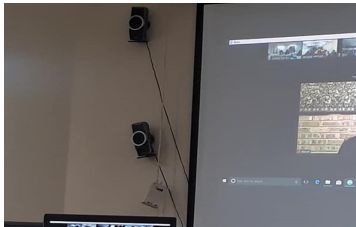


<p style="text-align: center;">ComplutBharati E-newsletter of Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana Visva-Bharati</p>	<p>Issue 1 (Jan-Apr 2019)</p> <hr/> <p>April 15, 2019 ১ বৈশাখ, ১৩২৬</p>
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From the Office Desk

On its sixth year, the Centre for Comparative Literature (CCL) begins this attempt to document its works, which has been made possible due to the effort of our students and scholars. The development of this Centre has been a very small, but significant, step in the astounding journey of Comparative Literature in India. The e-newsletter is one attempt to document that history, which – like any other history – is fraught with its own failures and triumphs. This e-newsletter chronicles the major events at CCL, fully acknowledging that not every incident becomes an ‘event’. The ‘events’, as our readers will notice, are not strictly academic, but rather events which contribute to our understanding of reality and its representation. This is an effort to showcase the events, and also to facilitate questioning that very process of ‘showcasing’ and ‘doing’ within the practice of Comparative Literature. Therefore, besides giving our well-wishers a cursory glimpse into the kind of work CCL is involved with, the e-newsletter will also help us in reflecting on our own work, perhaps for betterment. To this latter end, we would be delighted to have suggestions from our readers. Any comments/ suggestions/ questions may be directed to cclvbu@gmail.com.



International Webinar on “Organised Higher Academics in South Asian Perspectives: Changing Perspectives”

Sounak Dutta

Centre for Comparative Literature had collaborated with Sarsuna College, West Bengal, to organise an International Webinar on "Organised Higher Academics in South Asia: Changing Perspectives" during February 25 and 26, 2019. The event was sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research, and there were several other academic collaborators who had participated from their own institutes and the entire event took place online. Discussions were centered on the uses of the online aid in higher academics. Panelists spoke on their understanding of 'Digitisation of Folk Texts', 'Post-Colonial Digital Humanities' etc. Professor Saikat Maitra, Vice-chancellor of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology, West Bengal, delivered the key note address. Professor Dipesh Chakraborty, from the University of Chicago spoke on 'Humanities in the Age of Big Data' in the Indian subcontinent.

A One-day Symposium on “Comparative Literature: The Indian Scenario”

Ishani Dutta



The Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati organised a one-day Symposium titled ‘Comparative Literature Today: The Indian Scenario’ on March 25, 2019.

Dr. Soma Mukherjee and Dr. Dheeman Bhattacharyya were the coordinators. The symposium was organized with the aim to bring together Comparative Literature departments across West

Bengal in order to discuss about the state of the discipline in the country with specific focus on the three departments – Department of Comparative Indian Language and Literature, University of Calcutta; Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University; and Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati. Professor Rambahal Tiwari, Retired Professor, Bengali Department, Visva-Bharati, inaugurated the symposium.

The first session titled “CL Researchers at Work” was moderated by Prof. Mrinmoy Pramanik, Head, Department of Comparative Indian Language and Literature, Calcutta University; and was responded by Ms. Supriya Bannerjee, PhD Scholar of the Centre for Comparative Literature. In this Session, M.Phil. and PhD scholars from the three departments gave a general outline of the research that they are pursuing, in the process of which a discussion about the Comparative methodology that is being employed by them was significant. The speakers were Dishari Mukherjee (M.Phil) and Uttara Mitra (M.Phil) from the University of Calcutta. Rakesh Kaibartya (Ph.D) and Ishani Dutta (Ph.D) from Visva-Bharati and Urmi Sengupta (Ph.D) from Jadavpur University.

