*, discloses that “the men leaned their chins against the serene necks of the women, danced a waltz or two, slid oysters into their partner’s mouths. The waves on the beach collected champagne corks. Men who had lost fortunes laughed frantically into the night.” This paper argues, however, that to focus exclusively on this pursuit of pleasure is to ignore the way these writers expose the grim, even sordid, realities that were so much a part of Burgher existence at the time—their elite status threatened by the prospect of Independence, the dysfunctional nature of familial relationships, the cult of male aggression that saw women and minors being victimized in multitudinous ways, and the complexities of adjusting to the fraught, evolving relationship with the majority communities in Sri Lanka, to mention a few. While not gainsaying the importance of the festive atmosphere and the uproarious humour which has made *Running in the Family* and *The Jam Fruit Tree* compelling reading for literary aficionados across the world, this focussed, comparative study demonstrates how Ondaatje and Muller have adopted a strategy analogous to Derek Walcott’s in “Mass Man” where the artist as critical observer reveals that the gaiety associated with the carnival is but a mask to obscure the hurt and other forms of negativity experienced in multiple spheres.

KEYWORDS: Burghers, carnivalesque, masked reality, victimization, interethnic relationships

YASHVI SRIVASTAVA, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

Comedy and Crisis: Political Commentary in Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*

ABSTRACT: Sri Lankan literature has a rich tradition of employing humour as a means to engage with and comment on the pressing political and societal issues including the works of Michael Ondaatje, Shyam Selvadurai, and Anuk Arudpragasam to name a few. Amongst the contemporary Sri Lankan writers employing satire and humour is Shehan Karunatilaka. His 2022 Booker Prize winner novel *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* is a noir fiction that envisions the afterlife as a system of bureaucracy that is as absurd as the real-life bureaucratic world of Kafka. The novel employs the tool of satire and wit to not only deal with violence of the civil war that engulfed the country during 1983-2009 but also as a means of political commentary and subversion. This paper aims to delve into the multifaceted relationship between humour and political commentary in the novel, exploring the ways in which Karunatilaka employs satire, wit, and irony to illuminate and critique the complexities of the country's political landscape. This study will explore how humour is used to subvert official or mainstream political narratives and reveal alternative perspectives. It will consider how Karunatilaka uses irony and absurdity to challenge dominant ideologies. The research aims to highlight the resilience of humour in Sri Lankan literature as a tool for critique, even in the face of political repression and censorship. It will examine how humour often serves as a means of resistance and coping.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Sri Lanka, Satire, Civil War, Subversion

URMI SENGUPTA, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts, ICFAI University, Tripura

'Tricky Trickster Tales': Wit and Humour as Tools of Decolonization in Indigenous Literatures of Canada

ABSTRACT: Memory Studies, in its recent pre-occupation with the exploration of the relationship between memory and history, often strives to look into the rich repertoire of collective communal memory of the indigenous communities of Canada that serves as a repository to the communities' rich pre-colonial cultural heritage and worldview. The Native-Canadian tricksters – anthropomorphic animal spirits with gender and form variability and a special penchant for humour and mischief - have been a part of these creation myths, ceremonial songs and ancestral tales, since ages. When centuries of European interventions induced the Aboriginal creative artists to take up the colonizers' medium of expression (writing) and the colonizers' language (English /French) to build an effective resistance against the colonial atrocities unleashed upon them, these trickster figures entered these written cultural production as active agents of protest against the gradual erosion of the Native-Canadian autonomy. Positing their sarcasm as wit, masquerading their subversion as humour and encapsulating their complete disregard for social proprieties in a garb of laughter has endowed the writers with an ability to express their disdain for the discriminatory colonial policies in a way so as to forgo any threat of persecution. This has further helped them forge an 'alternative' indigenous version of history that refutes and questions the validity of the official (European) version of the history in Canada, as a singular monolithic entity. With

reference to selected short stories and poetry of the seminal literary personalities Lee Maracle (Salish, 1950-2021), Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan, b.1948-) and Thomas King (Cherokee, b.1943-) – this paper aims to unpack the role of collective memory in transforming wit and humour into tools of subversion within late twentieth century Native-Canadian literature, by ensuring the conspicuous presence of the trickster figures therein. It further aims to explore the effectiveness of this subversive potential of the tricksters in reclaiming the social, political and cultural autonomy of the repressed indigenous population of Canada.

KEYWORDS: trickster, humour, indigeneity, collective memory, subversion

SHARIQ KHAN, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Allahabad

Memes as Carnavalesque in Sheena Patel's *I'm A Fan*

ABSTRACT: Sheena Patel starts each section of her novel containing the internal monologue of her anonymous British-Indian narrator with memes or popular hashtags. Memes in their polyvocality and ability to subvert dominant ideological discourse through humour can be understood as being carnivalesque. They can employ words, images, audio or video mirroring the heterogeneous performances that invites varied participation and create a shared culture as in Bakhtin's conception of a carnival. However, Sheena Patel through her use of memes as carnivalesque complicates the subversive potential of carnivalesque and of humour at large. The use of memes at first appears as a coping mechanism for the narrator that allows her to participate in the popular culture online, something that is denied to her in real life because of her brown skin. As the story progresses, the advantages of race and privilege that are transparent outside the internet begin to be visible on social media platforms that pretend to operate on the logic of equal participation. Even memes or internet jokes that on the surface seek to subvert racism/misogyny in fact reinforce stereotypes. Any successful engagement can become about performing the expected and permissible version of your identity. The chapter titles, that begin as humorous, memetic description of the situation described below, begin to sit uncomfortably: the chapter in their spontaneity and immediacy of the visceral serve as an indictment of the inegalitarian perspective reinforced by the title for cheap laughs. Thus, Sheena Patel's novel highlights how the narrow spectrum between subversion and reinforcement carried by humour; of permissibility and transgression hides multiple silencing antagonisms.

KEYWORDS: humour, carnivalesque, memes

SESSION 3B CLASSIC MAVERICKS: WIT & SUBVERSION IN THE WESTERN CANON

Time: 1:45 – 03:00 PM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: **SUSAN S DEBORAH**, Assistant Professor & Faculty In-charge,
Department of English, MES College, Goa University

SUKRITI BHUKKAL, Assistant Professor of English, Department of Higher
Education, Haryana

**Carnavalesque Revelry and Social Subversion in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*: A Study
of Gender, Power, and Liberation**

ABSTRACT: *The Rover*, Aphra Behn's most acclaimed play, challenges conventional categorization and confounds genre expectations. Behn deliberately selected a carnival backdrop for *The Rover*, deviating from the setting of the source play, *Thomaso* or *The Wanderer* which was based on the personal experiences and fantasies of playwright Thomas Killigrew during his exile in the Interregnum period, with its setting in Madrid during the Spanish Inquisition. In contrast, *The Rover* unleashes its cavaliers during the festive chaos of Naples during the carnival. According to Bakhtin, the medieval and Renaissance carnival customs symbolized "the temporary suspension of all hierarchical structures, privileges, norms, and prohibitions," creating a genuine festivity of time, a celebration of change, renewal, and a Utopian realm of boundless potential. In *The Rover*, which draws inspiration from both folk traditions and decadent carnival trends, elements embodying both Utopian and nightmarish qualities emerge. These elements work to challenge and undermine the affected and posturing culture of the English drawing room, shedding a brighter light on the disparities within Restoration society, particularly within the male aristocratic sphere. The play's heroines, Hellena and Florinda, enthusiastically embrace the rejuvenating carnival spirit, embodying what Bakhtin terms as a "characteristic logic" of turning things inside out. These women are already accustomed to a particular kind of masquerade, which involves conforming to society's expectations of their roles as women. However, the determination of these female protagonists to pursue love over material gain represents the new social dynamics unfolding in *The Rover*. The conspicuous disruptions caused by the renowned courtesan Angelica Bianca from Spain, along with the utopian challenge to patriarchal authority, lay bare the discordant aspects of Restoration culture, such as the transactional nature of marriage and aristocratic libertinism. Finally, the play delves into and partially resolves the conflicts and paradoxes it presents, immersing itself in the joyous laughter of the people. This laughter is also aimed at those who laugh, as it serves as a reminder that everyone, like the carnival, must undergo a transformation and renewal after experiencing their own demise.

KEYWORDS: carnival, aristocratic, love, disruption, libertinism

AYESHA IRFAN, Associate Professor, Department of English, Dyal Singh College,
University of Delhi

Bernard Shaw's Intellectual Comedies and the Shavian Wit and Humour

ABSTRACT: George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was a well-known socialist, a reformer, an economist, a politician with a scientific temperament, and he was also the co-founder of the London School of Economics. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for his outstanding contribution to literature in 1926, and he also won an academy award for the film adaptation of his play *Pygmalion*. Shaw has been ranked as one of the greatest humourists of English literature, at par with Shakespeare and Dickens. As the leading playwright of 20th century, he has made a spectacular contribution to literature, and contributed immensely to the art of comedy. He wrote nearly sixty plays, and each play that he wrote addressed prevailing social problems, he used the medium of his plays to foreground the prominent issues of his time like education, religion, class privilege, problems of the working class, marriage, healthcare and the inadequacies of the government and other prominent political and economic institutions. Almost all his plays address the significant social problems pertaining to his time, and the genre of comedy employed by him makes each of these social themes appear even more glaring and palatable and thus his plays are entertaining and thought provoking at the same time. Shaw's comedies are enriched by the discussions that he brought to the forum of his plays on the economic and sociological realities of his day. Shaw's memorable comedies include, *Arms and the Man*, *Candida*, *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara*, *Getting Married*, *Pygmalion*, *Androcles and the Lion*. He helped in initiating new levels of sophistication on the stage, and in revitalising the interaction of drama with life and human destiny. Shaw's first play that brought him financial success was *Arms and the Man* (premiered in 1894), and this play is a comedy satirising the conventions of love, military honour and class. *Man and Superman* was completed in 1903, and reveals Shaw's cosmic philosophy, his play *Major Barbara* (premiered in 1905) depicts how evil should to be conquered by the eradication of poverty rather than the salvation army. *The Doctor's Dilemma* (first staged in 1906), presented a more thoughtful piece about the professional ethics. In this paper I intend to look at Shaw's socialism, and how he foregrounded some pertinent issues of his time employing the medium of his comic plays.

KEYWORDS: Shaw, socialist, reformer, comedy, political

SWATEE SINHA, Assistant Professor, West Bengal College Service Commission

Theorizing the Popular: Wit and Humour in Samuel Beckett

ABSTRACT: The paper proposes to investigate the concept of the 'popular' in the plays of Samuel Beckett through his use of unconventional humour and dark wit. The plays, which often engage scant resources and minimal props take as their focal point the bare bodied, destitute subject concretized through the figure of the tramp whose gesticulations, body language and sparse vocabulary reinvent the notion of the comic. Often bordering on slap stick the plays use a kind of stalling mechanism, freezing the frame at a critical juncture to mute the loud humour or guffaw that is usually associated with slapstick and provoke a darker vein of thought. The plays reformat how a work communicates with the audience by simultaneously provoking laughter and arresting humour. Beckett's plays are a marked transition from high-brow art to more interactive and immersive forms of theatre which draw on contemporary popular entertainment.

Inventive games and role playing, 'a series of practical and mental puzzles' contribute to the wit and decadent humour that informs Beckett's plays. The sense of agency or the lack of it becomes linked to bodily movements which often experience a limitation in spite of the sense of boundless spatiality which serves as the backdrop. The characters often structure their actions around intentional tasks or goals which are often inane or apparently lack a sense of deeper purpose/meaning. These superficial and seemingly futile games or ploys which provoke humour become a mode of deflecting attention from existential thoughts which plague the characters. The threadbare plot and the gradual depletion of resources in terms of props both human and non-human portends towards a narrative closure with the exhaustion of humour as a resource to combat cynicism and bleakness and the unavoidable spiritual vacuity.

KEYWORDS: Samuel Beckett, humour, wit, popular, entertainment, slap stick, existentialism

SABREEN AHMED, Assistant Professor, Nowgong College, Assam

Locating the Carnavalesque and Public Laughter in Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

ABSTRACT: Public laughter is a crucial element of the carnivalesque that is satirically represented in Milan Kundera's literary corpus. The carnivalesque in Kundera is a coherence of the principles of carnival as embedded in the grotesque body which may become a cause of public laughter. The proposed paper would locate the functionality of public laughter as an infectious social disease with political ramifications transcending the domain of the personal in the novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. The celebration of the body in all its oddities is an act of defiance against the existing norms of social behaviour that defies the political nature of collective memory in the life of the characters in the novel. The political trauma of abandonment and revelation circumscribe their fate and future. For instance, the character of Andre Breton was still in stoic support of the failed state when the narrator in the section "The Angels" wandered through the streets of Prague in rings of insane laughing amidst the dancing Czechs in a gigantic ring between Paris, Moscow, Prague, Warsaw, Sofia and Greece symbolizing the carnivalesque of suffering and death amidst a political dystopia. The dark humour of a political satire is the weaving thread of the seven narratives that unfold the novel intertwining memory, laughter and forgetting in a political carnival of statelessness. The paper by locating the carnivalesque and public laughter would argue that flushing of the toilet intermingles with the sound of fear as the sexually potential body, activating bowels and insidious bravery essentially coexist in a state of being in an anarchic body politic.

KEYWORDS: Carnavalesque, Memory, Laughter, State, Body

SESSION 3C FUNNY PICTURES: HUMOUR IN INDIAN CINEMA

Time: 1:45 – 03:00 PM

Venue: D-101

Chair: RAYSON K ALEX, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

DHANYA AP, Research Scholar, Department of English and Humanities, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri, Kerala

Unmasking Prejudices: An Analysis of the Use of Wit & Humour in Malayalam Cinema

ABSTRACT: Movies are a form of mass media that are intended to provide entertainment and to transport the audience to a world that is distinctly diverse from reality, a world that offers an escape from the monotonous routines of everyday life. Movies thus play an important role, in shaping perspectives, creating visual representations, and reinforcing prevalent ethnic beliefs. The story is not anything different in the Malayalam film industry, which is known for its captivating storytelling prowess and character-driven plots, and frequently employs wit and humour to keep its audience entertained. However, beyond the surface of the comedy lurks the interplay of societal issues, such as the subtle reinforcement of patriarchal values, misogyny, and body image stereotypes. This paper aims to take the readers on a journey through the history of Malayalam cinema, examining how humour has worked as a mask to disguise the societal issues of gender inequity and concerns about body image using the Incongruous Juxtaposition theory and Feminist film theory. As Laura Mulvey has stated in one of her essays, movies shouldn't be viewed as mere text or entertainment but rather should be viewed from many angles, with particular emphasis on how they were created and how they were received. Starting with early films, the paper follows the evolution of Malayalam cinema by analyzing significant films, characters, and dialogues. This in-depth examination not only reveals how subtle infiltration of misogyny, patriarchal norms, and body shaming have penetrated the narratives but also highlights the revolutionary moments within the industry that reflect the rise of progressive voices. Thus, this study sheds light on the transformational power of art as a form of enjoyment and critique, generating dialogues that question prevailing conventions and stimulate introspection.

KEYWORDS: humour, misogyny, patriarchy, societal issues, body shaming

JAHNAVI S DAS, Ph.D. Candidate, Presidency College, Chennai

Laugh till You Drop: A Study of Black Humour in Bollywood Films

ABSTRACT: This paper analyses black or macabre comedy as seen in Bollywood cinema. The films chosen for study are *Blackmail* (2018), *Janne Bhi Do Yaaro* (1983), *Lootcase* (2020) and *Phas Gaye Re Obama* (2010). The researcher aims to interpret the ways in which the selected films adhere to rules of traditional dark comedies, while also

examining the creation of a uniquely Indian style. The paper also focuses on an enquiry into the carnivalesque elements seen in these films.

KEYWORDS: Black humour, crime, carnivalesque, Indian cinema

CHETNA RAWAT, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English & Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

Exploring the Dark Side of Laughter: Black Humour in *Karwaan* and *Goodbye*

ABSTRACT: Comedy is one of the most admired genres in Hindi Cinema. Through humour, movies have the potential to make audience rethink their perceived notions. Modern Hindi Cinema is experimenting with the Black Comedy also known as black humour, dark humour, or dark comedy. It is a very powerful genre that has the capacity to bring sensitive and serious subjects into lime light with subtle humour. It is a style that brings fun out of taboo subjects. Movies like *Delhi Belly* (2011), *7 Khoon Maaf* (2011), *Kaalakaandi* (2017), *Blackmail* (2018) and many more are the bold examples of Black Humour in Hindi Cinema. Even though these movies were not very well received at the Box Office, critics appreciated the initiative of choosing comically negative representation over satirical representation. In the era where most of the Hindi movies are slapstick comedies there are a few pieces which attempted to find strong spot in Black Humour genre. Death, in Indian culture, is a crucial life event that either signifies the achievement of emancipation or the continuance of the life's journey. It is a serious subject and often portrayed in Hindi cinema with great sensitivity. The present paper is an attempt to explore the humorous components in the movies *Karwaan* (2018) starring Irrfan Khan and *Goodbye* (2022) starring Amitabh Bachchan.

KEYWORDS: black humour, death, comedy, Hindi cinema

MAZIAH SHAAZ, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

Goan Rhapsody: An Analysis of Carnival, Wit and Humor in Select Films Set in Goa

ABSTRACT: Cinema as visual art has a lasting impact and lucrative appeal to the masses. The cinematic experience is a cumulative effect of the internal elements as well as the locale where a movie is set and shot. It is crucial to the process of filmmaking. It is not merely a setting but an integral part of the storytelling, character development, historical context, visual aesthetics, cultural significance and narrative symbolism. It adds authenticity to the vision of the director. Goa, a state in India, stretching across the shoreline of the Arabian Sea, stands as a true testament to the spirit of carnivalesque. With its long and clear beaches, beautiful churches, and vibrant nightlife, Goa becomes a safe retreat for people looking for a little escape from routine life. It has been a perfect setting for Indian filmmakers to capture the spirit of Goa's festive and free life and use it to foreground the narrative in the movie. Goa's multifaceted appeal, from its natural

beauty to its cultural diversity and alternative lifestyle, continues to make it a sought-after location for filmmakers in India. They have often preferred the colourful and catchy ethos of Goan culture not just as a template to make a commercial success but also as an inextricable part of the narrative where it might accentuate the disparities between the established norms and a spirit of defiance. The concept of carnivalesque, as understood in literature, stems from Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (trans. 1984), and "parallels the flouting of authority and temporary inversion of social hierarchies that, in many cultures, are permitted during a season of carnival" (Abrams p.86). The diverse social levels in the literary narrative mock the dominant authoritative rules to flout social sanctions. Regarding movies, several cinematic elements are combined to create a diverse microcosm within the main discourse that effectively counters the imposing dictates. Goan locale has proved to be one of the major modes of subversion in films to the effect that it becomes an integral part of the plot. This paper majorly explores *Go Goa Gone*, *Honeymoon Travels Pvt. Limited*, and *Finding Fanny* to analyse the spirit of carnival, wit and humour in these films set against the beautiful backdrop of Goa.