The second session titled “Comparative Literature Pedagogy: The Classroom Story” was moderated by Sri Gyanendra Mani Pradhan, Guest Faculty of the Centre for Comparative Literature, and was responded by Sri Sounak Dutta, M.Phil. Scholar of the Centre for Comparative Literature. This session, as the name suggests, talked about the classroom scenario in the three Comparative Literature departments mentioned earlier. Many speakers in this session took up issues regarding the formulation of their respective departments, as well as the politics and problematics of their respective syllabi. The speakers were Madhurima Majumdar (BA) and Rhitama Basak (MA) from Jadavpur University, Ayan Ghosh (M.Phil) from the University of Calcutta, Nabil Jahangir (MA), Deeya Bandyopadhyay (M.Phil) and Ankana Bag (M.Phil) from Visva-Bharati.

The third and final session, moderated by Dr. Nilanjana Bhattacharya, Teacher in Charge of the Centre for Comparative Literature, was a Roundtable discussion on the state of the discipline with all the participants of the Symposium that ranged from BA students to PhD scholars to professors. This session took up major issues related to the discipline and challenges that the discipline faces in the country owing to the multiplicity of languages, voices and identities. The importance of translation was also touched upon in the course of this session. The event ended with the vote of thanks by the coordinators.



Carca: Exercise in Comparativisms (A Monthly Lecture Series)

From January 2019 to March 2019

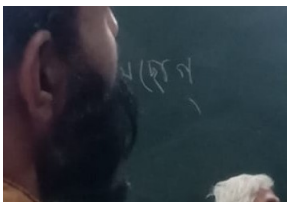
Ankana Bag

The Centre for Comparative literature, Bhasha-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati arranged the first *Carca* of 2019 on January 29. The theme of *Carca* for this year traces the origin and history of the various disciplines and departments within Visva-Bharati. The first lecture was delivered by Dr. Abhijit Banerji, Head of the Department, Cheena Bhavana. The title of his lecture was ‘*Visva-Bharati Cheena Bhavana: Pioneering in Fostering India-China Relations*’. The Cheena Bhavana

or the official Department for Chinese language study was established in 1937.



The second *Carca* lecture on February 23, 2019 was delivered by Dr. Gita Keeni, Head of the Department, Nippon Bhavana. The title of her lecture was '*The Journey towards a Discipline: Japanese Language in Santiniketan*'. The Department of Japanese was established much later after the study of Japanese language had already begun among students of Santiniketan. The official Department was established in 1994.



The third *Carca* lecture on March 29, 2019 was delivered by Dr. Suniti Kumar Pathak, Retired professor, Department of Indo-Tibetan. The title of his lecture was '*Bharat o Bhota Bidya Carca Visva-Bharati te*'. The Department is named 'Indo-Tibetan' instead of only 'Department of Tibetan' because the studies mainly focused on the Buddhist texts that had reached Tibet from India at some point of time, thereby archeologising the Indian Buddhism in the Tibetan texts.

Ongoing Research Work at Centre for Comparative Literature

গবেষকের উপস্থাপনা: রাকেশ কৈবর্ত

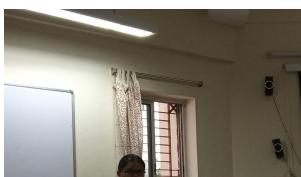
নাবিল জাহাঙ্গীর



গত ১৫ই ফেব্রুয়ারি তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য কেন্দ্র ভাষা ভবন, বিশ্বভারতীর নিয়মিত কার্যক্রমের অংশ হিসেবে গবেষকের বিশেষ উপস্থাপনা অনুষ্ঠান আয়োজিত হয়। উক্ত অনুষ্ঠানে রাকেশ কৈবর্ত নিজ গবেষণার উপর, "লোকনাট্য আলকাপ ও বহুরূপী: লিঙ্গ পরিচয়ের নির্মাণ-বিনির্মাণ" শিরোনামে, বক্তব্য উপস্থাপন করেন। অনুষ্ঠানটিতে তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য

কেন্দ্রের শিক্ষক, শিক্ষার্থী ও গবেষকগণ সকলে অংশগ্রহণ করেন।

রাকেশ কৈবর্তের বক্তব্যে লোকনাট্যের অর্থ, লিঙ্গ নির্মাণের ধারণা, জেন্ডার, সেক্স, সেক্সুয়ালিটি প্রভৃতি তত্ত্ব ও উল্লেখিত নাট্য বর্গদুটির উৎপত্তিস্থল, শিল্পীদের সামাজিক ও অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থান, নাট্যের সংজ্ঞায়ন ও গঠনের মত বিষয় সমূহ পর্যালোচিত হয়। তিনি বৈঠকী গান ও আলকাপে ছোঁকরা-শিল্পীদের অবস্থান নির্ণয়পূর্বক লিঙ্গপরিচয় নির্মাণ-বিনির্মাণ সম্পর্কিত তাঁর গবেষণালব্ধ মতামত উপস্থাপন করেন এবং আলকাপের সময়কালকে তিনটি পর্যায়ে বিভক্তের স্বপক্ষে যুক্তি তুলে ধরেন। এছাড়াও তিনি গবেষণায় তুলনামূলক মেথডোলজির ব্যবহার ও গবেষণার প্রাসঙ্গিকতার বিষয়ে আলোচনা করেন। বক্তব্য শেষে দর্শকদের অংশগ্রহণে মন্তব্য ও প্রশ্নোত্তরপর্ব অনুষ্ঠিত হয়।



Presentation by a Researcher: Anita Gua Hembrom

Deeya Bandyopadhyay

On March 17, 2019 Anita Gua Hembrom made a presentation on her research findings. Her work is titled '*Contemporary Santali Literature: A Literary History from Below*'. Smt. Hembrom began by relating two

incidents from her past which had made her reflect on her ethnicity as a Santal. She introduced a few landmark incidents in Santal history. She discussed in some detail the following issues – Hool (1855-1856), the rise of Sidho-Kanhu and the arrival of the Christian missionaries in 1867, the formation of the Ol Chiki script, etc. She also spoke on the establishment of the first Santal printing press in 1874. Giving us a basic idea on the annexation of Santal lands and lives, Smt. Hembrom pointed out the efforts of the missionaries to learn the Santal ways of living (from their own European positionality) and interpolating the folklores. Smt. Hembrom discussed following extra and intra literary events to formulate her thesis. The events are - Kherwal movement (1871), Bengal famine (1874), first book on Santal folktales (1890), first book on Santal Grammar (1899), first Santal book published outside the influence of the missionaries (1895), first translation of Bible (1929) etc. When the presentation was opened for questions, a student curiously pointed out the similarities in the process of colonization of the Santals and the African communities. Smt. Hembrom gave us an interesting view on this – that with the Africans, European languages were imposed but with the Santals, several missionaries learnt their language and started living in the villages, in close proximity to the cultures they were influencing through language and religion. The conversions took place from ‘within’ the community as well.

Current Researchers at CCL	Ongoing Research Works
Supriya Banerjee	‘Devi to Superwoman: A Feminist Reading of Select Graphic Novels of India from 2000-2014’
Rakesh Kaibartya	‘ভারতীয় লোকনাট্য: লিঙ্গ পরিচয়ের নির্মাণ-বিনির্মাণ’
Anita Gua Hembrom	‘Contemporary Santhali Literature: A Historiography from “Below”
Purbita Garai	‘Rabindranath Tagore’s <i>Byangakoutuk</i> : An Annotated Translation and Critical Introduction’
Ishani Dutta	‘Of Recitals and Performances: Reading New Literary Trends and Genres in Contemporary Indian Nepali Poetry in the Darjeeling Hills and Sikkim (1980-Present)’
Sounak Dutta	‘Narrative Continuity of a Transient: Contact between History and Literature in the Tebhaga Peasants’ Movement (1946-1949) in Bengal’
Ankana Bag	‘Negotiating <i>Meiji-Taisho</i> Japan in Dominant Discourse through the Travel-writings of Isabella Bird, Hariprabha Takeda, Abala Basu and Sarojnalini Dutta’
Deeya Bandyopadhyay	‘A History of a Discourse in ‘Obscenity’ in Bengali Literature of the Nineteenth Century’