KEYWORDS: diversity, humour, subversion, society, cinema

SESSION 4A HUMOUR & THE CHEQUERED HISTORIES OF NORTHEAST INDIA

Time: 03:00 – 04:15 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: HEMJYOTI MEDHI, Associate Professor, Department of English, Tezpur University, Assam

REETU RAJ KASHYAP, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Delhi

The Modern Assamese Tradition of Humour and Assam's Cultural Left of Mid-20th Century

ABSTRACT: Lakshminath Bezbaruah (1864-1938) is generally accepted as the one who firmly established the modern Assamese literary tradition. His humorous and satirical short stories or quips on society marks his writing from that of his contemporaries. Bezbaruah himself, and later day critics have observed that such a choice of lighthearted material was beneficial to the Assamese literary tradition insofar as it helped to attract and sustain a steady readership. Furthermore, by drawing motifs and sayings from the repertoire of folk in his modern tales, he ensured a continuity between the modern and the traditional. His intervention, in fact, shaped the very notion of Assameseness. However, his style has been the subject of much scrutiny from the middle of the 20th century onwards onwards, especially by critics and writers affiliated with the Left. It has been argued that even though Bezbaruah's humor appealed to "common sense", it wasn't subversive; rather it sided with the status quo. Nevertheless, Bezbaruah's mode of humor, with its penchant for fusing folk forms and idioms with modern concerns was strongly

entrenched in the Assamese literary-cultural tradition and the Left too borrowed from this tradition. Building on this, this paper investigates the uneasy relationship the cultural Left of the 50s and 60s shared with Bezbaruah's legacy. If there is a distinct style of Bezbaruah, was that palpable in some of the Left cultural forms of expression in Assamese from that era? And what does it tell us about the cultural Left's engagement with tradition and heritage.

KEYWORDS: Assamese literature, Progressive literature, print, cultural left, identity

DEBASHREE DATTARAY, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University

The Carnavalesque as Cultural Memory: Resistance in the Karbi Youth Festival of North East India

ABSTRACT: In his 2018 book, *Strangers No More*, Sanjoy Hazarika writes of old and new struggles in Northeast India: "The problems and alienation caused by the non-stop application of AFSPA and the Disturbed Areas Act along with other laws such as the Nagaland Security Regulations Act have created a huge gap of mistrust between individuals and communities in the states caught up in this trouble and the central government and its representatives" (Hazarika 2018: 341). Situating the role of the carnivalesque within local, national, transnational contexts and temporalities in a digital world, this paper would focus on the turbulent history of conflict and fragmented selfhood in the Northeast of India with particular reference to the Karbi Youth Festival, an event organized by the Karbi community from Karbi Anglong, Assam, India. The Karbi Youth Festival provides newer opportunities to confront painful histories by ensuring that the festival ground transforms into a site of reclamation and resistance. In the cartographic imaginary, Karbi Anglong, as reiterated by this annual Festival has existed and survived over centuries through its myths, legends, songs, dances, artistic traditions as well as through its conflicting history and moribund politics. The Festival posits the idea of the "carnavalesque" as cultural memory and a form of resistance. Through the years, the Festival has felt the effects of globalization on its economy, politics, and expressive culture and offers a multidimensional and transnational view of the carnival itself. The Karbi Youth Festival takes cognizance of differentiation rather than assimilation, whereby language plays a mobilizing force in identity formation within the Indigenous Karbi community. Through the vivid history of the Karbi Youth Festival, this paper would foreground conversations that must be heard, of art that must be seen, of photographs that must be envisioned, of dances that must be re-discovered and of stories that must be retold, again and again.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Memory, Resistance, Indigeneity, Carnavalesque

SYLVIA SAGOLSEM, Fellow, Centre for Advanced Internet Studies, Bochum, Germany

Humour as Cultural Expression: Insights from Manipuri Folk Narratives

ABSTRACT: Folklore comprises of various traditions - 'tales, songs, proverbs' etc. Within these traditions, humour is embedded pervasively such that "jokes and other forms of humourous expression would come to be recognised as the preeminent forms of folkloric expression in contemporary urban society" (Elliot Oring 2008). Such is the relevance and ubiquity of humour within folklore that in the classification of tale types (ATU index), humourous tales or jokes and anecdotes figure as one of the major and most extensive tale types within this vast corpus of folktales. Within this tale type, there are further sub-categories such as numbskull tales, stories about married couples, stories of the clever man, the stupid man, etc. This gives a fair idea that humour and wit are among the key elements of folk narratives. Correspondingly, within Manipuri folkloric tradition, tales of wit and humour, numbskull tales represent some of the most prominent and popular tale types that engage with a diverse audience of varying age groups. For instance, 'The tale of Apang' can be considered a sub-category in itself comprising of many such tales where Apang, which literally means a fool, recurs as the hyperbolic numbskull protagonist. In this light, this paper attempts to read such humourous tales beyond the simplistic functions of amusement and entertainment since they carry various socioemotional, cultural values and meanings that are delivered through humour as a vehicle of communication. These tales cannot be dismissed simply as a form of amusement because it is apparent that beneath the humour lies a deeper meaning (William Bascom 1954).

KEYWORDS: Manipuri folk narratives, Humourous tales, Numbskull tales

NATASA THOUDAM, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Arts, IIT Jodhpur

The Meitei-Kuki Conflict in (Political) Cartoons of *The Sangai Express* (Meiteilon Edition)

ABSTRACT: "[A] cartoon is a regular feature in the local newspapers of Manipur," but "caricature and editorial page political cartoons are however hardly seen in the local newspapers," observes Aribam Ibomcha Sharma (http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=features.Focus_On_Media.Impact_and_Import_of_Cartooning_and_Caricature_Part_2_By_Aribam_Ibomcha). He made these observations in a newspaper article published in 2016. The situation in Manipur of 2023 is no longer same. This paper analyses a section titled "Onthokpanida" (roughly translated as alas) dedicated to (political) cartoons available only in the online Meiteilon edition of the newspaper *The Sangai Express*. The paper also tries to understand how this newspaper makes use of humour and wit to visualise and politicise the ongoing Meitei-Kuki conflict in Manipur. The time period chosen is from 3 May 2023, which is the day on which this conflict began, to the present day, 15 October 2023. During this time, there have been numerous instances when this section has been omitted while there have also been days when no edition of the newspaper came out. The paper also attempts to understand the political implications of these omissions and non-publications.

KEYWORDS: Manipur, Meitei-Kuki conflict, "Onthokpanida," political cartoons, *The Sangai Express*

SESSION 4B DRAWING GIGGLES: HUMOUR IN VISUAL NARRATIVE ARTS

Time: 03:00 – 04:15 PM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: ASMAT JAHAN, Associate Professor, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

VISHAL PANDYA, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Government Arts College, Vallabhipur, District Bhavnagar, Gujarat

Beyond the Punchline: Irony and Satire in Contemporary Art

ABSTRACT: In this research paper, we try to explore the multifaceted realm of humour and critique in modern artistic expression. It embarks on a journey through the historical roots of irony and satire, tracing their transformation from traditional jest to powerful tools for societal reflection. The study examines the work of contemporary artists like Jeff Koons, Chris Ofili, and Yoko Ono, who employ irony and satire in innovative ways, challenging established norms and sparking critical discourse. Drawing from various critical perspectives and theories, including Linda Hutcheon's self-reflexivity of irony and Northrop Frye's structuralist analysis of satire, the paper sheds light on the cultural significance of these artistic tools. Additionally, it identifies key figures and movements, such as Banksy, Pop Art, and the Guerrilla Girls, exemplifying the enduring relevance of irony and satire in art. The analysis of specific artworks underscores their profound impact in critiquing societal norms, questioning power structures, and fostering critical dialogue. In today's complex world, where nuanced discussions are paramount, irony and satire in contemporary art continue to play a vital role in challenging assumptions and inspiring meaningful conversations. This research reaffirms their enduring significance in the modern cultural landscape.

KEYWORDS: Irony, Satire, Contemporary Art and Societal Critique

JAYA UPADHYAY, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Liberal Arts, DIT University, Dehradun

The Comic and the Grotesque: Reading the Critique of 'Babu Culture' in the Art of Dharmanarayan Dasgupta

ABSTRACT: Art following the nineteenth century diverged from the established practises of representations preceding it. As a result of experiments in art and literature, various modern artistic approaches became prevalent during the time. These included Dadaism, Surrealism, and Fauvism, among others. With this art moved away from a conventional

depiction of reality and an obsession with the beauty in the normative and symmetrical categories. Use of grotesque imagery, fantastical colour palette and incongruity in art became the norm during the times and was employed by several artists who shunned the conventional styles. This incongruity of forms and fragmentation of reality provoked a comic response from the audience by posing a challenge to the conventional worldview. In the light of the foregoing, this article will analyse Dharmanarayan Dasgupta's artworks from the post-independence era in India. Dasgupta's art embraces the Avant Garde art movements of his time, as well as the traditional Indian Kalighat and Patchitra style of painting. It will examine how his art mixes the elements of grotesque and fantasy to create a comic effect in the viewer. The article will also analyse how he uses the motifs of the Bengali Babu Culture in his art to strike at the sophistication of the newly minted Indian with European mannerisms and materialistic tendencies during the time. The article will reveal how the aspects of the grotesque are linked with the comic, and how they become a vehicle for transgression and subversion by challenging established norms and ideals of propriety.

KEYWORDS: Grotesque, Comic, Babu Culture, Art, Indian

SHILPA SHIRISHKUMAR TANNA, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus

Comic(s) Capers: Carnavalesque Tropes in Sarnath Banerjee

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I aim to examine the carnivalesque tropes in the Indian graphic novel *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers* (hereafter *BOWC*, 2007) by Sarnath Banerjee. The paper finds that the medium's bimodality makes *BOWC* an inherently dialogic text. I argue that *BOWC* evokes the carnivalesque in its mesalliance of high-low, sacred-profane, and old-new. Its irreverence and ludic approach, mixing of media, complicated narrative, a medley of smaller stories jostling for attention, and a plethora of characters bring a chaotic energy to the novel. The novel pokes fun at the established order, making it appear ludicrous. It is a celebration of life in all its messy details. *BOWC* encourages the reader to examine the values and nature of the social system they are a part of as well as their own subject position within it. The paper finds that employing carnivalesque tropes allows *BOWC* to interrogate the grand narrative of history, both colonial and nationalist.

KEYWORDS: carnivalesque, history, Indian graphic novel

AARCHA PRADEEP, Independent Researcher

Wit, Humour, Satire & Social Critique: An In-depth Study of VT Thomas's Comic Series *Bobanum Moliyum*

ABSTRACT: Comic is a medium used to express ideas with images, often combined with text or other visual information. This two-way media encourages the creation of public opinion through criticism and suggestions, conveyed through comic strips. It evokes a

sense of laughter and fun where wit and humour are active participants. Apart from wit and humour, satire also plays a very vital role in comics that deals with society and its norms. Satirical comics are very strong at social criticism, one of which is the Indian weekly comic series in Malayalam “*Bobanum Moliyum*” featuring 12-year-old twins Boban and Molly, woven by the magician V.T. Thomas. It brilliantly showcases the social tensions in Kerala and is one of the longest uninterrupted running comic series of the world. First published in 1962, and has been in print ever since. This paper aims at the use of wit, humour and satire as a social critique by conducting an in-depth analysis of the comic “*Bobanum Moliyum*”. The study argues that the humour generated in comics conveys a strong message that requires an analysis of the interaction between the different signs used and their social and ideological implications. A model of analysis derived from Ronald Barthes’s Semiotics. “*Bobanum Moliyum*” is a window to the state of Kerala, it encapsulates the beauty of the land, it’s culture and society in the purest form, which entertained generations of Malayalis. As stated by Chris Claremont, comics provide a platform for social commentary and exploration of complex themes, likewise this paper identifies different areas explored in “*Bobanum Moliyum*” semantically and unravels how wit, humour and satire is advocated as a tool for social critique.

KEYWORDS: *Bobanum Moliyum*, wit, humour, satire, social critique

SESSION 4C INDI-WIT: HUMOUR IN BHASHA LITERATURES

Time: 03:00 – 04:30 PM

Venue: D-101

Chair: EV RAMAKRISHNAN, Professor Emeritus, Central University of Gujarat; Gandhinagar

SOHINI GAYEN, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar; and **ARNAPURNA RATH**, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar

Colloquialisms and Humour in Select Short-Stories of Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay

The rural short-stories of Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay (1898-1971) present a complex stylistic and semantic possibility that mark an overlap of the everyday speech of rural Birbhum with the high classicism of early twentieth century Bengal. The interplay of humour and high-seriousness are the subtle undercurrents in several of Bandyopadhyay’s stories in his oeuvre of more than hundred-ninety short-stories. The language that Bandyopadhyay has used in his stories, have an intrinsic quality of colloquial expressions, raw linguistic markers that often border on irreverence from the perspective of ‘elite’ bhasa-sahitya. Through a close reading of select short-stories of Bandyopadhyay, such as; “Treaty” (1940), “Chor” (1941) and “Jadukari” (1942), this paper undertakes a comparative study of the semiotic and rhetorical devices that reflect freedom from the rigid constraints of polite conversations within the “officialdom” of bhadralok society. In these stories, humour is present as subtext of the narrative in the

form of sarcasm and tongue-in-cheek devices. In his stories, popular literary techniques such as curses, oaths, jokes, ridicule become an integral part of the rhetoric of the representation of rural Birbhum. A close reading of the select stories open dialogic possibilities to understand the intertwined nature of caste and class discourses. Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) concept of literary carnivalization forms the focal theoretical backdrop of this research. Bandyopadhyay's stories as well as Bakhtin's concept of carnivalization work towards a subversion of established stereotypes, breaking the binary oppositions of high and low, popular and classical, and appropriate and inappropriate. The colloquial speech, and verbal expressions rendered in Bandyopadhyay's stories which are sometimes light-hearted but often are sharp and piercing, are evocative of the language of marketplace in the carnival squares. This study will build a creative dialogue between the conceptual framework of literary carnivalization and its visualization in the short-stories of Bandyopadhyay.

KEYWORDS: colloquialisms, humour, literary carnivalization, Mikhail Bakhtin, Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay, short-stories

ALVIN JOSEPH, Assistant Professor, Department of English, St. George's College, Aruvithura, Kerala

Wit, Humour, and Carnavalesque Elements in Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's Novels

ABSTRACT: Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, a prominent figure in Malayalam literature, is celebrated for his unique narrative style that incorporates wit, humour, and carnivalesque elements in his novels. His literary works provide readers with an intriguing blend of humour, satire, and subversion. This paper proposal aims to explore and analyse the presence and significance of wit, humour, and carnivalesque elements in several of Basheer's most notable novels translated into English, including *Pathumma's Goat*, *Childhood Friend* and *Voices*. To investigate the role of wit and humour in Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's novels and how these elements contribute to the reader's engagement with the text. A review of existing literature will provide a foundation for this study, including analyses of Basheer's use of humour, satire, and subversion in his novels. Previous scholars have explored the themes and literary devices in Basheer's works, but this paper aims to offer a fresh perspective by focusing on the interplay of wit, humour, and carnivalesque elements. The study of wit, humour, and carnivalesque elements in Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's novels is essential in understanding his unique contribution to Malayalam literature and his influence on Indian literature. This paper will provide valuable insights into Basheer's literary legacy and his ability to use humour as a means of social and political critique. This paper attempts a comprehensive examination of wit, humour, and carnivalesque elements in Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's novels. By analysing these elements, we can gain a deeper understanding of his literary genius, his contribution to Indian literature, and his impact on the broader literary tradition. This study will shed new light on the enduring relevance of Basheer's work and its engagement with humour and social critique.

KEYWORDS: Wit, Humour, Carnavalesque, Indian Literature, Malayalam

THARA GANGADHARAN, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Kochi, Kerala

Humour and Biopower: An Analysis of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's Short Stories

ABSTRACT: Vaikom Muhammed Basheer, often referred to as the 'sulthan of Beypore' is noted for his use of humour, wit and satire in his writings. He is a master craftsman in using parody and pastiche in his stories and novels. The use of humour in his stories is a vehicle to comment on the complexities of human nature, societies and the absurdity of life. He has the ability to blend humour with deeper social and philosophical questions and observations. The objective of this research paper is to examine Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's short stories, with a particular emphasis on the stories 'Viswavikhyathamaya Mookk' and 'Neethi Nyayam' and to explore how he, perhaps inadvertently, intertwined humour with the philosophical concept of biopower as elucidated by Michel Foucault. The former dealt with how the body of a person is being treated as a powerful tool of generating societal force and how the popular media works in creating this general notion of acceptance and non-acceptance of a particular diverse phenomenon and the later dealt with how unreasonable judiciary works. For Foucault, biopolitics can be understood as a political rationality which takes the administration of life and population as its subjects "to ensure, sustain and multiply life, to put life in order." Biopower thus names the way in which biopolitics is put to work in society and involves what Foucault describes as the profound transformation of the mechanism of power. Perhaps, inadvertently, Basheer is dealing with the body of his subjects and their influence in societal and political structure through the narrative with a layer of humour for his readers.

KEYWORDS: bio power, bio politics, wit, humour, parody and pastiche

KALYANEE RAJAN, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College, University of Delhi

Examining the Depiction of Witty Women and their Response to Marriage in Ismat Chughtai's Fiction

ABSTRACT: The twentieth-century Urdu literary arena witnessed the growth and establishment of one of the finest women writers of all times, Ismat Chughtai (1911-1991). One of her short stories, "Lihaaf" (The Quilt, 1942) generated enough notoriety for all times to come, in the form of a much-publicised trial and subsequent acquittal on the charges of obscenity; and predictably, her entire oeuvre came to be shadowed by it, at least in popular imagination. A nuanced and rigorous appreciation of her characteristic razor-sharp wit and humour got lost in the process. In his introduction to *Lifting the Veil: Selected Writings by Ismat Chughtai*, academic, critic and translator M. Asaduddin highlights the unique but highly gendered atmosphere at the house Chughtai grew in: one

which was “relaxed and informal—family banter, laced with wit, humour and repartee, was indulged in with great gusto... (a) freedom limited to the male members only...” (xii) Author and Critic Geeta Patel on the other hand, locates the source of Chughtai’s humour and ‘uncivil’ character in grief, loss, and the “making” of women themselves. Ismat Chughtai, a self-willed, educated, and working woman by her own volition, who hailed from a Muslim middle-class family, quite unapologetically and vehemently engaged with wit and humour in many of her works. This paper seeks to critically examine and analyse Chughtai’s depiction of witty women and their response vis-à-vis the institution of marriage, considered a woman’s solemn and quintessential duty, in some of her lesser-known short stories like “Kafir”, “Sacred Duty”, “All Alone” and “All for a husband”.