Special Lecture by Professor Rimli Bhattacharya

Supriya Banerjee



The lecture, part of the special lectures conducted by CCL, was delivered to a packed house by Prof. Rimli Bhattacharya, University of Delhi and introduced by the Prof. Abhjit Sen, Principal, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati on January 21, 2019. The lecture was titled ‘Artful Zones in Urban Narratives’. She spoke about the city both as a spatial labyrinth, in the tried and tested forms like pulp fictions, short stories, mysteries, and especially in the female confessional voice. She spoke about the ways the autobiographies of the female actresses were written by the male writers

which had its oeuvre. She finds that by the turn of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century Bangla was spoken by less than half of its total population in Kolkata. In this scenario, there was a marked presence of bilingual practices, mediated by a class structure which was spread across a huge population. She discussed the text *Miss Bankim Binodini* (1890). The basic trajectory that the novel follows is that it creates a continuum between a novel-reading woman, a product of East-West encounter, who fantasizes herself as a central protagonist in a novel. Professor Bhattacharya pointed out Miss Bankim Binodini’s familiarity with the Kalighat ‘pata’ paintings which examine the ‘erotic’. The way all the texts are created are a part of what she refers as an act of looking, a gaze. She referred to Amarendranath Dutta, the dramatist, who translates his text *Abhinetri’s Roop* as Charms of an actress. These challenge the western idea of the gaze, and ideas of narcissism and scopophilia. They are part of a narrative device which is both redemptive and deductive. Technology mediates into the readings that are ocular and regulates the method of reading. The lecture was a great exchange of ideas and an extremely invigorating session.

Special Lecture by Professor Himani Bannerji

Purbita Garai



Professor Bannerji presented her lecture with a vivid study of seventeenth century literary productions to contextualise “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” by Karl Marx on February 18, 2019. For this, she traced a trajectory of transformations of the concepts and positions of history, religion or knowledge in man’s life along with their correlation with the socio-political events. She prepared the audience with the required theoretical premises of Kantian and Hegelian

ideologies to understand Karl Marx and his ideology better. Bannerji also discussed some biographical details of Marx in before probing into the essay published in 1852 in *Die Revolution*, a German monthly magazine. She read out some portions from the essay that was circulated beforehand in a soft format. At the closing point of her lecture, Bannerji mentioned some films which are relevant to estimate the present situation of the country. The ambience of the whole session was interactive and hearty which was highly appreciated by all present there.

Special Lecture by Professor Soumik Nandy Majumdar

Purbita Garai



Dr. Soumik Nandy Majumdar, Department of History of Art, Kala Bhavana, presented a lecture on *Roop Sristi – Naam Bristi: Encountering Rabindranath as a Painter* at the Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, on March 18, 2019. His deliberation was on Rabindranath's own literary works as well as his paintings establishing a dialogue between his own world of creativity. He argued that the vast range and number of his paintings (about 2500 paintings made within 16 years) are better appreciated through intense understanding of the various interfaces of several artistic expressions across his career. While discussing different facets of those paintings,

he reflected on issues like rhythm, ambiguity, the use of light and shade etc., which are related to the overall process of transformation from 'figures' into 'characters'. The slides of the power point presentation he displayed substantiated his points and enhanced the vivacity of the session.

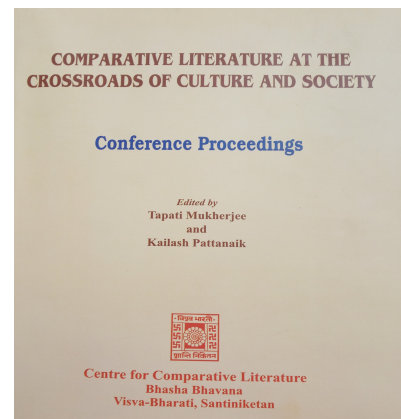
Departmental Projects and Publications

Comparative Literature at the Crossroads of Culture and Society: Conference Proceedings

Edited by Tapati Mukherjee and Kailash Pattanaik

Editorial Assistance: Saptarshi Mallick

Translation project to be undertaken by Ms. Anita Gua Hembrom on the translation of Pt. Raghunath Murmu's plays.



Cine-Carca

From January 2019 to March 2019

Cine Carca 1

Ankana Bag



The Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, has been organising 'Cine Carca' a monthly film screening in the Centre since the beginning of 2019. The purpose of this screening series is to read a variety of film texts and understand the inter-relationships between literature and the other arts. The students select cinemas of their own choice and moderate the event followed by a screening with the AV facilities available with the

Centre. Every month students take turn and volunteer to acquire the film and make posters for it. Till now, three *Cine Carca* have been arranged.

The first *Cine Carca* on February 5, 2019 was moderated by Sounak Dutta, M.Phil student of the Centre for Comparative Literature. The Oscar-awarded documentary *Searching for Sugar Man* (2012), directed and written by Malik Bendjelloul was screened. The film explores the rumours about American musician Rodriguez's death and also, portrays Rodriguez's popularity in Africa during and after Apartheid, while he remained an unknown artist in America.



Cine Carca 2

Ishani Dutta

The second *Cine Carca* on March 3, 2019 was moderated by Ishani Dutta, Ph.D student of the Centre for Comparative Literature. A Nepali documentary originally titled *Naboldai Naboldai* and translated as *Silence Flows: The Life in Margaret's Hope Tea Garden Darjeeling* was screened.

Smt. Dutta started the session by talking about the location of Margaret's Hope which is a Tea Estate that falls in between the City of Kurseong and a very small locality called Jorebunglow. Margaret's Hope is globally known for its first flush Darjeeling teas and is governed in India under the Goodricke and Amgoorie Groups.

Before the main documentary was screened (duration: sixty minutes), a short nine-minute advertisement was also shown to enable to audience to experience the difference between the popular image of Margaret's Hope and the reality of the lives of its tea garden workers.

It was claimed soon after this promotional film released that the workers were forced into saying that all was good in Margaret's Hope or they would face dire consequences. So, left with no choice other than to locally express their anger because no one was willing to listen to the tea garden workers at a pan-Indian level, a few local youths decided to find out the reality of the Tea Estate and about the lives of the tea garden workers. They decided to portray the reality by juxtaposing the film (*Silence Flows*) with a song of hope and suffering that they were simultaneously composing.



Cine Carca 3

রাকেশ কৈবর্ত

তৃতীয় সিনে-চর্চায় (এপ্রিল ৫, ২০১৯) হুমায়ুন আহমেদ রচিত ও পরিচালিত 'ঘেঁটুপুত্র কমলা' (২০১২) নামক সিনেমাটি দেখানো হয়। উপস্থাপনার দায়িত্বে ছিলেন তুলনামূলক সাহিত্যের স্নাতকোত্তরের দ্বিতীয় বর্ষের ছাত্র নাবিল জাহাঙ্গীর।

জাহাঙ্গীর তাঁর ভূমিকাতে দর্শকদের কাছে ঘেঁটুগানের উৎপত্তি, বিষয়বস্তু ও ঘেঁটুশিল্পীদের জীবন যাপন সম্পর্কে সংক্ষেপে আলোচনা করেন। প্রায় দেড়শো বছর পূর্বে হবিবগঞ্জ জেলার জলসুখা গ্রামের এক বৈষ্ণব আখড়ায় ঘেঁটুগান নামে নতুন সঙ্গীতধারার সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। তিনি বলেন যে, মেয়েদের পোশাক পরা কিছু রূপবান কিশোর নাচ-গান করত, যারা পরবর্তীকালে সমাজে 'ঘেঁটু ছেলে' নামে পরিচিতি লাভ করে। এই ঘেঁটু ছেলেরা সমাজে ছিল নিন্দিত ও ঘৃণিত। স্বাভাবিক জীবন যাপন, ও সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক বিভিন্ন অনুষ্ঠানে তাদের অংশগ্রহণ সহজ ছিল না। এই জনপ্রিয় সঙ্গীতে নারীবেশী কিশোরদের উপস্থিতির জন্য এই বর্গটিতে "অশ্লীলতা"-র ছোঁওয়া দেখা দেয়। ইংরেজ আমলে জমিদারগণ, সম্পত্তিশালী শৌখিন পুরুষরা এই ঘেঁটুশিল্পীদের যৌনসঙ্গী হিসাবে পাওয়ার জন্য লালায়িত থাকতেন। পরবর্তীকালে এই সঙ্গীতধারাটি ধীরে ধীরে সমাজ থেকে হারিয়ে যায়।