KEYWORDS: Feminism, Marriage, Ismat Chughtai, Women's education, Working women

DIKSHA BENIWAL, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Kanpur

Hiding in Humour: A Study of Ajay Navaria’s “*Apne Apne Mukhaute*”

ABSTRACT: Ajay Navaria’s short story “*Apne Apne Mukhaute*” (2011) employs humour in addressing caste bias as an all-pervasive force in modern Indian society. When Sandhya is asked about her surname by a colleague named Mrs. Gupta, her ears tingle, her body stiffens, and she decides to pretend as if she did not hear the question. However, upon further probing, Sandhya reacts in a way that even she does not comprehend, she laughs. This laughter is as much a sign of discomfort as it is a coping mechanism for Sandhya. It echoes the psychoanalytical theory of humour as a form of relief put forth and elaborated upon by Herbert Spencer (1860) and Sigmund Freud (1905). The existence of an unsettling curiosity about a teacher’s caste in an urban educational institution marks an irony in the survival of caste consciousness in the modern times. Humour highlights not the light heartedness of such a discussion but quite the opposite. This paper analyzes how this placement of humour within the story counterintuitively adds to the gravity of the situation and the fragility of relations among characters belonging to different castes. Furthermore, this paper delves into the caricature-ization of characters like Mrs. Chopra and Florence Messi whose caste consciousness and ethnic biases are only thinly veiled by their feigned indifference towards Sandhya’s caste status in the beginning. These characters represent a multilayered world of everyday communication which not only makes the readers laugh because they find the instances familiar and relatable, but also pushes one to ponder over the subtleties with which caste presents itself in modern society. Lastly, this paper focuses on Navaria’s incorporation as well as critique of humour as a tool for oppression and social exclusion of certain communities and individuals.

KEYWORDS: Dalit fiction, wit, satire, humour, resistance, Dalit literature, Dalit consciousness

Day 2: Friday, 16 February 2024

SESSION 5A COMIC TRANSACTIONS: HUMOUR ACROSS TIME & CULTURE

Time: 09:00 – 10:15 AM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: RAYSON K. ALEX, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus

SUBHAYU CHATTERJEE, MA Student, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Abhijanadushmantam*: An Attempt to Point Out the Silences

ABSTRACT: In the Afterword of Nabaneeta Dev Sen's translation of *Chandrabati Ramayana*, Professor Ipsita Chanda writes, "If a view of literature as a singular non-iterable utterance is accepted, then the deviation from abstract generalized criteria (rather than conforming to those criteria) can be taken as the norm." This explains the process of textualization, that has taken place with each telling of Ramayana, where each motif intrinsic to the Rama matter, that Roland Barthes would refer to as "kernels" has been reorganized depending on the agenda of the text. But with each telling there is a change in the ideological implication which guides the process of the textualization, an idea which we are familiar with as far as the Ramayana repertoire is concerned. Nabaneeta Dev Sen extends this idea to the repertoire of the Sanskrit *Nataka*, specifically *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. Referring to Derrida's idea of the contamination of genres, I would like to analyse how Nabaneeta Dev Sen in her play, *Abhijanadusmantam* is subverting certain crucial tenets of the Sanskrit *Nataka*, *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* and foregrounding feminist agency in the text. Beginning with the title of the play, she is subverting the content making the *abhijnana* or the ring crucial to the identity of Dushmanta and not Shakuntala. She is also bringing in contemporary Bollywood songs and attempting a negotiation with certain prescriptions of the *Nataka*. Following this, we find Nabaneeta introducing narrative ploys which generate humour, making it closer to the form of a *Prahasana*. Humour and wit have often been used to subvert the 'classical texts', as has been done by Sukumar Ray in Bangla literature. *Lakshmaner Shaktishel* is one of the crucial texts in this regard. Even the attempt of pointing out at the crucial silences has also been initiated with the publication of *Meghnadbadh Kavya* by Michael Madhusudan Dutt in 1861. My attempt in this paper would thus be to see how the introduction of the varied ideological implications, which in case of Nabaneeta Dev Sen is the introduction of feminist agency, would initiate the creation of a new episteme. In the introduction of the book *Sita Theke Shuru*, Nabaneeta Dev Sen repeatedly mentions how the women of the "classical" texts have often been robbed of their agency. I would like to point out that although Sukumar Ray and Madhusudan Dutt have made an attempt to respond to this process of silencing, it was essentially a limited attempt. Whereas Nabaneeta with her feminist consciousness has been successfully robbed of the masculine glory of the hero

of Kalidasa's play *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* and has tried to reaffirm agency to the silenced female characters like Shakuntala, Shalobha and Lolapangi in her play, *Abhijnanadusmantam*.

KEYWORDS: textualization, ideological implication, feminist agency, rupture

RAHUL AHLUWALIA, Ph.D. Candidate, Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

The Trails of Odysseus: Vestiges of a Joycean Labyrinth

ABSTRACT: My paper aims to posit a comparative study between the works of James Joyce and Amit Chaudhuri, in particular 'The Dead' from 'Dubliners' and 'A New World' and 'Ulysses' and 'Odysseus Abroad' utilizing a Bakhtinian chronotopic lens. The interplay between memory, time, and space is integral both 'The Dead' and 'A New World', through this paper I hope to showcase the various elements on which the narratives of both the novels is anchored. In my study of 'Ulysses' and 'Odysseus Abroad', I hope to throw light upon the various metatextualities and transtextualities in order to better understand the literary heritage both texts pay homage to. Another aspect of these works will be the sense of migratory and community experiences highlighted in both works. A portion of the paper will be dedicated to analyzing the character arc of Stephen in 'Stephen Hero', 'A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man' and 'Ulysses' and Ananda in 'Odysseus Abroad' in their quest to become renowned poets and not conform to the limitations of community experiences. The paper will conclude with a brief analysis about the influence of Joyce's style of writing on Chaudhuri, and the modernist style of prose writing in Indian English Literature.

KEYWORDS: James Joyce, Amit Chaudhuri, Mikhail Bakhtin, Comparative Literature, Modernism

JAYA YADAV, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, University of Delhi

A Modern Prometheus?: Analysing Humour, Popular Culture and Representation in Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson Series

ABSTRACT: The making and unmaking of the literary canon is an ongoing process. Over time, discourses on the binaries between Classical and Popular literature have become blurred, as Cultural studies have focused on intersectional readings of popular fiction being significantly linked to understand issues of representation, agency and gender. Challenging authority and undercutting hegemonic modes of thinking is not a new phenomenon to literature. Drama in the ancient Greco-Roman world was filled with performances based on using humour as a tool to question, fuel and add to public debate. In this paper I analyse the use of the Greek epics as well as humour as a literary tool to investigate themes of representation and identity that seek to examine modes of writing, namely through Rick Riordan's immensely popular novels, *The Lightning Thief* (2005)

and *The Sea of Monsters* (2006). These two texts have been categorised under the genre of Children's literature, which posits the question, how has popular fiction 'reinvented', or even carried forth Greek myths, especially in a genre marketed towards younger readers? Have the *Percy Jackson* series advocated for greater accessibility to classic tales, by incorporating them into Children's literature and by also characterising the protagonist, Percy Jackson, as diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD? Can the humour of the ancient world translate into the 21st century through fandoms, meme making and popular novels that raise the theoretical framework of the essay, 'Death of an Author' by Roland Barthes, through a portrayal of authority as a space to be laughed at? These are some of the questions my paper seeks to raise. The series follows Percy's ascent into his role as a Greek hero, where he faces the Gods in contemporary America, who continue to live for eternity, reflecting their immortal role in literature across time. Percy refuses the gift of immortality offered to him after a successful quest, marking him as a 'threat' to the order of the Greek kingdom, thereby invoking an alternative reading of what it means to be a (post)modernist hero in times of conflict. The series not only creates alternative modes of writing classical myths, but also weaves a narrative where the 'hero' today chooses a path different to his historical counterparts, which pushes the boundaries of Popular and Classical literature to new realms.

KEYWORDS: cultural studies, Classical Literature, fandoms, popular culture

KALPLATA, Assistant Professor, Department of French and Francophone Studies, The English & Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

Rabelaisian Renaissance: Dissecting Gender Dynamics within the Carnavalesque Landscape of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

ABSTRACT: In the vast expanse of Renaissance literature, François Rabelais holds a distinctive position, particularly with his remarkable work, "Gargantua and Pantagruel". This narrative, emerging from the crucible of a rapidly changing European society, seamlessly blends Rabelais's satirical genius with a profound exploration of the societal intricacies of his epoch. As a defining aspect of this narrative, the 'carnavalesque', a term that gained deeper significance through the analytical lens of Mikhail Bakhtin, offers rich terrain for academic discourse. Bakhtin's interpretation of the 'carnavalesque' envisions it as an arena where conventional societal norms and structures dissolve, creating room for uninhibited expression, critique, and transformation. Rabelais, through his vivid depictions of celebrations, sharp-witted dialogues, and unapologetically bold characters, employs the carnivalesque as a canvas to both mirror and interrogate established societal norms, with a marked emphasis on the fluidity and dynamism of gender roles. The narrative's depiction of places, such as the forward-thinking Abbey of Thélème, alludes to imagined realms where traditional gender identities and roles are unshackled from societal constraints, encouraging re-evaluation and reinterpretation. Such narrative choices by Rabelais pave the way for an enlightening journey into the mutable and multifaceted nature of gender perceptions during the Renaissance period. Furthermore, Rabelais's narrative strategy and thematic foci prompt academic inquiries and discussions around the nature, expression, and implications of gender roles within a society in flux. This paper delves into the labyrinth of Rabelais's intricate portrayal of

gender interplay set against the vibrant backdrop of the carnivalesque. In light of recent research, this exploration not only aims to unearth and understand its nuances and subtleties but also contextualizes these findings within modern scholarly dialogues on gender dynamics. By journeying through this rich narrative landscape, the paper seeks to offer a comprehensive perspective on the evolution and dynamism of gender constructs during the Renaissance era and their reverberations in contemporary academia.

KEYWORDS: Renaissance, Carnavalesque, Gender Dynamics, Rabelais

**SESSION 5B ANTISEPTIC WIT: CONFRONTING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REALITIES
THROUGH HUMOUR**

Time: 09:00 – 10:15 AM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: PAROMITA BOSE, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Ecole Centrale School of Engineering, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

SRIDHI DASH, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Ravenshaw University, Odisha

Humour as Resistance: Faturananda's Literary Critique of Society and Politics

ABSTRACT: Humour as a tool of resistance has long been used by writers attempting to question the status quo and subvert repressive systems. In his satirical writings, Faturananda, a doctor and an eminent satirist of early-twentieth century Odisha, used humour as a form of resistance against the social and political maladies of his time. Despite facing several challenges as a patient of leprosy, he continued writing and editing for the popular periodical of Odisha *Dagaro* as a form of resilience. With his excellent understanding of politics, local prejudices and flair for creating cartoons he used humour and wit to criticise both global and local injustice. His use of humour in his works, especially his autobiography, demonstrates his resistance to be constrained by a community that once sought to alienate him due to his illness. In this paper, I attempt to highlight the use of humour in selected short stories by Faturananda as a form of critique and how the writing life protected him from social exclusion and allowed him to be an observer of contemporary life that included an insightful depiction of variety of subjects such as corruption, politics, world war, street fights, electoral process, marriage, dowry, education system, elitism in literary circles and many more. Faturananda used humour to voice his disagreement and challenge contemporary cultural conventions through this kind of critique. Furthermore, through this paper I aim to elaborate how the author's humour enabled him to penetrate his readers' consciousness to inspire critical thinking and engage them in a way that traditional means of criticism may not have been able to.

KEYWORDS: satire, humour, resistance, illness

SAYANTANI CHOWDHURY, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, University of Delhi

Satire and Cultural Criticism in a Little Magazine: Revisiting Diptendra Sanyal's *Achal Patra*

ABSTRACT: Since ancient times, satire has always fashioned itself as a genre tailored to expose hypocrisy, incongruity and vanity. A Bangla little magazine named *Achal Patra* appeared in the literary scene a year after India's independence with a self-proclaimed task to expose the hypocrisies of Bengali culture and the whole nation's socio-politics through sharp wit and blistering ridicule. My paper looks into how the satire in *Achal Patra* reflects on and refracts the ways a nation and a culture imagined itself. It explores the ways in which the unique 'character', 'technology' and 'medium' (Eric Bulson) of sporadically published little magazines channelized humour as a style of literary-cultural criticism. Satire as an intellectual exercise does become the touchstone against which the post-independent India's self-construction through literature, movies, mass communication and mass-politics is measured. However, the lively 'letter to the editor' section—most lively and often most controversial—in *Achal Patra* reveals that the primary emphasis was on using satire to present a critique of other modes and trends of criticism that was being carried on in collusion with power and finance. My paper highlights that as a 'little' magazine *Achal Patra* contends against the industrialization of criticism and shows an alternate way. Apart from engaging with an under-researched literary form, this paper argues that the concerns that inform the study of little magazines—production, circulation, sponsorship, et al—help in re-engaging and reconsidering some aspects of traditional theories on literary satire. For instance, when *Achal Patra* does not spare its own readership from its bite, where does it draw its consensus or agreement from, or, who is and is not ex-colluded? Satire was already constitutive of the public sphere in India (through the myriad Hindi-language periodicals across the twentieth century), but to research its extent in a little magazine is to look at how a counterculture looks at the self-fashioning of the public sphere.

KEYWORDS: Satire, Little Magazine, Criticism, Culture, Self-fashioning

YAMINI, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi

Harishankar Parsai: Satirizing the Performance of Nationalism

ABSTRACT: Harishankar Parsai has created a vast range of political satire, consistently humorous and biting in its critique of post-independence nation-state, expressing post-independence *mohabhang* (disenchantment) as well as social isolation. He is credited with elevating the form of satire in Hindi, from its understanding as light entertainment to its value for social critique and political subversions, as he implicates postcolonial governmental structures and institutions, systemic problems as well as the 'common' middle-class individual in his satirical pieces, revealing their culpability in political

corruption, blind faith, religious superstitions, class and caste divisions, and social alienation. His collections of short essays, beginning from the end of the Nehruvian era, through the period of National Emergency, continuing post India's globalization, provide a sensitive but sharp subversive history of the Indian nation's progress. Employing literalism and stretching the obvious meaning/implications of social norms and political rules, he demonstrates the widening gap between the state and its people through "the descriptive logic of '*ulti batein*', which, in turning on its head conventional understandings of the relationships between cause and effect, intention and result and other self-evident logics of realism, comprises a critical commentary on the particular kind of failure which characterised the post-colonial Indian state" (Ulka Anjaria). Analysing the reductive contemporary relevance of political symbols and concepts like *khadi* and *ahimsa*, he reveals nationalism's performativity and hypocrisy through the fissures between nationalist sentiment, training, knowledge and morality. As his characters trudge the thin line between authentic nationalist feeling and performative bureaucratic norms, the hilarity of their positions, and the double-standards of national situations are presented through '*vyangya*' that's both inward as well as outward-looking. Reading through some of his selected essays from collections like *Nithalle ki Diary* (1968) and *Thithurta Hua Gantantra* (1970), this paper looks at the historical relevance of satire or *vyangya*, especially with reference to contemporary understandings of nationalism as symbolic, performative, and institutional, rather than oriented towards people or civil society.

KEYWORDS: Parsai, Satire, Nationalism, *mohabhang*, *ulti baatein*

AHMED SHABIN KK, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

Circumventing Censorship: Satire and Black Humour in Perumal Murugan's Writings

ABSTRACT: Tamil writer Perumal Murugan was at the centre of a literary censorship debate in 2014 when *One Part Woman* (2013), the English translation of his novel *Madhorubhagan* (2010), came under scrutiny for 'misrepresenting' temple rituals and women devotees. The protests forced the author to announce his literary suicide in 2015. Following a Madras High Court judgement two years later, Murugan returned from his literary exile in 2016 with an anthology of poems *Songs of a Coward: Poems of Exile* and a novel *Poonachi*. The proposed paper will explore the use of satire and black humour in both works and how they have enabled the author to circumvent censorship. Heinrich Heine's remark that without censorship, "All style will cease! All syntax, all good habits," reinstates the idea that writing under censorship fundamentally shapes style and literary aesthetic. Bunn views the development of literary forms, especially black humour and satire, by writers as a deliberate attempt to prolong the interpretive process. In *Songs of a Coward: Poems of Exile*, Murugan's deliberate deployment of animal metaphors such as poisoned guinea pig, lab rat, buffalo, and snail coupled with black humour and satire present more complex records of the experiences of censorship than that which is revealed by factual accounts. His novel *Poonachi* resembles George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in literary style and utilises a seemingly simplistic tale of a goat's life to shed light on

issues like censorship and surveillance. In the Preface, Murugan explains why he decided to write about a goat instead of human protagonists: “I am fearful about writing about humans; even more fearful of writing about gods. [...] It is forbidden to write about cows or pigs.” His tongue-in-cheek remark demonstrates how authors use allegorical approaches and stylistic choices in their narratives to convey powerful social and political commentary while navigating the constraints of censorship. The paper investigates the subject position of a helpless self-censoring writer whose creativity has been severely restricted and how humour and satire enable the exercise of social criticism, resistance and liberation.

KEYWORDS: Literary Censorship, Surveillance, Self-censorship, Black Humour, Satire

SESSION 5C WIT UNBOUND: HUMOUR IN THE WESTERN CLASSICS

Time: 09:00 – 10:15 AM

Venue: D-101

Chair: SHOBHA M, Professor, Department of English, Bangalore University

S. RAVIKUMAR, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sree Sevugan Annamalai College, Devakottai, Tamil Nadu; and **P. BOOMIRAJA**, Guest Lecturer in English, Government Arts and Science College for Women, Paramakudi, Tamil Nadu

Wit and Humour in Classical Literature

ABSTRACT: Wit and humour, integral components of the human experience, have been vibrant threads woven into the tapestry of classical literature. From the ancient epics to the plays of Shakespeare and beyond, classical literature showcases a rich array of comedic elements that transcend time and cultural boundaries. In Greek literature, the comedies of Aristophanes stand as pillars of humour. Aristophanes brought laughter to the Athenian stage through clever wordplay, satirical commentary, and absurd situations. His works, such as “Lysistrata” and “The Clouds”, not only entertained but also served as vehicles for social critique, lampooning the political and societal norms of the time. Shakespeare, a master wordsmith, elevated wit to an art form in his comedies and tragedies. The banter between characters in “Twelfth Night” or the clever wordplay in “Much Ado About Nothing” exemplifies Shakespeare’s unparalleled ability to intertwine humour with intricate plots. Even in the darkest tragedies, Shakespeare injected moments of comic relief, showcasing his understanding of the dual nature of the human experience. In Roman literature, the satirical works of Horace and Juvenal offered a glimpse into the everyday absurdities of Roman society. Their keen observations and witty verses critiqued the social, political, and moral landscape, using humour as a means of both entertainment and cultural reflection. Moving eastward, the works of the ancient Sanskrit playwright Kalidasa, particularly in “Shakuntala” and “Malavikagnimitram”, showcase poetic beauty and playful humour. Kalidasa’s wit, often expressed through clever dialogue and situational comedy, adds a layer of charm to his timeless narratives.