সিনেমাটিতে বেশ কিছু বিষয় আমাদের সামনে উঠে আসে। বিষয়গুলি হল তথাকথিত লিঙ্গনির্মাণের ধারণা, ঘেঁটুশিল্পীদের পারিবারিক আর্থিক অনটন এবং ধর্মের কঠোর অনুশাসন প্রভৃতি। ঘেঁটুশিল্পী জাহিরের (কমলা) অভিনয়ের মধ্য দিয়ে অভিজাত সম্প্রদায়ের ষড়যন্ত্র, ব্যভিচার ও শিল্পীর অন্তর্বেদনার সূক্ষ্ম অনুভূতিগুলি দর্শকদের বারবার ভাবিয়ে তোলে। এছাড়াও সিনেমাটিতে ব্যবহৃত গানগুলিও খুব প্রশংসনীয়। গানগুলির মধ্যে “সোহাগ উড়িল উড়িল জীবেরও জীবন” এবং “আমার যমুনা জল দেখতে কালো / স্নান করিতে লাগে ভালো ...” এই গান দুটির বিষয়বস্তু শিল্পী ও তাঁর জীবনের সঙ্গে অঙ্গাঙ্গিভাবে যুক্ত বলে মনে হয়। গানগুলিতে একদিকে যেমন উচ্চাঙ্গ সঙ্গীতের প্রভাব লক্ষণীয়। অন্যদিকে লোকায়ত সুরগুলিও পরিচালক সফলভাবে ব্যবহার করেছেন।

Other Departmental Activities

From January 2019 to April 2019

Gandhi Punyaha

Anita Gua Hembrom



Every year on the 10th of March Visva-Bharati observes Gandhi Punyaha to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Santiniketan in 1915. On this day, all students and faculties of Visva-Bharati clean the campus themselves. Like every year, the Centre for Comparative Literature observed the day on March 10, 2019. The current and students of the Centre all came together and carried out the whole work of cleaning, coordinating with each other.

Performance by the students of the Centre on International Mother Language Day

Sounak Dutta



Like every year, this year too Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati had organised a special programme to celebrate the International Mother Language Day (*Antarjatic Matribhasha Divas*) on February 21, 2019 where all the departments, as well as the centers,

the Bhasha Bhavana. The students and scholars of the Centre for Comparative Literature presented a multilingual recitation focusing on the linguistic diversities of the Indian subcontinent. The five-minutes long performance consisted of poems written in Bengali, Assamese, and Nepali. The poems commemorated the various struggles for acquiring linguistic rights in the recent past of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. The significant feature of the performance was the presentation of a slideshow at the background by the participants while they recited the poems. The slides depicting the pictorial evidence of the struggles contextualized the core understanding of the linguistic movements.

Annual Excursion

Ishani Dutta

The Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati organised its annual



excursion on February 20, 2019. This time, the Centre collectively decided to visit Bardhaman City to soak up its history and local flavours. Two faculty members along with nine students cheerfully participated in the same. The Bardhaman Rajbati was visited. The Rajbati now acts as the administrative office for the University of Burdwan. The Rajbati also houses a small museum containing valuable sculptures, paintings and artefacts. The second stop was the Golapbag (The Garden of Roses) which was developed as a botanical and zoological garden in 1884 by King Bijoy

Chand Mahatab. Apart from being a hub of exotic birds and different kinds of trees and plants, the Golapbag also contains lakes and a structure known as the Hawa Mahal (The Palace of Winds). At present, most of the Departments and Centers under the University of Burdwan take their classes in this complex. The next stop was for lunch at a quaint Lebanese joint. After this, it was almost time to come back but everyone decided to take a short stop at Ajay River to enjoy the sunset. A short hike from the main road to the river bank was undertaken. Finally, after stopping at a small joint for tea and biscuits, the excursion party returned back to their everyday life at Visva-Bharati.

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