Across classical literature, whether in satirical plays, comedic poetry, or witty dialogues, humour emerges as a universal language. It entertains and illuminates the human condition, offering insights into the foibles, ironies, and quirks that transcend temporal and cultural barriers. The enduring legacy of wit and humour in classical literature is a testament to the timeless appeal of laughter as a reflection of the shared human experience.

KEYWORDS: Wit, Humour and societal criticism

SHIPRA G. VASHISHTHA, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi

An Analysis of the Role of Wit and Humour in Classical Comedy

ABSTRACT: Humour and wit are native to humankind. Folly is observed and imitated by the comic characters to bring some lighter moments and laughter. John Dryden described the kind of laughter produced by ancient Greek comedy "The Clouds" by Aristophanes in which the character of "Socrates" is made ridiculous by acting very unlike the true Socrates by appearing childish and absurd. Dryden was concerned with analyzing the laughable quality of comedy and the demonstration of its different acquired forms in different periods of dramatic history. Johnson's talent lay in his ability to make men appear pleasantly ridiculous on the stage while Shakespeare and Fletcher excelled in wit and the sharpness of conceit. Sigmund Freud for example in "Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious"(1905), said that wit is made but humour is found. Ancient Greek Comedy included one of the final three principal forms of classical Greece. Aristophanes represented the fleet of middle age comic poets. New Comedy followed the death of Alexander, The Great in 323 BC. the three best known playwrights to this genre are Meander, Philemon, Diphilus. New Comedy genre was built on the legacy of their predecessors but adapted to the portrayal of everyday life rather than of public affair.

KEYWORDS: Wit, Humour, Comedy, Folly, Drama

PIYUSH RAVAL, Associate Professor, Department of English, Sardar Patel University, Gujarat

Humour and the Conflict between Old and New Comedy in Aristophanes' *The Frogs*

ABSTRACT: In this proposed abstract for paper, I would like to examine the elements of humour in Aristophanes' Old Comedy *The Frogs*, discuss the features of Old Comedy in the play and show the concern of the dramatist with political history and socio-cultural, literary issues of the day. The Athenian comic drama, which began in 486 BC, was divided into two contrasting periods, Old Comedy and New Comedy. Old comedy in the ancient Greek world was represented by the comic dramatist Aristophanes, who belonged to the third generation of writers of the Old Comedy, and who is known to have produced forty

comedies, but only eleven surviving plays are the examples of the Old Comedy. Aristophanes' old comedies are important documents for understanding the cultural life of fifth century Athens as they confront the socio-political and cultural issues of the day. Political situation in Athens in 405 BC was fraught with danger and uncertainty, especially Athens' war with Sparta. One of the categories of Old Comedy is about specific topical cultural issues and Aristophanes' *Frogs*, produced in 405 BC, performed at Lenaea, composed in two Acts with three actors as rule, tests new parameters of Old Comedy and strengthens existing ones. *The Frogs* surveys tragedy from Aeschylus to Euripides, couching their differences in terms of the conflict between Old and New Comedy. The plays of Old Comedy contain formal units such as prologue, parodos, agon, parabasis and exodos which appear in sequence. One of the anomalies of *The Frogs* is that the agon is placed after the parabasis and occupies the second half of the play. As Dionysus is a common figure in Old Comedy, Aristophanes makes Dionysus, the Greek god of drama, the comic hero in *The Frogs*, who seeks laughter from any source and exchanges different acting and festival roles - roles of Xanthias and Heracles, of Choral members and spectators, and those of the judge and the patron god of drama towards the end. Aristophanes creates humour through Dionysus who is timid god and whose true character keeps surfacing, and humourously, when he steps down from acting, nobody is ready to believe in his immortality. Dionysus becomes comical in mistakenly believing or comically feigning beliefs about assuming the traits of persons. Dionysus demonstrates two methods of creating humour: self-deception and unmasking of the self-deceived. Aristophanes creates comedy through parodying the technical of theatrical illusion. Dionysus becomes the critic of comedy by provoking laughter himself (frogs' song), prohibiting Xanthias from using 'usual' stock comic lines for creating laughter and judging comic laughter through the yardstick of unpleasant reactions (like puking) produced by it. His becoming judge of the literary contest between Aeschylus and Euripides, creates great laughter in *The Frogs*. Dionysus is impressed by lofty and daring phrases and metaphors at the expense of content and therefore, he employs the same criterion of physical reaction for judging tragedy. Dionysus had come to Hades for retrieving a clever poet for Athens, and in the end, he selects Aeschylus who shows both cleverness and genuineness. After questioning both the poets what the city should do about Alcibiades and being pleased with both responses, Dionysus asks each one for one more suggestion about how to save Athens. Euripides responds with a comic solution while Aeschylus asks Dionysus whether the city makes use of its good men: "The city hates the good most of all and uses unwillingly the wicked." The god of drama considers the two criteria - wisdom and pleasure - of equal weight, and therefore, they become the two categories of judging drama. In making Dionysus select the tragic poet as one who can best salvage the city, Aristophanes's aim in *The Frogs* becomes clearly didactic, i.e., to make men better in the communities. Aristophanes also desires Athens to follow his own advice given through the Chorus of making peace with Sparta to save the city, and thereby, celebrating and honouring Dionysus uninterruptedly. Aristophanes points to the poets of Old Comedy as the ones being able to save Athens and by doing so, reinforces the Old Comedy tradition, ignored by his contemporaries, that the poet's social function is didactic.

KEYWORDS: Old and New Comedy, humour, Dionysus, tragic poet, city, didactic

S GOPINATH, Assistant Professor & Head, Department of English, Muthayammal College of Arts & Science, Rasipuram, Tamil Nadu

Scatological Humour in *Gulliver's Travels*

ABSTRACT: It is safe to say that humour is a ubiquitous human activity. It is a unique aspect of human interaction and communication. From ancient times to the post pandemic period, humour has been an important ingredient of literature. A host of top-notch writers like Aristotle, Kant, Cervantes, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Moliere, Jonathan Swift, and Mark Twain have added the element of humour in the dynamics of their writings. It is a subject that insinuates itself every aspects of life. It is an apt tool in the hands of writer to exceedingly engage and entertain the audience. It has a therapeutic effect by reducing stress and improves the mood. Humour functions in modes like burlesque, farce, comedy and satire. The main purpose of humour is to entertain and amuse. Deadpan humour, Dark Humour, Character-driven humour, Black humour, satirical humour and Scatological humour are the various types of humour. Among the various types of humour, Scatological humour is a kind of humour that focuses on the primary function of human body. It is a part of satire. It is considered as a social taboo. Scatological humour can be represented as various forms of entertainment, literature and comedy. It is often used to evoke laughter by addressing the crude aspects of human existence. It is considered as vulgar. It is often used for entertainment and amusement. It also highlights the absurdity of human behaviour. By pointing out the absurdity of human condition, the writer comes down heavily on the function of the society. It is actually a comic relief. *Gulliver's Travels* is a case in point. Swift employs scatological humour in the first two parts namely Lilliput and Brobdingnag.

KEYWORDS: Therapeutic effect, stress, taboo, Deadpan, comic relief

SESSION 6A KIDWIT: HUMOUR IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Time: 11:30 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: AMANDEEP KAUR, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

GARGI GANGOPADHYAY, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Vivekananda Vidyabhavan, Kolkata

The Pleasure of Topsy-Turvy Worlds: The Carnavalesque in Bengali Children's Literature

ABSTRACT: Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnival as a place where all hierarchies are effectively but temporarily dissolved, Maria Nikolajeva ('Growing Up: The Dilemma of Children's Literature', 2008) identifies the underlying structure of a category of children's books as 'carnavalesque'. In these stories, she points out, the protagonist

overthrows the figures of authority and takes control, thus causing a temporary disruption of imposed norms and rules (generally of the adult world) which lasts till the resumption of the normalcy at the end of the story. This paper uses Nikolajeva's identification of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque to review the patterns of 'playful subversion' in a selection of Bengali children's stories written and published during the colonial period. Initiated in the early 19th C by European missionaries and rooted in a new colonial modernity, early Bengali children's books were guided by Western pedagogical ideas and constituted mainly of primers, textbooks and moralities. Entertaining books or 'story books', meant for children's leisure reading, began to appear towards the end of the 19th C, when, indigenous epics and folk tales were being retold for children and a handful of illustrious authors were writing original stories especially for child readers (Rabindranath Thakur, Abanindranath Thakur, Upendrakishore Raychaudhuri and Jogindranath Sarkar - to name a few). Reading a selection of these 'entertaining books' authored through the late 19th and early 20th C period (*Kankabati*, *Tuntunir Golpo*, *Gupi Gayen Bagha Bayen*, *Abol Tabol*, *Hajabarala*, *Pagla Dashu* and traditional folk tales and nursery rhymes printed in children's anthologies) the paper engages with the carnivalesque patterns inherent in the comic structure and idiom of these texts and attempts to review the role of the carnivalesque in the double contexts of colonization and childhood.

KEYWORDS: Colonial Bengal, nonsense, children's literature, subversion

SABEREE MANDAL, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Bengali, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal

Sukumar Ray: A Critical Analysis of Humour in Bengali Poems

ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on the humorous approach in the Bengali poems of Sukumar Ray, which is also blended with nonsensical imaginations. He wrote about '*Kheyal Rosh*' (The whimsical essence), in the introduction of his famous poem collection '*Abol Tabol*', which is crucial to understand his approach towards humour and wit. His writings are infused with '*Kheyal Rosh*' which will be granted as the primary tool of the critical analysis of his poems. This paper will try to find out how this flavour of critical humour reflected in his poems. It will analyse how readers usually mistake his writings to be Children's Literature and overlook the scope of reading them from a critical point of view. Sukumar Ray's poetic sense, sensitive response towards the social system and human nature, capability of drawing images with simple and subtle words, and his own jovial mind reflects in his poems unconditionally. But also, the humour and wit he uses in his poems are not similar in pattern – some deliver pure laughter, some have dramatic imaginations and direct implication of humour, some have in-depth satire with layers of harsh realities. The hard blows of wit in between the lines gives the readers a scope to analyse them critically. This paper will focus on the different types of humours in Sukumar Ray's poems, it will try to find out the underlying layers of critical realities. The main objective of this paper is to find out the origin of the poet's humorous expressions, various types of humour, wit and satire and the critical point of view of the poet and how these poems are still relevant in the changing socio-political reality. The discussion of

humour in literature remains incomplete without Sukumar Ray, so this paper will be a tribute to the master of humour in the field of literary creations.

KEYWORDS: Sukumar Ray, 'kheyal rosh' (The whimsical essence), critical humour, wit and satire, socio-political reality

PAROMITA BOSE, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Ecole Centrale School of Engineering, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

The 'Nonsense' World of Sukumar Ray

ABSTRACT: "Nonsense" is defined as rubbish, clap-trap, or as words or language having no meaning or carrying no intelligible ideas. Michael Heyman in *The Tenth Rasa: An Anthology of Indian Nonsense*, talks of nonsense as the negation of reality, which emerges from an "excess" of sense rather than lack of it. It is the ability to be something and nothing at the same time; it fights sense both at the logical and the semantic level. Its nothingness is of great significance. Nonsense lives in the works of Sukumar Ray, one of the most prolific writers of nineteenth century Bengal. Ray added a new dimension to Bengali literature by, firstly, using children's literature as a genre to highlight social evils and secondly, by introducing the element of nonsense in his works. His works are filled with wit, humour, sarcasm, etc., and much as he claims that there are no underlying meanings to his verse and that it is "pure nonsense" readers do find a subtle satire running through his works. However, his humour has no malice attached to it. Ray's character and themes are identifiable, furthermore, the readers also cannot, overlook his illustrations which are remarkable. To quote Amit Chaudhuri, "...his compound words and compound creatures form an outrageous allegory of the hybrid, cosmopolitan origins of Bengal Renaissance." (Chaudhuri, A. 45) Sukumar Ray's works appeal to children and adults alike. To children they appeal because of the musicality of the poems and the wonderful creations that he makes, the fantastic creatures and the fun-filled accounts, because of the word play and excellent illustrations, and to the adults they appeal because they are satirical, and expose the cracks and flaws of the society and offer a sharp critique. This paper will be located at the intersection of nonsense, humor and wit in the works of Sukumar Ray and will attempt to analyse select works by him, namely Ha Ja Ba Ra La and Abol Tabol to locate how nonsense "force(s) for social change, linguistic exploration, political satire, religious expression and philosophical inquiry" (Heyman xxv).

KEYWORDS: Nonsense, Sukumar Ray, Humour

SHEFALI KOHLI, MA Student, Department of English, Miranda House, University of Delhi

Beyond the Real: Exploring Carnavalesque and Magical Realism in Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

ABSTRACT: In a World preoccupied by binaries of truth and falsehood, real and fantastical, right and wrong, Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of Carnavalesque encourages one to

break through and further widen the possibility of coexistence of these otherwise predominant structural binaries. Through Carnavalesque, the World as a whole, instead of being a singular dominant space, extends into becoming a space where the supernatural or magical metamorphoses into natural or real, where real is not necessarily true and unreal false. One might also witness these inversions, transformations and reversals of the accepted and universalised structures in another literary and artistic genre- Magical Realism. What happens when the real and magical, the reality and dream fuse together, making one indistinguishable from another? Does the blurring of inherent hierarchy otherwise associated with reality and fantasy unravel the possibility of the existence of more than only one form of reality, making the unreal real? Pertaining to this confluence between Bakhtin's Carnavalesque and the genre of Magical Realism, this paper focuses on analysing Salman Rushdie's 1990 allegorical novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by presenting the fantastical lands of Gup and Chup as carnivalesque spaces. Within these carnivalesque spaces, several inversions occur (that will be discussed further in the paper), the inversions of time (not linear or circular but stagnant), space (the blurry boundary between the real world of Alifbay and the fantastical world of Kahani), as well as the status of Being (the humanising of machines, flowers, fishes and even shadows). By ironically using the language of wit to envision the possibility of these inversions, Rushdie disguises the corrupt power structures that disseminate pre-established norms as the singular reality, a "Khattam-shud" of all imaginations, into an allegory further establishing how fantastical world of stories can prove to be real after all.

KEYWORDS: Carnavalesque, Magical Realism, Reality, Space, Time, Being

UMME UMMARAH KHAN, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University

Unmasking the Comedy in the Tragedy: Exploring Wit and Humour in Children's Literature through Lemony Snicket's Works

ABSTRACT: This paper seeks to take readers on a whimsical journey to the enchanting world of children's literature, where imagination knows no bounds. It seeks to understand how language elements and techniques operationalise wit and humour in children's literature, making reading an enjoyable activity and inspiring readership amongst young Children. To do so, this study aims to focus on the unique instance of Lemony Snicket's "A Series of Unfortunate Events", a series that, despite appearing to explore gloomy and depressing events and settings, has a witty and humorous writing style that makes its readers laugh. Author Daniel Handler, writing under the pen name Lemony Snicket, skilfully blends the humorous and witty with the dark and gloomy in this series. The story's darkly humorous and satirical aspects captivate readers of all ages by challenging conventional ideas of children's literature. Handler's skilled use of literary allusions, wordplay, and meta-narrative structures draws young readers into the study of difficult subjects like the perils of adult authority, the loss of innocence, and the ridiculousness of bureaucracy. This paper aims to examine and evaluate the literary devices and strategies used in "A Series of Unfortunate Events" to juxtapose light-hearted and satirical language with a gloomy and dismal setting. It seeks to unveil the richness of

humour and social critique in children's literature by exploring the contrast between the humorous writing style and the grim content of the series. The idea is to provoke thoughts about how literature can inspire young readers to read more, making the whole reading session enjoyable while tackling complex themes. Since laughter can be a ray of hope even in the worst of situations, Lemony Snicket's creation is a testament to the ability of humour to enhance the reading experience and encourage young readers.

KEYWORDS: Children's literature, Wit and humour, Lemony Snicket, A Series of Unfortunate Events, Language elements

SESSION 6B CASTES OF HUMOUR

Time: 11:30 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: ANANDITA PAN, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IISER Bhopal

NANCY TYAGI, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University

Humour as a Tool for the Marginalised: A Reading of Anti-Caste Literature

ABSTRACT: “Humour can be dissected as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind.” – E.B. White. Graphic narratives and Humour have a long withstanding relationship with each other. Through the medium of graphic format, social issues are effectively critiqued bring visibility to the margins. Even when such horrific events are produced, humour often slips into the frame through cracks, giving us an insight into the dominant culture, subculture and the artistic traditions. In this paper, I seek to address the need of humour as a politically charged tool to redefine resistance for the marginalised and define the underlying power structures through humour and contextualise the following: 1) Who makes the jokes?, 2) Who gets laughed at? Caste in India is deeply entrenched into every other aspects. From popular culture, literature, to social mobility, caste occupies the very mechanics of social order in India. Jokes on caste, domestic workers, violence against women, make up the very crux of Indian humour, resting on the method of punching down and superiority theory of humour. In an attempt to resist subjugation, anti-caste graphic narratives are now contesting to the dominant discourse though the incongruity humour theory, in an attempt to subvert the popular superiority theory of humour, displacing them as the ‘subject’ of humour. In this paper, I seek to examine the role humour plays in subverting popular tropes and cultures through the reading of *A Gardener in the Wasteland* and other anti-caste narratives. The novel attempts to subvert the dominant discourse of brahmanical supremacy through the means of punching up – mockery and humorous depictions of religious myths – as a way to redefine resistance.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Caste, Dalits, Myths, Culture

PRIYA VERMA, Ph.D. Candidate, Amity Institute of English Studies and Research, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

'Filthy Mahars!' Analyzing Dalit Assertion and Satire in Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*

ABSTRACT: Dalit autobiography has joined satire as a contemporary genre of Dalit Literature since the 1960s. Locating their inspiration in the advocacy and reformations by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), an anti-caste intellectual and founding father of the democratic state, the Dalit writers have examined recurrent themes including social exclusion, poverty, patriarchy, survival, and individuality over the span of time. This research paper is an exhaustive criticism of acceptance of the 'Brahman way' as the sole judgmental standard through the mockery of upper caste hypocrisy effected through real life exemplifications in Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*. Drawing on personal history, Kamble exposes irony, and celebrates the resilience by provoking thought, and eliciting an emotional response from the reader. Utilizing Satire as an instrument for the Dalit emancipation and liberation, heavily influenced by Ambedkar's philosophy of democratic ideas, the author challenges the stigma surrounding the Mahar community. Her rigorous criticism regarding the Savarna rituals and absurd superstitions, establishes her as an important developer in the Dalit discourse. The ludicrousness of practices such as 'nose-chopping' and 'bowing to the upper-caste men,' and their contribution to the persistence of discrimination are highlighted by the author using humour. For Kamble, ridiculing through writing became necessary with the intention of revealing the Mahars' product of the Brahmanical patriarchy that exposed the horrific abuse of Mahar women encouraged by the Mahar community itself. The Dalit autobiography is also a reminder of the need for social justice and equality for Dalit women. Applying the theory of Assertion by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, as a framework, the author seeks to answer the questions: To what degree the absurdity of the caste-based hierarchy is justified, and how the satirical elements have been applied to the Dalit narratives over the 20 years.

KEYWORDS: Assertion; Dalit Autobiography; Satire; Dalit Discourse

JHARANA RANI DHANGADAMAJHI, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kalahandi University, Odisha

Religion or Subversive Performativity: Unravelling the Carnavalesque in Dalit Rituals of Odisha

ABSTRACT: The Dalits of Odisha especially the Domb and the Gond community, mostly from the western part of Odisha, follow a distinctive religious tradition, from that of the dominant Hindu tradition of Jagannath cult. Their religious-verse is dominated not by the gods and goddess of Hindu religion but by the ancestral deities like Bhima, Jena,

Kalisundri, Budha Raja etc., who are taken out on procession, in a ritualistic manner, on various occasions like wedding ceremonies, Chaitra Jatara, and Dussehera. During these ceremonies, it is believed that these gods and goddess come to possess the mortal bodies of the living (married women of the family) demanding their desires to be fulfilled. Keeping this as background, the present paper hypothesises and argues that these religious rituals are performative in nature having characteristics of Bakhtinian carnivalesque with the potential to subvert the gender norms of the heteronormative and patriarchal world as well as the existing hierarchies in terms of caste and class that are the hallmarks of established dominant religion. Dalit religious rituals and the participating performing body in these rituals (collected in the form of videos and picture) will remain the locus of enquiry using the lens of Bakhtinian Carnivalesque, Dalit aesthetics (Limbale, Rajkumar), and gender/feminist theories of the 'body' to re-read Dalit religion as subversion through performativity.

KEYWORDS: Carnivalesque, Dalit Body, Dalit Rituals, Domb Community, Performativity, Subversion

DILSHA K DAS, Ph.D. Candidate, School of Management Studies, NIT Calicut, Kerala

Reconstruction of Identity in Thira and Theyyam: Performance and the Performer

ABSTRACT: The convergence of the artistic expressions of theatre, dance and music forms a creative dialogic space of interaction and gives birth to Performance. As an all-inclusive artistic product, it has been successful in promoting and preserving generational knowledge and value. Performances can also sometimes be instrumentalised for establishing a political statement by artists and communities. The liberating power of art to transcend social barriers like time, generations, caste, class, gender etc., is often reinforced through performances. The paper intends to analyse the identity of the subaltern in contrast to the identity of a performer in reference to Theyyam and Thira, ritualistic performances commonly seen in North Kerala, in relation to Mikael Bakhtin's idea of Carnivalesque. Thira Maholsavam, an annual traditional ritualistic festival often performed in temples in North Kerala, is a visual performance that narrates the story of the theyyakolam, and the performer belongs to a certain marginalised community. The transfiguration of an artist to a God through performance is not only ritualistic but also underpins a political and social statement of power. Through the employment of wit and humor, theyyakolam questions the societal norms during festivals that are otherwise considered inappropriate or illegal—the identity of a performer transverses into many paths giving voice to his silenced self. The method of the study is the close textual analysis of various thira and theyyam performances in relation to the lores. Thira, a local religious practice, can be seen as a microcosm of a larger universe where an alternate identity provides recognition, acceptance and value. Such festivals act as a means to subvert hierarchies and harsh social norms.

KEYWORDS: Performance, Carnivalesque, Thira, Identity, Marginalised

DIVITA SINGH, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

From Margins to Mainstream: A Study of Blue Comedy through the Paradigm of New Dalit Resistance, Revolt and Assertion

ABSTRACT: Blue comedy is a new space for Dalit comedians to clap back at the oppressor while negotiating a space for their own, these performing artists unlike the age-old comics who came from a place of privilege and caste capital take the mic in their hands and tell their own stories, specifically in an urban context where segregation and casual casteism is still deeply rooted and entrenched. They hit back at the stereotypes and turn the tables on being the butt of jokes and gaining an agency over their perspective of humour and laughter. Comedians like Manjit Sarkar, Manaal Patil, Ankur Tangade and many more are also making their shows available online through platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Twitter and thus explore many topics like “Savarna Guilt”. These avenues will be thoroughly examined in this paper and what will it mean to create such a space on social where the new generation of artists clap back at the Upper Caste status-quo. This paper will also entail a comparative study of African American Stand-up comedy genres and performances, an interspersion between Theatre and Performance studies, Resistance literature and Hyper textuality, New Media and modes of assertion as well as Legal humanities and how Resistance comedy or Protest Satire can often step beyond the boundaries of what constitutes “Free Speech” by the State and Legal authorities. This paper will incorporate ideas from Peniel Rajkumar’s work “Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation: Problems. Paradigms and Possibilities” and how he questions the millennial psychological concept of “Boundaries” which are still fecund when it comes to marginalisation and oppression. He puts forward an interesting hypothesis that synoptic healing stories and motivational diatribes and Rhetoric can resolve the situation in a larger context but we need a new Lense and negotiating spaces to put forward a bigger cause of assertion. His argument that through the earthliness of the hermeneutics and the oral and performative aspects of Dalits, one cannot engage in a process of decoding and interpretation. Rather, what is present is itself an interpretation of life. One should understand that one can only participate in subaltern hermeneutics and cannot simply access them through cognitive tools; and that’s where a mode of performativity like Stand-up comedy comes in the picture where the new generation tells their story defying the heuristic compatibility with the audience and make them uncomfortable so that they can revise and revisit their own liberative potential. This paper will also draw from Jack Black’s book “Race, Racism and Political Correctness in Comedy: A Psychoanalytic Exploration” Where talked about the “Comedy’s Incongruity” and how resistance comedy subversively disrupts the flow of everyday social life by upsetting our usual way of thinking. He also examines Kant’s and Henri Bergson’s view of “disjunctive humour” and its phenomenological significance. In his book he also introduces the concept of “ambiguous framing” around the ethnic minorities and marginalised identities resting on Stewart Lee’s Idea that “the exploration of boundaries, of social limits and their transgression in comedies is and has always been at the core of the genre”. Black’s work will help us juxtapose the race and caste through a comparative Lense and how comedy can help us move beyond the crude biological reductionism, which fundamentally ignores and challenge the symbolic order.

KEYWORDS: Disjunctive humour, Casual Casteism, Social Capital, Segregation, Subaltern

**SESSION 6C (NO) LAUGHING MATTER: HUMOUR'S ROLE IN (DE)NORMALIZING
STEREOTYPES**

Time: 11:30 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: D101

Chair: KALYANEE RAJAN, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College, Delhi University

ALEENA KHAN, Ph.D. Candidate, The English & Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad; and **MOHD FARAZ ZUBERI**, Ph.D. Candidate, Aligarh Muslim University

Being Funny About Who I Am: Identity Stereotypes to Create Humour

ABSTRACT: Wit and humour that draws on ethnic stereotypes for a voice of liberation and identity is a genre that has seeped into literature and performance, especially in a global context where social media has established diverse audiences and more multicultural connections. In this vein, the stereotypes that are reflective of various ethnic groups come forth on a global stage and spark negative and positive dialogue. This study explores how ethnic stereotypes are refurbished through wit and humour to regain identity. By looking at depictions of comic content on social media, in movies, and in literature, the study tries to document how derogatory associations can be utilised in a positive manner to reclaim identity by minority groups. For this, the study analyses global stereotypes about South Asians, in general, and Indians, in particular, to juxtapose and see how these conversations are being held through comedy and carnivalesque. It also looks at the linguistic aspect of this practice of how connotation is developed through wit and can be used to retrain identity perceptions.

KEYWORDS: ethnic identity, stereotypes and humour, identity liberation, multicultural comedy

JASRAH FAROOQ, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, The LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur

Blackface Minstrelsy: Fetishisation of Black Race in the Garb of Humour

ABSTRACT: Blackface minstrel shows enjoyed immense popularity during the 19th and early 20th century for their not-so-good humoured racial parodies of the black people. White performers employed “humour” to ridicule the black race. These performers

blackened their faces using burnt cork/shoe polish and mimicked the blacks, portraying them as lazy, ignorant, irresponsible, childishly simple, superstitious, hypersexual. Advertised not only as a mere show, blackface minstrelsy endorsed an invitation to peep into the “real life” of these darkies; therefore, casting an immense impact on the way mainstream society perceived blacks. As a stage form, it died out in the 1920s and migrated to film and radio. Blackface minstrelsy not only appropriated aspects of African American culture but also codified caricatures reducing them to total comic fools, reaffirming what mainstream American society had been thinking all along. Being one of the first public commercial venues in which blacks (though not really blacks) were represented on the theatrical/musical stage, it certainly had a lasting effect on the entertainment industry. Stereotypes that emerged from the 19th century minstrel shows remain conserved till the present day, with TV and radio producers demanding that black people speak, act in conformity with these negative stereotypes. One popular example of such caricatures is the blackface persona of “Jim Crow” (developed and popularised by Thomas Dartmouth Rice); which later evolved into a derogatory term to legitimise racial segregation in U.S. In this paper, we analyse various minstrel shows (in motion pictures) of early 20th century, like those by Cotton and Chick Watts, Fred Waring, Glen Turnbull, etc. to study and scrutinise their debased “wit” and “humour”, while employing arguments given by theorists like Stuart Hall, McClintock, Nathalie Rosset, George F. Rehin, Robert Staples, etc.

KEYWORDS: Blackface Minstrelsy; Humour; Race; Stereotypes

NARENDRA KUMAR, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, The LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur

Racist Humour, Cultural Surveillance and Trauma in Caryl Phillips’ *Dancing in the Dark*

ABSTRACT: In the three-act novel *Dancing in the Dark* (2005), which is classified as theatre fiction, Caryl Phillips presents the on-stage and off-stage life of Bert Williams and George Walker. Having gone through the experiences of portraying the stereotypical representations of the black as anthropological specimens and in medicinal shows, broken and tired, they decide to play the coon in vaudeville in New York. Playing the racial stereotype with blackface makeup further deepens their sense of shame and betrayal of the race, fracturing themselves further and culminating in everyday traumatic existence. By following the lives of Williams and Walker in a bildungsroman style, Caryl Phillips exposes the darker reality of 19th and 20th-century racist American society, which not only revelled in the grotesque representations of blacks at the mining sites but also the world of New York did find the portrayals of comic black buffoonery as natural and humorously indulgent as portrayed in blackface minstrelsy. Any deviation from portraying the black man otherwise, which is having an independent mind and intelligence, meant a theatrical failure for these young players. Thus, the American society involved itself in active cultural surveillance, making the lives perpetually subjected to cultural trauma. Scholars such as Robert Hornback (1983), Lawrence E Mintz (1996), and Raul Perez (2017) have demonstrated that “racist humour” is a site of power display for

the deeply racially stratified society. By perpetuating the stereotypes of race, as Homi Bhabha (1994) and Stuart Hall (1997) suggest, the representations in racist humour, acting through the splitting of ego, have a profound psychological impact on the black subjects, invigorating and further deepening their trauma of colonisation and slavery. In the current paper, taking a cue from Tommy Curry's *Another White Man's Burden* (2018), it is argued that slavery and post-slavery culture of racism has been formative of white American/European culture subconscious, turning the civil society into a surveillance society against miscegenation of racial boundaries that have acted against the immigrants of colour, and thereby, have also worked against colonial healing.

ABSTRACT: Caryl Phillips; Race; Humour; Cultural Surveillance; Trauma

MANISH SOLANKI, Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar

Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*: Satirical Revisionism and Subversion of Gender Stereotypes

ABSTRACT: The paper proposes to analyse Carol Ann Duffy's collection of poems *The World's Wife* (1999) in its literary revisionism that exposes the sociocultural constructions of gender stereotypes in myth, history and literature. This is her 'themed' collection wherein she explores what it is to be a woman. Duffy has used the literary genre of dramatic monologue in this volume and the speakers are all female excluded from myth, history and literature. They are also women who are mostly defined by their man/husband and obscured behind them. They tell their stories from the female perspective and thereby comment upon the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. The poems in this collection look at important events in human history in a controversial way to problematise gender, sex, embodiment and subjectivity. Most of the poems employ the device of satire, dislodging the women of history and myth from their original context and injecting their voices with new life through revisionism. Duffy's poems are characterised by her distinctive satirical tone in her use of ventriloquism and colloquialism. This results in the subversion of masculinist stereotypes to negotiate the space for a separate female identity outside the masculine definition. Duffy is known for her use of performance poems where the satirical blunt, aimed at sociocultural construction of gender stereotypes, turn them on their heads to empower the marginal female. She interrogates the 'sex-determined roles' assigned to women in a patriarchal society. Her poems, known as 'insult poem' or 'joke poem', are marked by female self-assertion using the literary devices of wit, satire and humour. The proposed paper is an attempt to read/study her poems from this collection in accordance with the theme of the conference. Her poems, such as 'Mrs Darwin', 'Frau Freud', 'Queen Kong', 'Mrs Icarus', 'Mrs Sisyphus', 'Penelope', 'Mrs Lazarus', 'Medusa', and, 'from Mrs Tiresias' offer a rich textual template to analyse how satirical retelling of our popular myth and history can redress the issue of gender inequality and lead toward a more egalitarian social outlook.

KEYWORDS: literary revisionism, subversion, gender stereotypes, joke poem, satire and humour

NEHA DAGAR, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Ambedkar University Delhi

Wit and Humour in Folk Songs Challenging Traditional Gender Roles and Stereotypes: An Example of *Jakari*

ABSTRACT: In the wake of wit and humour, performances, especially in social setups, tend to pave the way for more comprehensive parameters to be acknowledged rather than just limiting to culture and tradition by touching upon social issues, norms, and societal ethics. Folk songs are one of many such examples of genres in folklore where manifestations through wit and humour, especially in challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, serve as a vehicle for social commentary and critique. *Jakari* folk songs are an exclusive women's subculture of Haryana, which, in the background of humour and fun, reinforces gender norms and challenges in Haryana. Being a crucial part of the male-dominated state of Haryana, *Jakari* songs not only reflect the position of women in Haryanvi society but also embody the social issues they face, making them a collective, universal form of articulation. I propose to investigate how, through the comedic effects, these oral expressions negotiate for a safe space and reflect the position of women. These songs depict their everyday issues and serve as a mode of articulation to vent their emotions. Moreover, I seek to examine how *Jakari* folk songs are an empowerment tool to help change the social order and understand the Haryanvi women's socio-psychic reality. By analyzing some of the songs I have documented during my repeated field trips, I will explore how they reflect women's rational and modern thinking by focusing on significant social issues, such as education, discrimination, dreams, and desires. Moreover, by establishing a contrast between men's and women's folk songs, I aim to examine the role gender plays in shaping the themes and content of these humorous songs through notable examples of *Jakari* and *Ragini* or *Swangs* (Haryanvi folk songs of men).

KEYWORDS: Performance, Social order, Folk songs, Emotions, Humour

SESSION 7A WIT AND THE OTHER: HUMOUR'S MULTIFARIOUS ENTANGLEMENTS

Time: 1:45 – 3:00 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: NIBEDITA MUKHERJEE, Professor, Department of English, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal

AMANDEEP KAUR, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; and **JAGVIR SINGH**, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, SR Government College for Women, Amritsar

The Humour of the Absurd: Roy Andersson's "Living Trilogy"

ABSTRACT: In this paper, we explore three films that comprise Swedish director Roy Andersson's "Living Trilogy"—*Songs from the Second Floor* (2000); *You, the Living* (2007); and *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence* (2014). Our aim is to trace how the absurd can be represented in the guise of humour and its philosophical relation with the concept of the aesthetic of "trivialism" that Andersson has employed in his cinema. The absurdist humour consists of two essential fields: the brute irrationality of the universe and the absurd rationality of mind. We develop on this dialectics to illustrate how his movies become "characters" in themselves to subvert the cinematic linearity. Drawing on the theories of the absurd, we explore how the trilogy depicts the confrontation between transcendental illogic and the empirical logic which lies in the very mood of the films than in the logical acts of the characters. Finally, we argue that these three films tend to answer the conundrum of human identity by showcasing the absurdity of grand narratives which are unable to offer respite from the mundanity of everyday life.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Absurd, Cinema, Trivialism

SHOBHA M, Professor, Department of English, Bangalore University

The Significance of Scatological Humour: A Case Study of the Film *Piku*

ABSTRACT: *Piku*, the 2015 Hindi film, is significant for its deft handling of scatological humour. Toilet humour, as it is generally known, till then had been used as a slapstick comic relief in a movie—to be enjoyed in a moment and forgotten before it becomes disgusting. *Piku*, however, compels the audience not only to acknowledge and applaud its presence in a prominent way, but also to understand the nuances of social, political and humanistic issues of contemporary Indian society. The scatological humour, embedded through the two hour ten minutes' spectrum of everyday life, throws open the eccentricities (physical and emotional), and offers deep insights about ordinary lives. Although some of the reviews of the film have recognized the refreshing and the positive aspects of the scatological humour, there has been no attempt to analyse its connotations for the personal and the cultural dimensions of characters. In his study of Rabelais, Bakhtin has presented the use of scatological humour and the grotesque body as means of inverting hierarchies and creating a sense of regeneration. The present paper, however, explores fecality as the site of a more enduring emancipation than the temporary, subversive, comic relief the carnivalesque can afford. It aims at exploiting fecality's capacity to transgress and 'enable the assimilation of the inassimilable fact of mortality' (Annabel L. Kim).

KEYWORDS: scatological humour, fecality, carnivalesque, emancipation, transgress

ASMITA KUNDU, Academic Fellow, Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda, Gujarat

The Carnavalesque of Queer Historicity: Horror and Wit in *Plain Bad Heroines*

ABSTRACT: The aesthetic overlappings of horror and comedy have been rather everlasting and intrinsic. As the genre of horror comedies began to gain prominence, works categorically deemed as exclusively horror, could reveal their proximity with elements of comedy. Alfred Hitchcock had famously remarked about *Psycho* being primarily comedy as there "is a fine line between getting someone to laugh and getting someone to scream " (Gordon, 1992). Despite this alleged immanent connection, commonsensically speaking, horror and humor seem to be emotions largely antagonistic to one another. This presumption is perhaps what gives works that conspicuously synthesize horror and comic elements, their curious character that has the propensity to challenge notions of normativity and genre based expectations. Noel Carroll in their essay 'Horror and Humour' remarks that since humor aims for sensations of rerelease, lightness and expansion and horror invokes heaviness, pressure and claustrophobia, they might appear "initially implausible that such broadly opposite affects can attach to the same stimulus" (1999). This counterintuitive merger can be instrumental in expanding the restraints of a genre by making the "initially implausible" rather comprehensible and reveal the inherent naturalness of the same. A similar driving force is also what defines any narrative of subversion– especially those which aim at centering alternate and under-represented voices by challenging the notions of accepted history. Emily M. Danforth's *Plain Bad Heroines* (2020) is comic horror novel that weaves various narratives of queer romance and existences to ultimately expose the bizarreness and absurdity of queer exclusion across history, to simultaneously express the horrible and the laughable. The blend of horror and comedy ends up becoming a crucial vehicle for uninhibited celebration or a carnivalesque of queer re-telling of narratives. This paper seeks to explore the aesthetic relationship of wit and horror as an indispensable element in stories of marginality with a close analysis of the narrative tactics deployed in *Plain Bad Heroines*.

KEYWORDS: Queer, Horror, Affect, Historicity, Carnavalesque

A SOWMYA, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sri D Devaraj Urs Government First Grade College, Hunsur, Karnataka

Casting Aside of Caste Centres in Comic Shorts

ABSTRACT: Short movies, as a parallel genre to feature films, have been increasingly creative and unconventional not only in the use of narrative techniques but also in their selection of bold subjects. Caste questions in feature films, largely, are either blurred or ruled out with the blanketing justification of aesthetics. Convenient categories of rich and poor binary replace caste to bend the movie down for suitable consumption. Comic short movies, on the other end of the spectrum, capture nuances and complexities of the caste system using parody and humour to present Dalit issues in a modern, radical way

countering the pitfalls of caste hegemony. This paper explores comic short movies made on the Indian caste system to bring out their difference from feature films, which would to some extent, confirm and proliferate myths surrounding dominant ideologies of caste. Beating the commercial formulas of cult movies, the short movie medium does not shy away from portraying disturbing questions concerning caste. Adopting a light, humourous tone, the short movies engage the readers in a lively repartee to parody the modern, sophisticated manifestations of casteism. The movies also synthesize diversity and inclusion of the marginal cultures instead of presenting Indian society as monolithic. The bleakness and seriousness surrounding the issues give way to breathtakingly refreshing outlook propped by comic narration. The paper's purview includes Pa. Ranjith's "The Discreet Charm of the Savarnas," "Share Auto," "Modi and A Beer" among many others.

KEYWORDS: Short movies, feature films, humour, wit, parody, caste, hegemony.

SESSION 7B WISECRACKS: HUMOUR IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Time: 1:45 – 3:00 PM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: PRIYANKA TRIPATHI, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Patna

IPSITA SENGUPTA, Associate Professor, Department of English, Bankura University, West Bengal

In Connect, Disconnect: Exploring Pluripotency of Wit and Humour in a Comparative Study of Select Representations of the Adda, Eighteenth Century and Contemporary

ABSTRACT: "The agelastes [those bereft of humour in Greek], the nonthought of received ideas, and kitsch are one and the same, the three-headed enemy of the art [the novel] born as the echo of God's laughter", observed Milan Kundera in his essay titled "Jerusalem Address: The Novel and Europe" (1985). The premise of humour as a mode of meditation, interrogation refracts as well on most literary representations of "adda" i.e., collective conversations without an apparent pre-set charter of lens and discoveries. In this paper I read four texts composed across locations, languages, tenses and media, all formed as creative representations of collectives in conversation, so as to compare the pluripotent dimensions of wit and humour limned, through moments that prescribe, question, disrupt, digress, or gather the eluded. The texts I choose are James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), Milan Kundera's fiction *Slowness*, translated from French by Linda Asher (1996), Marjane Satrapi's graphic novella *Embroideries*, translated from French by Anjali Singh (2008), and Shaunak Sen's documentary *All that Breathes* (2022). The Johnsonians gathered at taverns and coffee-houses and sometime at their friends',

upheld conversation as cherished value. Johnson the “public oracle” and prescriber of homo hierarchicus at such addas, could “toss and gore” with his ready repartees, but could be mimicked and laughed at as readily by his adorers, having been countered with “sportive raillery” as to his positions against “aliens and upstarts”. Wit in conversation confects, composes and protects a discrete intimate encounter in the “resonating seashell” of eighteenth-century France imaged in *Slowness*, humour here morphs into a contrapuntal technique of tenderness and preserving the private as inviolate. In *Embroideries*, women of post-Revolution Tehran use the ludicrous to register over tea-talk their heartbreak, horror of the local tyranny of kitsch around females and the feminine, and ambiguity about the global West. And finally, the humour of futurisms and alleged metaphors breathed by three hurting healers in *All that Breathes* gathers a loneliness of “specieistic difference” and other incommunicables, given the mass culture of pollution, cannibalization. I hope to explore how these diverse dimensions of the comic dis/connect to each other in a time-machine, across forms.

KEYWORDS: Humour in adda across space and tense, the Johnsonians' wit, humour public and private, humour and the margins, humour and gender

ALEENA MANOHARAN, Assistant Professor, CMS College, Kottayam, Kerala

The Comic Mode in Aboriginal Literature

ABSTRACT: Humanity's greatest markers have been achieved through the indomitable spirit of conquest; conquest of foreign lands, their people and natural environment. For Joseph Meeker, however, these heroic feats have been initiated and sustained by the Western civilization, and are definably tragic as these signify human estrangement not only from their like but also other forms of life. As an adaptive strategy, then, tragedy is neither a universal phenomenon, nor a natural one, but that which engages in a disruption of community life. Comedy, on the other hand, promotes communitarian living and survival, wherein the participating agencies, whenever possible, reduce the risk of engaging in conflicts of any sort that may disrupt the community. Seen in this sense, arguably, primal human communities, across the world, may said to have been modelled on the comic mode of life that integrated members of the community (both human and non-human) into an egalitarian whole. Humour, as an essential component of comedy, has always been a vital force in promoting a sense of community among primal people. With the advent, spread and challenges of colonization, which itself marks a tragic mode of life, humour has become ever more pertinent in combating the disruption of communitarian life. This paper engages in a study of comedy and humour in contemporary Australian Aboriginal plays, and argues that the former are significant survival strategies that indigenous Australians have adopted to sustain and promote their primal ways of living.

KEYWORDS: Comedy, Tragedy, Aboriginal Literature.

AMRITA SHARMA, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi

Voices from Urban India: Understanding Carnivalesque through Select Web Productions by *The Viral Fever*

ABSTRACT: As the comic genre continues to remain one of the dominant forms of entertainment, it also asserts a significant space within the rapidly growing ‘over-the-top’ or OTT platforms. With multiple voices from contemporary urban Indian metropolitan centers finding expression in these web series productions, many digital content creators have emerged with a growing focus on narratives that depict real life challenges faced by the middle-class youth of contemporary India in a comic fashion. While these multiple voices resonate with the ‘carnivalesque’ within such screen narratives, the dominant social hierarchy appears shattered with numerous marginal voices occupying the center space within these web productions. The present paper attempts to trace the ‘carnivalization’ of select screen narratives created and streamed on one of India’s leading over the top media service and YouTube channel named The Viral Fever or TVF. With a focus on Indian youth as the primary consumer of their digital content, TVF has produced many widely successful web series like *TVF Aspirants* and others that focus on young Indian voices with humour becoming the primary tool to depict pathos. Where education, employment, financial stability, romantic relationships and mental health appear as major challenges faced by these young urban Indian TVF character voices, the humour and chaos in the multiple voices around them becomes the grounding point for the narrative arcs in these web series, The paper also analyses the emotional value and purposefulness of humour while simultaneously revealing the psychological and socio-cultural dimensions of storytelling and character development within the comic framework.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Indian, Youth, Carnivalesque, Urban

NEELA PARVEJ, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Linguistics, Aligarh Muslim University

Wit, Humour and Language in Digital Folklore: Exploring the Linguistic Dynamics of Online Humour in the Digital Age

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to examine the pivotal role of wit and humour within the realm of digital folklore focusing on their intricate relationship with language in the new media platforms like: Twitter renamed as X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and audio/visual platforms like- Radio FM, Sunday suspense, audio story telling platforms etc. In the era of social media and online communication platforms, humour has emerged as a cornerstone of virtual communities, shaping cultural narratives, social narratives, social interactions and collective identities. This study aims to dissect the multifaceted nature of digital humour by scrutinizing its linguistic underpinnings and the ways in which language play the most important role in evolution of online folklore in the age of new media. Employing an interdisciplinary approach drawing from folklore studies, linguistics, communication and media studies, the paper analyses a diverse array of

digital artefacts, including memes, Urban Legends, Urban myths, etc. Signs and semiotics approach is also utilised in the creation of different humour contents such as memes, avatars and cartoon caricatures. The central emphasis lies in delineating diverse manifestations of wit within digital folklore, which studies various forms of wit encompassing puns, wordplay, satire, irony, metaphor, hyperbole and absurdity, and probes how they are deployed in online humour. It also delves into ways in which linguistic features serves as social instruments establishing virtual communities and identities in the digital spaces. Furthermore, this paper addresses the implications of digital humour on linguistic evolution and the preservation of cultural heritage. It also investigates how humorous content circulates, adapts and propagates within online communities, contributing to the creation of shared linguistic repertoires. In conclusion, this paper ultimately offers a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between wit, humour and digital folklore, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of online humour and its impact on modern linguistic practices and cultural communication.

KEYWORDS: Humour, digital folklore, language, linguistic features, new media

SESSION 7C WIT AND HUMOUR IN THE TWICE BORN FICTION

Time: 1:45 – 3:00 PM

Venue: D-101

Chair: ANSHU SURVE, Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat

S MOORTHY, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sree Sevugan Annamalai College, Devakottai, Tamil Nadu

Wit and Humour in R. K. Narayan's Novels

ABSTRACT: R.K. Narayan, the maestro of Indian literature, weaves a tapestry of wit and humour throughout his novels, creating a literary landscape that mirrors the peculiarities of human existence. His narrative prowess lies in his ability to infuse everyday situations with a delightful blend of wit, satire, and gentle humour. Narayan's humour is often a subtle commentary on the human condition, employing irony and comedic situations to explore society's quirks. Like the iconic Malgudi residents, his characters navigate life with charming nonchalance, and their encounters are laced with humour that transcends cultural boundaries. The wit in Narayan's novels serves a dual purpose—it entertains and enlightens. Through his humorous lens, he addresses profound themes such as tradition, modernity, and the clash between the old and the new. The humour becomes a vehicle for introspection, inviting readers to reflect on life's absurdities while fostering empathy for the characters. Narayan's wit is deeply rooted in his keen observations of human nature. He has an uncanny ability to capture the nuances of relationships, societal norms,

and individual idiosyncrasies, presenting them with an endearing and thought-provoking comedic touch. Whether it's the misadventures of the bumbling Swami or the eccentricities of Margayya in *The Financial Expert*, Narayan's humour is a universal language that resonates with readers across cultures. In essence, the wit and humour in R.K. Narayan's novels transcend the boundaries of time and space. They form an integral part of the narrative fabric, enriching the reading experience by infusing it with laughter, insight, and a profound understanding of the human spirit.

KEYWORDS: Wit, Humour, social-ills

M NATRAJAN, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu

Khushwant Singh: A Facetious Commentator of Men and Matters

ABSTRACT: Humour is a delicate thing that defies a clear definition, but it is certainly non-malicious. It is an antidote against hate and excessive pride. Khushwant Singh, a renowned journalist, author, lawyer, and diplomat, was famous for his sense of humour and unalloyed laughter, and he had the unusual ability to laugh at himself. He contributed to Indian Literature in English with his uninhibited wit and humour. Noted for his remarkable collection of jokes, comprising his original creations and selections from other sources, Singh consistently concluded his popular syndicated columns published in newspapers and journals with one or two jokes, frequently provided by his readers. The humorous anecdotes that he shared with his readers through these columns were characterized by their incisiveness, common sense, frequently containing bawdy elements but consistently eliciting laughter. Interestingly, Singh's publishers demanded such humours writing that resulted in largescale sales of his books as readers loved them. He consistently demonstrated an inclination to perceive the humorous aspects even in serious topics he dealt with. His distinctive and abundant wit and humour are the lifeblood of his literary corpus. An attempt is made in this paper to show the humorous elements as portrayed in the literary works of Khushwant Singh.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Wit, Anecdote, Incisiveness, Parody

ANNALISE BENJAMIN, MA Student, University of Colorado, Denver, USA

Laughing in the Face of Prejudice: The Transformative Power of Humour in Contemporary Indian Discourse on Race and Ethnicity

ABSTRACT: Disparities, oddly, the comedy form is sometimes underappreciated. What humor research lacks is a comprehension of how comedy fosters a climate in which race may be discussed openly and frequently severely. Both in literature and on the big screen, wit and humor have been essential to the examination of ethnicity and race. Renowned Indian novelist Salman Rushdie has skilfully used these literary devices in his novels to explore the difficulties of ethnicity and race. In *Midnight's Children*, his crowning

accomplishment, he expertly combines humor and magical realism to examine India's post-colonial identity. Rushdie navigates the complex cultural, religious, and ethnic origins of the people of the country with humor. His story creates a rich tapestry that depicts the difficulties and conflicts brought on by this varied heritage. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a major work of postcolonial literature because of its hilarious and sarcastic disposition, which serves as a striking commentary on the racial and ethnic conflicts present in post-colonial India. Rushdie challenges readers to consider preconceptions, practice empathy, and engage in a thorough examination of India's cultural diversity by using humor to analyze these complex subjects. Humor is still used in modern Indian movies to address themes of race and ethnicity. The movie *Article 15* conveys a strong illustration. This provocative thriller uses comedy and satire to expose the pervasive racial tensions and caste-based prejudice in rural India. The film cleverly uses humor to highlight the ludicrousness and injustice of the caste system, exposing the ingrained prejudices that still exist in modern India. Rushdie's novel and contemporary Indian films like *Article 15* are excellent examples of how humor can be an intriguing and pertinent way to discuss ethnicity and race. These artistic creations demonstrate the lasting significance of humor in literature and film, not only for its amusement value but also as a catalyst for inciting thought and igniting discussions on these difficult and important issues. With a particular emphasis on works like *Midnight's Children* and *Article 15*, this paper seeks to understand how conscious humor aids in the exploration and understanding of race and ethnicity in modern Indian literature and film. Additionally, it seeks to examine how such humor affects societal consciousness and encourages transformative changes in the context of modern India.

KEYWORDS: Popular Culture, *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie, Article 15

HARSHKUMAR CHANDRAKANT GHAGHADA, MA Student, University of Colorado, Denver, USA

A Battle of Wit's: Roy's Indegenous Approach in *The God of Small Things*

ABSTRACT: India has a long tradition of utilizing wit and humor in literature, films, and dramas to disperse moral stories, engage in political satire, and many other social justice areas like gender and sexuality, caste, color, and class. While wit and humor are used to discriminate against indigenous people, they are also to criticize against that discrimination. In the novel *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy deploys wit and humor in her language to write about various indigenous characters and their equations, such as how Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol are regarded highly in the Ayemenem house because they are from England but not Rahel and Estha, casteism in how Velutha is treated and killed, classism through the character of Comrade Pillai and the instances of the Communist Party in Kerala, the humor used to portray complicated familial love through the characters of Ammu, Rahel, and Estha, and the incestuous equation between Rahel and Estha, through gender bias in how Chacko is given more importance than Ammu in the family. Roy weaves in her narrative the use of wit and humor through a hybrid language, that is, the blend of two social languages within a single utterance, the blend of English and Indian English, through exchanges between characters Estha and Rahel, as well as the use of the Malayalam language. This itself becomes an indigenous approach to the English language and Indian English literature. Roy has also used a

decentralized style where there is a constant replacing, updating, and modifying of phrases to deliver her wit and bring these indigenous qualities of the text to the forefront. She uses dissection or disintegration of words and capitalization to further deliver humor and reflect on the minds of the characters. These techniques help interrogate themes from the novel like casteism, gender bias, and classism. This paper aims to examine how Roy has successfully used wit and humor through a hybrid language, a decentralized and disintegrated style, and capitalization that assists the aforementioned themes in building a narrative.

KEYWORDS: wit, humor, caste, color, class

SESSION 8A FUNNY AESTHETICS: THE PRAXIS & POLITICS OF HASYA RASA

Time: 03:15 – 04:15 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: EV RAMAKRISHNAN, Professor Emeritus, Central University of Gujarat; Gandhinagar

NIBEDITA JENA, Guest Faculty, Department of Odia, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar; and **RAMESH C MALIK**, Assistant Professor, Department of Odia, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar

Critical Appraisal of Catharsis: A Study of Odia Comedies

ABSTRACT: The concept of comedy and tragedy both are different in nature. But Catharsis is closely associated with the tragedy. It was observed that the Catharsis can be obtained through the sentimental comedy. In the Sanskrit plays, the concept of tragedy was absent. Among the nine emotions, the *hasyarasa* is a distinctive deal with a special character *vidushak* deployed to propagate it. It is quite relevant to say that Bhatta Nayaka's *saadharanikaran* which is equivalent to Catharsis and Abhinav Gupta's *vimarsh bhav* is possible through not only in the *karuna rasa* but also mostly in the *shrungar rasa*. This rasa holds the permanent *bhav* (emotion) of *rati* which has attained a high place in the *navarasa*. As the *hasyarasa* is closely associated with the *shrungaar rasa*, the *rasa nisipatti* and the Catharsis are conceivable in creating a particular situation in drama so that the audience feel sympathetic towards the protagonist getting reflection of his/her own life. The data elicited from the selected Odia comedies were written from 1920 to 2020. The corpus includes the classic comedies such as Bhikari Charan Pattanaik's *Joutuka* (Dowry) (1924), Gopal Chhotray's *Shriharinka Sansar* (Shrihari's World) (1974) and the comedies were considered by the awardees of the Sahitya academy like Chintamani Jena's *Kokua* (The Rumour) (1999), Kruttibasa Naik's *Ocha Mahasangha* (Union of Ocha) (2008), and Ranajit Pattanaik's *Nakata Chitrakar* (The Nameless Painter

(1989), and etc. In this paper, we want to discuss how wit and humor have an important role to determine the Catharsis. At the same line, comedy and tragedy are intended to be demonstrated here.

KEYWORDS: Catharsis, Comedy, Odia Comedies, Tragedy, and *saadharanikaran*

SREENATH VS, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IISER Bhopal

Tamāśa and Śuddhahāsyam: Understanding the Dynamics of Humor in Mimicry

ABSTRACT: The popular art which emerged in Kerala during the 1970s was perceived by the cultural elite as the inferior Other of high art. Although it was considered inferior to high culture, the popular art in Kerala was never a monolithic entity wherein all the artforms enjoyed the same social status. A detailed exploration of the popular art in Kerala shows us that a particular section of popular art in the state, which I hereafter call 'the dominant popular,' always tried to create an 'inferior Other' for itself. One such art form which is branded inferior popular is the art form called Mimicry. Mimicry is an extremely popular art form where artists imitate the voices and mannerisms of famous people, such as politicians, celebrities, and other public figures. Although imitation is the cynosure of this art form, it also included comedy skits. In spite of the fact that it contributed a large number of actors to popular Malayalam cinema, the general attitude of a section of popular cinema in Kerala towards mimicry was condescending. The factor which made mimicry an inferior form of art was its special use of humor which was distinct from *śuddha hāsyā*. In response to the perceived 'inferior' status attributed to Mimicry, numerous artists within this genre embarked on a deliberate journey to elevate their art form by incorporating elements of 'Sanskritization.' This paper seeks to delve into the nuanced aspects, exploring the underlying ideological framework of 'śuddha hāsyam,' as well as the distinctive brand of 'inferior humor' or 'hasya' that characterizes Mimicry. In this paper, I also argue that while the lower-caste status of practitioners of Mimicry is often considered a significant factor contributing to the inferior status of this art form, it is not the sole determinant which is positioning it at the lower-rung of the cultural hierarchy.

KEYWORDS: Tamāśa, Śuddhahāsyam, Mimicry, Inferior Popular, Sanskritization

GARIMA HARINIWAS TIWARI, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat

Exploring Wit, Humor, and Hasya Rasa in Mahesh Dattani's Plays

ABSTRACT: This research paper explores the intricate relationship between wit, humour, and the traditional Indian dramatic element – *Hasya Rasa*, as shown in the plays of Mahesh Dattani. This research seeks to conduct a thorough examination of *On a Muggy*

Night in Mumbai and *The Big Fat City* in order to explore the wit as a means of humour and adds to the evocation of *Hasya Rasa*. This study also examines the cultural and linguistic aspects of wit and humour along with social and psychological ramifications of humour in the plays revealing the playwright's perceptive insights into human behaviour and society interactions. Moreover, the research explores the performative dimensions of wit and humour, examining the involvement of performers, directors, and the audience in the manifestation of comic components within theatrical productions. This study provides a comprehensive comprehension of the interconnections among wit, humour, and *Hasya Rasa* in the plays of Mahesh Dattani.

KEYWORDS: Wit, Humour, *Rasa*, *Hasya Rasa*, Mahesh Dattani

SESSION 8B SERIOUSLY FUNNY: DISABILITY & THE POWER OF HUMOUR

Time: 03:15 – 04:15 PM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: FATIMA RIZVI, Professor, Department of English & Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

YUSUF AYAZ, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University, Lucknow

The Fool-Lunatic Complex: A Study of Humour and Madness in Renaissance Society

ABSTRACT: "If it [what is ugly] is concealed, it must be uncovered in the light of the comic way of looking at things." – Sigmund Freud. The 'fool-lunatic complex,' as this paper identifies it, refers to a discursive and material space involving cultural and medical narratives concerning the figure of the Fool and the psychopathologically insane during the Renaissance. It provides a polyphonic structure for the nexus of humor and madness, co-existing within the paradigm in a state of constant interaction. Enid Welsford describes the Fool as, "a man who falls below the average human standard, but whose defects have been transformed into a source of delight, a mainspring of comedy." This transformation of disability into a culturally acceptable and socially useful discourse, through wit and humor, is however, inaccessible to the clinically insane. Although, both the Fool and the Madman fall outside the domain of 'normalcy,' the former simultaneously subverts and reinforces his deformity through comedy, while the lunatic remains either silent or unheard. The Fool is laughed at and laughed with, but the Madman, who lacks the agency of humor, incites feelings of dread, repulsion and pity. The official truth-telling buffoon, speaking in jokes and jibes, becomes the socially accepted mouthpiece of madness. This paper intends to unearth and explore the idea of wit and humor in relation to the 'fool-lunatic complex' in Renaissance literature and society. It will situate and conceptualize humor within the complex and study its relationship with the Fool, holding it responsible for both, his social inclusion and exclusion. It will assess

its intrinsicity to the power dynamics and social orientation of the paradigm. Additionally, this paper will present a theoretical and literary exploration of the role humor plays in the dichotomous synthesis of sense/nonsense, sanity/insanity, laughter/repulsion within the Fool's existence in Renaissance society. The ontology of humor will be explored vis-à-vis the Fool by using the theoretical propositions of Freud, Jean Paul Richter, Kuno Fischer and Theodor Lipps.

KEYWORDS: Fool, Madness, Humor, Renaissance

DEEPANWITA DEY, PhD Candidate, Department of Liberal Arts, IIT Bhilai

Madness, Humour and Trauma in Jerry Pinto's *Em and the Big Hoom*

ABSTRACT: Jerry Pinto's *Em and the Big Hoom* (2012) portrays the unusual relationships of the Mendes family living in a 1-BHK flat in Bombay. The fragmented and non-linear structure of the text depicts the struggles of the narrator grappling with the unknown mental disorder afflicting his mother, Em. Em's madness, eccentric nature, suicidal attempts and paranoia dictate the mood and atmosphere of the Mendes household, characterised by cyclic disruption of everyday life alternating between episodes of sanity and insanity, stability and instability, and chaos and order. These disruptions also get mapped onto the narrative tone and structure of the text, oscillating between the comic and the catastrophic, the coherent and the incoherent, and the traumatic and the humorous. This paper seeks to examine the role of humour in articulating and addressing the everyday experiences of living with madness and trauma, and how these traumatic experiences lead to the emergence of humour in unforeseen and unexpected ways in the narrative. While the text figures various instances of humour ranging from Em's garrulous conversations laced with sexual expletives and innuendos, comic imagery and wordplay, and amusing situations arising from misunderstandings ensuing from Em's madness, this humour often uncomfortably intermingles with trauma, acquiring a disparaging tone veering into the grave and the tragic. Drawing on insights from trauma theory and J.L. Austin's theory of speech acts, the paper will examine these tensions between the comic and the catastrophic, the horrific and the hilarious, as the dissociative and disintegrating effects of madness and trauma are mitigated through the use of humour in the text. Although humour and trauma might appear as seemingly disparate elements at first glance, the paper contends that humour operates as a speech act, both embodying and enacting the destabilising and disruptive effects of madness and trauma, which enables the forging of empathetic entanglements within the text.

KEYWORDS: Humour, Madness, Mental illness, Trauma

JAYA SARKAR, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Sciences, MLR Institute of Technology, Hyderabad

Crip Humour: Exploring Subversion of Stereotypical Portrayals of Laughter at the Impaired

ABSTRACT: The proposed paper demonstrates how Sybil Lamb's *I've Got a Time Bomb* (2014) and Brian Koukol's *Handicapsules: Short Stories of Speculative Crip Lit* (2021) use crip humour to antagonise and illustrate crippled individuals with all of their inherent foibles in the same way as those with chronic good health. This paper will demonstrate how these two texts differ from the conventional forms of disability literature, specifically in the manner they use literary techniques, such as humour and fantasy, to subvert traditional disability tropes and create an unnerving effect on the readers. The proposed paper aims to demonstrate how the characters do not evoke empathy from the readers; instead, they use sarcastic humour to break down the binaries of good/evil, able-bodied/disabled, and human/non-human. They do not represent the cheerful sage notion of disabled characters and instead are portrayed as unlikable, lazy, and selfish. By engaging with Matt Franks's crip/queer aesthetics, Eli Clare's and Teresa Milbrodt's theories of crip humor, and Ryan Parrey's concept of ontological disorientation, the proposed paper will analyse how crip humour has the potential to surprise and shock the listeners, prompting them to consider alternative perspectives and understandings. It creates a discomfort within the audience that inherently interrogates their perspectives of able-bodiedness. Further, it articulates the explicit awareness of multiple embodiments and challenges the standardisation of what is called normal bodies. It suddenly brings the audience's attention to something that previously had not caught their attention and, in the process, leads to their ontological disorientation. The paper will analyse how different characters like Sybil, Sissy, Moscow, and Peder use crip humour for emancipatory purposes, and at the same time, they are also able to present an insider perspective, blurring the boundaries of the normative/non-normative binary through varied modes of embodiment that challenge overstated theories of crip and impairment. By shifting from the object of the joke to that of the creator of the joke, they slip constructive images of non-normativity into mainstream culture.

KEYWORDS: Crip Lit, Brian Koukol, Sybil Lamb, crip humour, crip time

SESSION 8C HILARIOUS HOOT: THE SITCOM SPECTACLE

Time: 03:15 – 04:15 PM

Venue: D-101

Chair: **KAVYA KRISHNA KR**, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanistic Studies, IIT (BHU), Varanasi

SOUMYANEEL DASGUPTA, Research Assistant, IIM Calcutta

Interrogating the Transformative Poetics of Sitcoms: Humour as a Medium of Resistance and Transgression in *Seinfeld* and *Young Sheldon*

ABSTRACT: This paper seeks to address how comedy as an art form subverts stereotypes, tries to dismantle existing social hierarchies, and challenges dominant

discourses of gender, class, and race. Taking *Seinfeld* and *Young Sheldon*, two of the most popular sitcoms in contemporary times, as case studies, I would attempt to investigate the poetics of sitcoms: how they use wit and mockery as a transformative mass medium, how they break down familiar social patterns, and how they simultaneously reinforce and challenge certain structures of power and social hierarchy. In *Seinfeld*, often regarded as a 'show about nothing', I would look into how it transformed the signification of sitcoms in our everyday lives, by including 'the everyday' and the banality of human existence, and using mockery and disparaging humour to critique capitalism and materialism in contemporary America, and emphasise the need for communality. I would also analyse how *Seinfeld*, as a work of meta-fiction, addresses the process of how laughter is produced, the politics of who is laughing and who is being laughed at, and articulates the agency of marginalised characters in transgressing social taboos. In *Young Sheldon*, a period piece about a childhood prodigy struggling to assimilate in family and society, I would investigate how it challenges oppressive discourses of patriarchy, racism, and class inequality, and articulates its own discourses of class, gender, and ethnicity that are liberating and empathetic. I would also seek to understand *Young Sheldon* from the perspective of meta-disparagement humour, which pretends to reinforce stereotypes, but is actually deconstructing it. In both these sitcoms, I would be analysing how they ruptured and transformed the genre of sitcom itself. The central journey of this paper is to document the role of popular culture in using wit and humour as a transgressive, transformative tool of resistance and subversion.

KEYWORDS: Humour, transgression, rupture, transformation

CHITRA BAJPAI, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English & Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

The Big Bang Theory: The Verbal Humour in Television Sitcoms

ABSTRACT: The subject matter pertaining to verbal humour has recently attracted considerable attention and brought about extensive discourse within the scholarly community. *The Big Bang Theory*, an esteemed American sitcom, has garnered widespread acclaim. The focal point of the television series predominantly centers on a collective of five individuals who inhabit the locale of Pasadena, California. The narrative derives its comedic impact from the juxtaposition of the contrasting attributes exhibited by the four male characters, who are distinguished by their Greek lineage and intellectual acumen, with Penny's proficiency in navigating social dynamics and employing practical reasoning. The primary objective of this paper is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of verbal humour within the popular sitcom, *The Big Bang Theory*. This endeavour will be accomplished by employing the theoretical framework of memetics, thereby expanding upon previous scholarly investigations conducted in this particular domain. The paper commences by providing an all-encompassing explication and delineation of linguistic humour, subsequently followed by a sweeping overview of the memetic theory. Moreover, the paper will direct its attention towards the various elements that contribute to the intricate formation of humour, while simultaneously delving into the intricate process of humour generation, all through the insightful perspective of memetics. In the

summation, the paper's author articulates the aspiration that this scholarly article could foster a heightened understanding for the utilisation of linguistic humour within the realm of American sitcoms.

KEYWORDS: Language, Verbal humour, Study, Memetics, Communication, Culture, Technology, New media, Performing arts

ROLI MISHRA, Assistant Professor of English, Amity University Patna; and
ARUNDHATI SHARMA, Assistant Professor of English, Amity University Patna

A Theoretical Analysis: Unravelling the Quantum of Femininity in *The Big Bang Theory*

ABSTRACT: In this analytical expose, we delve into the highly popular television series, *The Big Bang Theory*, unearthing the subtle yet dynamic interplay of gender representations embodied by the three central female characters: Penny, Bernadette, and Amy. Utilizing a comedic backdrop, the series cunningly presents a layered exploration of contemporary femininity, intertwining stereotypes, reversals, and complex human experiences that escape normative categorizations. Penny, the aspiring actress turned successful sales representative, illuminates the transformation from the traditional 'dumb blonde' trope into a formidable, independent woman. Bernadette's petite stature and pixie voice, seemingly suggestive of fragility, masterfully contradict the stereotypes as she manifests as a powerhouse, a successful microbiologist, and a domineering partner. Amy, initially introduced as a socially awkward neurobiologist, embodies an intriguing amalgamation of intellect, evolving femininity, and burgeoning sexual agency. Amidst laugh tracks and comedic sketches, *The Big Bang Theory* utilizes wit and humor to dissect and portray complex gender dynamics. The female protagonists aren't mere comedic elements but are instrumental in delineating a narrative that oscillates between conforming to and subverting traditional gender roles. Each character, meticulously carved, manifests a unique trajectory illuminating the intersectionality of femininity in a world hitherto dominated by the eccentric geniuses of male counterparts. In essence, the series curates a nuanced dialogue around gender, opening up spaces for the dissection of traditional and contemporary femininity. The whimsical and witty narrative, laden with scientific jargon and geeky antics, serves as a conduit to explore, challenge, and celebrate the multifaceted representations of women in the STEM field and beyond. Each laugh, each punchline, subtly encapsulating the seismic shifts and perennial constants in the gender discourse of the 21st century.

KEYWORDS: *The Big Bang Theory*, Wit, Humour, Femininity

Day 3: Saturday, 17 February 2024

SESSION 9A FOLK FUNNIES: WIT IN TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCES

Time: 09:00 – 10:00 AM

Venue: DLT-9

Chair: SUSAN S DEBORAH, Assistant Professor & Faculty In-charge,
Department of English, MES College, Goa University

ANSHIKA NIRANJAN, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Modern Indian Languages
and Literary Studies, University of Delhi

**Humour in Marriage Folk Songs of Bundelkhand Region: with Special Reference to
Districts Jalaun and Hamirpur**

ABSTRACT: India is a composite of different regions and every region has a particular culture of folklore. Bundelkhand is among such regions. Bundelkhand region covers some districts of Madhya Pradesh and some of Uttar Pradesh. Districts Jalaun and Hamirpur belonging to Uttar Pradesh are among them. Folklore represents the socio-cultural aspects, knowledge and experiences derived from a particular region. Folklore of any region has a limited reach but somehow it possesses a universal appeal. It presents common and daily life through its contents. Agricultural context, seasons and geography of a particular region, turmoil and psychology borne out of it and many more aspects also find their representation in folklore. There is an abundance of contents in traditional folklore of Bundelkhand, which consists of songs, dances, plays, proverbs and riddles. Mostly songs, dances and plays are performed during festivals such as Deepawali, Holi, Navratri and on special occasions such as marriage and childbirth. Some forms are 'Faag' songs that belong to Holi, 'Deewari Naach' for Deepawali, 'Achari' songs for Navratri, 'Sohre' songs for Childbirth, 'Gari' and 'Dadra' songs for the occasion of marriage. This paper aims to focus on folk songs pertaining to the occasion of marriage and having mainly three sub categories, namely, 'Banna/Banni', 'Gari' and 'Dadra'. 'Banna/Banni' are pre-wedding songs which are sung to tease the bride and the groom. 'Gari' songs are sung during marriage rituals and Dadra is sung after the marriage. All these songs contain joy and humour and make the marriage function lively. The paper will try to discuss socio-cultural elements and characteristics of these songs sung particularly in District Jalaun and Hamirpur.

KEYWORDS: humour, folklore, wedding songs, socio-cultural elements

MEGHAL KARKI, Ph.D. Candidate, School of Letters, Ambedkar University Delhi

Rethinking Humour, Licence and the Carnavalesque in the Indian Context, with Reference to Kumaoni Holi

ABSTRACT: Bakhtin's conception of the carnivalesque has been one of the most significant contributions towards studies of festivities, and has enabled us to understand celebrations and the inversions and suspensions that accompany them in great detail. Research on the festival of Holi in particular has been conducted through the lens of the carnivalesque. However, as Bakhtin's ideas about the carnivalesque have been shaped by a certain socio-cultural context and milieu, uncritical applications of the same are inadequate to capture the nuances of the festival and are often detrimental to research. The profanation, free interaction between people and the carnivalistic *mésalliances* that are vital to understand the carnivalesque are often missing in Indian contexts, or even when they do, they are bound by certain regulations. While Holi certainly has incidents of role reversals, elements of licence, and is framed by the spirit of burying the old and starting anew, hierarchies in caste, class and gender roles exist and are maintained during the festival. Even wit and humour in the licentious space of Holi, which are radically subversive, is often restricted to the traditionally defined joking relationships, such as the *devar-bhabhi* and *jeeja-saali* relationships. However, this does not mean to argue that there is no possibility of resistance and subversion. This paper will make an attempt to highlight the pertinent need to adapt ideas about licence and the carnivalesque to the Indian context, through Holi celebrations and folk songs in the Kumaon Himalayas, and engage with Holi's subversive space that is not openly confrontative, but is still temporally distinct in its expectations, demands and norms of behaviour, and has radical potential that has been actualised in several settings. The ideas put forward will be supplemented by personal interviews and participant observation, conducted during the years 2022 and 2023.

KEYWORDS: Holi, licence, folk songs, women, festival

BHUMIKA SINGH, Ph.D. Candidate, School of Letters, Ambedkar University Delhi

Unmasking Wit and Humour: Investigation of Wit and Humour in Select Mask Traditions of India

ABSTRACT: The Mask traditions in India offer a fascinating avenue for exploring the rich interplay of wit and humour within the country's diverse cultural tapestry. This abstract aims to summarise a comprehensive investigation into the use of wit and humour in select mask traditions of India, shedding light on the multifaceted aspects of these cultural expressions. In this paper, I will attempt to delve into various regional mask traditions, with a focus on specific examples such as the "Mukha Bhaona" masks of Majuli (Assam), the "Chhau" masks of West Bengal, and the masks used in Manipur employed during the "Ras Lila" performances. These traditions represent distinct styles, each contributing to the broader narrative of wit and humour in Indian mask culture. The research shall explore how humour is manifested through these masks, ranging from exaggerated facial expressions and body movements displayed in physical comedy to clever nuisances added in the performances and satirical undertones. Furthermore, the investigation highlights the role of wit and humour as a means of both entertainment and

social commentary. In traditional "Ras Lila" performances, for instance, divine characters use wit and humour to engage the audiences, alongside conveying intricate social, spiritual and philosophical messages. Similarly, masks in "Chhau" dance and "Mukha Bhaona" performances incorporate playful elements that entertain and challenge the audience's perceptions of folklore. I will also recognise the significance of cultural context in the interpretation of humour, and the variation based on the respective mask traditions. The research methodology shall involve a combination of qualitative analysis, fieldwork, and interviews with artists, scholars, and audiences, providing insights into the perception and the impact of humour of these mask traditions. In conclusion, this paper will present a nuanced exploration of this age-old cultural phenomenon. This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted role of wit and humour in the mask traditions of India, revealing their enduring relevance and captivating appeal.

KEYWORDS: Indian Mask Traditions, Wit and Humour, Mukha Bhaona Masks, Chhau Dance & Ras Lila Performances

SESSION 9B HUMOUR IN THE FOLK TRADITIONS OF BENGAL

Time: 09:00 – 10:00 AM

Venue: DLT-10

Chair: SWATI PAL, Professor of English & Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi

SANJUKTA NASKAR, Associate Professor, Department of English, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi

The Cult of Baul in Contemporary Times

ABSTRACT: Baul is one of the most popular genres of folk culture performed by itinerant singers, troubadours or minstrels of Bengal. Emerging from the Bhakti movement Baul songs and singers have carved out a niche for themselves and continues to maintain its popularity even today. For Tagore the Baul represented one of the most authentic representations of an innocent and untouched Bengali culture untainted by contemporary influences. This was naturally aligned to the nationalist agenda of cultural nationalisms. Tagore was also one of the foremost advocates of Baul among the intellectual class and has used Baul tunes, images and metaphors in his songs and compositions. Baul is one of the important living traditions of Bengal that was based on the mystic and the devotional. Songs composed by Baul singers, usually a lonely figure, aimed for divine love. Despite the influence of Tagore the Baul's reputation was over a period of time denigrated due to neglect and abuse by the intellectual mainstream. In contemporary times however, Baul has reinvented itself through commercial activities and due to its interaction with the milieu and has become an important part of cultural tourism. The article intends to analyse the historical and social importance of Baul and specifically probe into the means and manner of revival in recent times. By looking at

songs by Bauls I will try to configure the possible areas of corruption or retention (as the case may be) of the cult of Baul. In fact, contemporary reinvention of this dynamic oral culture will also probe into the question of corruption and commercialisation, the latter being necessary of survival of Bengali esoteric songs from the past.

KEYWORDS: Folk Culture, Baul, Bhakti Movement, Cultural tourism

MIR MASUDUL HOQUE, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University

The Folk Carnavalesque: Resistance and Subversive Wit in Bengal's Alkap Tradition

ABSTRACT: Alkap, a distinctive form of folk theatre encompassing a vibrant amalgamation of dance, drama, and music, shares its roots with the Jatra tradition. As an indigenous performing art, it once enjoyed widespread popularity in specific districts of West Bengal and Bangladesh, as well as regions spanning Jharkhand and Bihar. Historically, Alkap has served as a source of entertainment for rural communities, captivating audiences with its portrayals of mythological narratives, social injustices, and a myriad of intriguing everyman subjects. However, Alkap's original charm lay in its capacity for subversion and resistance, as it artfully mimicked the kings and landlords, challenged gender norms through cross-dressing, and infused performances with elements of sexual innuendo, profligate colloquialism, etc. Although the Alkap tradition has largely faded into obscurity, its significance as a platform for social commentary remains paramount within the socio-political matrix of rural Bengal. Through a comprehensive exploration of historical and contemporary Alkap theatre and by analysing the carnivalesque characteristics such as wit, humour, satire, and parody within Alkap performances, this paper explores how Alkap theatre serves as an artistic medium for the expression of social critique and cultural resilience against dominant ideologies and power structures. Furthermore, this research delves into the ways in which Alkap theatre adapts to contemporary socio-economic and political contexts, continuing to be a dynamic force of folk carnivalesque. In conclusion, the study underscores the imperatives for the preservation and revitalisation of this tradition, recognising its potential not only as a source of entertainment but also as a means to foster critical dialogue and societal transformation within rural communities.

KEYWORDS: Alkap, carnivalesque, resistance, preservation

SUBHANKAR DUTTA, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Bombay

Performance and the Comic Replicas: Humour and Social Satire in the Sawng Jatra of Gajan Festival

ABSTRACT: The hook-swinging festival in Bengal, namely *Gajan*, accounts for a performative mode of cultural transmission where the *sawng jatra* comes as a vibrant articulated expression sketched and manifested in satirical and humorous performances. *Sawng* is primarily a musical and dramatic dance display with poems, riddles, replicas, and figures. *Gajan* is a pre-harvest yearly festival of the rural communities of western Bengal, concentrating on community temples of Shiva, where the devotees and the performing community participate in the *swang* procession by singing in costumes and dancing in the rural 'pantomime.' On the one hand, *sawng jatra* or the *sawng* procession comes with comical and satirical replicas that symbolically criticise various aspects of the community; on the other hand, the procession comes with the narrative retelling of poems loaded with social satire. The paper aims to take a strategic departure from the inscriptional paraphernalia as evidentiary cultural components. Instead, it engages with the question of how the narrative retelling of *sawng* poems and the performance with comic replicas of British sahibs, human genital organs, and others project a mode of indigenous social commentary and criticism. The dancing and singing devotees on the *sawng* procession break the theatrical divide of the ritual space and go beyond the confines of the ritual stage to engage in a ritual-based, embodied, humorous, and satirical tradition that becomes the way of community formation and cultural knowledge transmission in the festival of *Gajan*. Concentrating on the *sawng* procession, its reflections on the oral and performative cultural forms, and its modes of visual imagination and representation, the paper looks into the creative formulation and reformulations of satire and humour in the *sawng*. The paper argues that the recurrence, like the recitation of the poems and the *sawng* performances every year, refers to a mode of communal existence where every single emergence of it through poems or replicas asserts cultural knowledge: satirically coded, humorously performed, mutually shared, and communally associated.

KEYWORDS: *Sawng Jatra*, Satire, Humour, Performance, *Gajan*, Performing Body

SESSION 9C HUMOUR IN THE FOLK TRADITIONS OF GUJARAT

Time: 09:00 – 10:00 AM

Venue: D-101

Chair: PIYUSH RAVAL, Associate Professor, Department of English, Sardar Patel University, Gujarat

ANSHU SURVE, Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat

Harmonizing Humour and Social Critique: A Comprehensive Analysis of Gujarati Dayro

ABSTRACT: This research paper undertakes a comprehensive exploration of Gujarati Dayro, a traditional folk-art form in the state of Gujarat, India, widely recognised for its distinctive amalgamation of humour and social commentary. This research critically

examines the complex dynamics of Dayro performances, elucidating its role as a multifaceted platform for both entertainment and critique. This study examines the presence of wit and humour in the Dayro performances of Kirtidan Gadvi, Geeta Rabari. This study investigates the historical and cultural origins of this particular art form and emphasises its unique significance within the realm of oral storytelling traditions and Indian folklore, primarily concentrating on the manner in which it has evolved and adapted to the modern-day contexts. It examines the various mechanisms employed in the deployment of humour, including wordplay, exaggerated character sketches, and satirical commentary, investigating the cultural and social allusions present in the humour of Dayro artists, analysing how they skilfully navigate between light-hearted entertainment and stimulating critique. The research highlights the multifaceted nature of Dayro, functioning both as a form of amusement and a catalyst for societal introspection, as evidenced by the artistic contributions of these Dayro performers investigating the potential impact of it on its viewers and examining its ability to entertain and stimulate the discussions surrounding societal transformation. This research paper proposes to offer an in-depth and critical analysis of how the Gujarati Dayro showcases its unique blend of humour and social commentary and the ability of the art form to provide entertainment while also functioning as a platform for contemplating current social and cultural dynamics, presenting itself as a captivating perspective to delve into and comprehend the convergence of tradition and modernity in Gujarat, India.

KEYWORDS: Gujarati Dayro, social commentary, satirical commentary, cultural allusions, societal introspection

VARIA DRASHTI RUSHABHBHAI, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat

Delving into the Delicacies of Thought: Wit and Intellectual Profundity in Jhaverchand Meghani's Gujarati Folk Narratives

ABSTRACT: Jhaverchand Meghani, an eminent personality in the domain of Gujarati literature and folklore, stands out as a remarkable figure renowned for his adept utilisation of cleverness and profound intellect within the intricate fabric of his folk narratives. This research explores Meghani's aptitude for imbuing his narratives, particularly in works "A Noble Heritage", "The Shade Crimson" and "A Ruby Shattered" respectively with a remarkable combination of wit and intellectual prowess. These narratives provide a captivating exploration of the folk traditions, culture, and essence of Gujarat, unveiling a distinctive amalgamation of incisive observations and whimsical insight. By employing colloquial dialogues and crafting the development of characters, Meghani adeptly explores the intricacies of human nature, societal hierarchies, and moral ambiguities. This is achieved while upholding a narrative style that effectively combines intellectual rigour with a touch of exuberance and a sense of humour. This analysis aims to shed light on Meghani's literary prowess, highlighting his ability to effectively communicate intricate ideas and intellectual depth through folk narratives. In doing so, he transcends the boundaries of mere storytelling and offers profound insights into the nuances of Gujarati culture and society. The author's narratives, characterised by their

cleverness and profound intellectual exploration, serve to enhance our comprehension of folklore as a means of safeguarding cultural heritage and fostering analytical thinking. In the realm of Gujarati literature, the literary contributions of Jhaverchand Meghani stand as prime examples of the enduring significance of cleverness and intellectual depth within folklore. This research paper proposes to focus on the profound wit and intellectual acumen that infuses his narratives embedded in the rich tapestry of Gujarat's cultural heritage, providing a captivating journey into the heart of region's essence and traditions.

KEYWORDS: Wit, intellectual depth, intellectual rigor, cultural identity, societal hierarchies, moral ambiguities, character development

CD NARASIMHAIAH PRIZE SESSION

Time: 10:15 AM – 12:30 PM

Venue: DLT-9

Chairs: M ASADUDDIN, Former Head, Department of English, and Former Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; and **FATIMA RIZVI**, Professor, Department of English & Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow

SANYOGITA SINGH, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English & Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Humour and Hurt: Narrative as Counter-strategy in Krishan Chander's *Ek Gadhe ki Aatmkatha*

ABSTRACT: In the wake of the multiplying constituency of hurt strategizing humour is a challenge. The future of humour, especially political writing, must be reinvented to remain relevant as a literary mode of intervention. I propose to go back to Krishan Chander's *Ek Gadhe ki Aatmkatha* (1958), a narrative of a beast of burden that carries the charge against deplorable working conditions, desensitised government agencies and undisguised communalism, releasing socio-political frustrations in volatile post-Partition India. The novel becomes a playful site of unforeseen combinations and relations as Gadha takes on the responsibility to secure monetary compensation for his master's loss of life. This quest brings all possible surprises, to the extent of Gadha interviewing Pandit Nehru. Further, the narrative brings forth a strategic mediation—between human/nonhuman, knowledge/ignorance, network/agents—which is both political and aesthetic. Moreover, the colloquial metaphor of *gadha* contrasted with the Gadha, implied author and eponymous protagonist, highlights a linguistic-coded network of meanings. But, Gadha's refined position throughout the novel aims to flatten the hierarchy between various modes of being than promoting divisions. This narrative logic engenders a nuanced sense of humour over sensitive issues like communal violence and systemic disenfranchisement of the working class and lower caste. The paper seeks to argue how

a sustained narrative holds the potential to transform the possibilities of hurt into agential humour, through the deployment of animal metaphor in Krishan Chander's work.

KEYWORDS: narrative, humour, hurt

ASHIMA SHRAWAN, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shri Bhagwan Das Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Haridwar

Deciphering Humour: Exploring the Enigma of *Hasya Rasa* in *Natyashastra*

ABSTRACT: Bharata's *Natyashastra*, an ancient Indian text dating back to approximately 200 BCE to 200 CE, is a comprehensive treatise on the performing arts, encompassing drama, dance, and music. While it is renowned for its detailed guidelines on the aesthetics of performance, it also offers profound insights into the use of wit and humour within the context of Indian dramatic tradition. This abstract explores the role of wit and humour in *Natyashastra*, emphasizing its significance in creating a holistic and engaging theatrical experience. Wit, known as '*Hasya*', and humour, referred to as '*Vyangya*,' are integral elements that serve multiple functions in the *Natya* (drama) segment of the text. Wit is employed as a means of evoking laughter and amusement among the audience, enhancing their emotional engagement with the performance. Bharata's text provides an in-depth analysis of the various types of *hasya rasa* (laughter) and the appropriate situations in which they should be used. Wit is not only about comedic dialogue but also includes physical humour and expressions, making it a versatile tool for actors and playwrights. Humour in *Natyashastra* goes beyond mere laughter; it is an essential vehicle for social commentary and satire. '*Vyangya*' encompasses the art of irony, parody, and sarcasm, allowing the playwrights to criticize societal norms and political structures subtly. This form of humour serves both entertainment and enlightenment, making it a potent medium for conveying important messages while engaging the audience. The *Natyashastra* also delves into the psychological aspects of humour, discussing its impact on human emotions and the balance it brings to the dramatic experience. It emphasizes the need for timing and moderation in the use of wit and humour to ensure that they resonate effectively with the audience. In conclusion, Bharata's *Natyashastra* highlights the profound understanding of wit and humour within the context of performing arts. Wit and humour in this ancient text are not just tools for entertainment but also vehicles for conveying societal, moral, and ethical messages. The exploration of *Hasya* and *Vyangya* within *Natyashastra* provides valuable insights into the timeless art of evoking laughter and thought simultaneously, making it an indispensable resource for contemporary performing arts practitioners and scholars alike.

KEYWORDS: humour, rasa, Bharata, wit, enigma

POOJA DUGGAL, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English and Cultural Studies at Panjab University, Chandigarh

Stand-up Comedy as a Catalyst for Social Change: Wit, Humour and Caste

ABSTRACT: This research paper delves into the world of stand-up comedy as a unique and powerful medium for addressing the deeply entrenched issue of caste in society. Comedy, with its ability to engage, inform, and entertain, serves as a vehicle for presenting social commentary and challenging prevailing stereotypes and norms. This study explores how stand-up comedians employ humour as a means to condemn or challenge the caste system while simultaneously fostering social awareness and change. Comedians including Manjeet Sarkar, Manaal Patil, Prashasti Singh, Varun Grover, Pratyush Chaubey, Samanvay and Sunder Sharma adroitly navigate the intricate discourse surrounding caste through multifaceted comedic narratives. Their acts encompass an array of thematic explorations, ranging from inter-caste marriage, the semiotics of surnames, the nuances of cow protectionism, the intricacies of reservation policies, and a spectrum of sociocultural issues. These comedians, through their unique and insightful comedic approaches, engage with and interrogate the multifarious dimensions of the caste system, challenging conventions, encouraging dialogue, and promoting a deeper societal understanding of these intricate matters. In addition to offering a comprehensive overview of the landscape of caste-related stand-up comedy, this research paper considers the ethical dimensions of using humour to address deeply rooted social issues. It examines the responsibilities of comedians and the role of comedy as both a reflection of and influence on societal attitudes. Ultimately, this study sheds light on the evolving role of stand-up comedy as a catalyst for social change. By investigating how humour can serve as a means of condemning or challenging the caste system and presenting social commentary, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the potential for comedy to influence social perceptions, foster dialogue, and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society.

KEYWORDS: Stand-up comedy, caste system, humour

SRESTHA BHATTACHARYA, M.Phil. Candidate, Department of English, University of Delhi

Humour, Carnavalesque and Counter-Memory in the Literary Works of Suniti Namjoshi

ABSTRACT: This paper proposes to analyze how comic counter-memory operates in Suniti Namjoshi's autofictional memoir, *Suki* (2013). Humorous and yet infused with pathos, the story follows the author reminiscing about her recently departed Lilac Burmese cat, the eponymous Suki. However, instead of 'faithfully' recounting her memories with her beloved pet, Namjoshi, quite literally, endows the latter with her own voice: Suki is a talking cat who engages in both witty banter and deep philosophical conversations with the narrator. Playful and independent, Suki repeatedly questions the narrator's biases and assumptions towards her and her species in these conversations. Such deployment of humour allows Namjoshi to eschew conventional realism, including the faithful representation of time, space, and events, in a matter-of-fact way. This, I argue, enables Namjoshi to introduce in her narrative elements of what Mikhail Bakhtin has termed the "carnavalesque" — a topsy-turvy world order where conventional rules

and hierarchies are subverted in favour of a more unrestricted spirit. By foregrounding the individuality of a non-human animal (who, notably, is female), Namjoshi encourages her readers to look past their own prejudices and acknowledge the perspectives of the 'other' as valid. As my paper will demonstrate, this is in line with what Namjoshi seeks to undertake in what is arguably her most famous work—*Feminist Fables* (1981)—where age-old myths, legends and fairy tales are retold in a way that questions their patriarchal biases.

KEYWORDS: humour, carnivalesque, counter-memory, narrative empathy, autofiction

TASNIM NAZIFA CHOUDHURY, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Delhi

The Construction of the Comic Frame in Stand-Up Comedy

ABSTRACT: Mary Douglas' looks at what different spaces does to a body, how certain "space/cultures call upon our bodies to be articulated extremely precisely, while others allow it to relax into relative inarticulate formlessness" (Brady 2018). A dedicated space for stand-up as described above creates a particular set of expectations, which can be antithetical or incompatible to the norm of the world outside this frame. The use of the term frame is very consciously done. The act of framing can be seen as "placing information in a unique context so that certain elements of the issue get a greater allocation of an individual's cognitive resources" (Pan and Kosicki 1993). Though stand-up mimics an informal social setting, it inhabits the space to become truly social (where the audience shares an equal opportunity to speak up) rather than a bracketed performance through formalized strategies involving the lighting, and the "take-down" of hecklers, etc. The stand-up artist must keep the balance from tipping over, through take-downs, filler jokes, jokes on when jokes do not work, etc., while the audience may sometimes indulge in unruly verbal comments. This paper intends to look at how the space of stand-up comedy is framed in order to house a kind of entertainment, a kind of performance genre, where the standard rules of society are relaxed in many ways, publicly. In other words, the paper seeks to investigate how the space of stand-up comedy that can be associated with heterotopia, or parhhesia (Cantino 2016), and thus at crossroads with the powers that be, through the management of the spatiality and the expectations of the audience creates a frame where the unmentionable aspects of society are openly talked about. However, it must be noted that the construction of such a frame has its limitations and cannot protect the performers beyond a certain extent. The paper also intends to highlight how and why the frame fails.

KEYWORDS: comic, frame, subversion, reception, space

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