



Curriculum Vitae

Name- Shaona Barik

Date of Birth- 20.08.1986

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Educational Qualifications

Completed PhD from Jadavpur University, Department of English in 2019

MA in English from Jadavpur University in 2010

BA in English from Jadavpur University in 2008

Title and synopsis of PhD thesis

Title- Haunted by the Empire: Representations of the Occult and the Uncanny in Colonial Fictions about India, 1870-1940.

Synopsis: In the dissertation I have looked at the diverse ways in which European women and men who came to India during the nineteenth century engaged with the uncanny in direct or indirect ways. The depiction of the paranormal and the occult they imagined or encountered in the Indian subcontinent in their writings have been critically analysed. In order to elaborate on this theme, I have looked at certain examples, such as writings about uncanny objects, the so-called “devilry” and arcane practices of the “natives of India” (as was imagined by the Europeans in India) including the strange actions of the fakirs and other practitioners of the occult. The theosophical society, esoteric cults encountered by the British in India which further led to the production of theosophical fictions have been focused upon. The manner in which the study of the occult led to a process of cultural exchanges between India and Britain

have been examined. I have looked both at popular (and populist) representations of the occult in India and more scholarly, empathetic or syncretic approaches of the Europeans towards it. I have mainly looked at the works by lesser known authors of the Victorian period.

Professional Experience in Teaching- 12years

Assistant Professor of English (Stage-11), Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, India from 2019- till present

Assistant Professor of English (Stage-10), Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, India, 2013-2019.

Assistant Professor of English, JD Birla College, Kolkata, India from 2011-2013

Assistant Teacher of English ST. Xavier's School, Kolkata, India from 2010-2011

Awards/ Fellowship received

Awarded the Charles Wallace India Trust Visiting Fellowship at the Department of History, University of Leeds, UK on June 27th, 2022.

Awarded the Visiting Fellowship (2025-26) at the University of Maynooth, Ireland. Will avail it in June, 2025.

Awarded the Visiting Fellowship (2025-26) at the Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Surrey, UK. Will avail it in September- November, 2025.

Associateship of the UGC Inter-University Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, for three consecutive periods of one month each from 2017-2020.

Membership of reputed organisations

Associate Fellow at the Royal Historical Society, U.K.

Publication in Books

Shaona Barik, 'Haunted by the Empire: Memsahibs Writing the Ghosts of 'Hindoostan' post the Indian Mutiny of 1857,' in *Visions, Contestation and Deception: Interrogating Gender and the Supernatural in Victorian Shorter Fiction*, ed. Oindrila Ghosh (Kolkata: Avenel Press

Shaona Barik, 'Uncanny Indian Rivers in the British Mindset in Colonial India,' in *Sarita Sutrakatha: Riverine Cultures in Indian Narratives*, ed. Arzuman Ara (Shima: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 2023), 47-70.

Shaona Barik, 'Angry Servants, Anxious Masters in Colonial India: Dialectical Perspectives,' in *Anger in the Long Nineteenth Century: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Ritushree Sengupta and Shouvik Narayan Hore (UK: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2023), pp. 69-92.

Shaona Barik, 'Indian Vampires: Religion, Esotericism, Responses in English and Bengali Literature' in Madeline Potter ed. *Theology and Vampires* (UK: Lexington Books, 2025), pp. 33-50.

Exhibition

Research exhibition titled, 'Occult Objects in India and England (1850-1940): Nuanced Perspectives,' curated by Dr. Shaona Barik. Venue: Nandan Art Gallery, Visva- Bharati, Santiniketan, from the 25th of August till the 29th of August, 2025.

List of Publications in Journals

Shaona Barik, ""Sympathetic" Appropriations of Kali and the tantras: Reflections on Religious and Cultural Negotiations During the Colonial Era," *Jadavpur University Essays and Studies*, vol. 32 (2018): 172-186, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://juenglishorg.files.wordpress.com/2020/10/juesvol.-32-2018.pdf#page=172>.

----- "Reclaiming Agency and Exploring Freedom through Participation in Seances: A Study of the Victorian Women's Interest in Spiritualism," *The Confidential Clerk*, Journal of the Centre for Victorian Studies, Jadavpur University, vol. 5 (2019): 86-98, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://theconfidentialclerk.com/the-confidential-clerk-volume-5/>

-----"A Study of the Victorian Women's Interest in Spiritualism." *Osmania Journal of English Studies*, Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad (2019): pp. 25-37. ISSN: 0474- 8107.

-----"Colonial Masculinity Its Depiction, in Late Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century British Fiction Based in India." *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, vol.23 and 24, no.1 and 2 (January-June, 2015): 75-82.

-----"The Ambivalent Perception of Kali by the British in Colonial India," *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, vol. 25, no.1 (April- June, 2016): 77-88.

----- "The Indian Ascetics in the British Imagination during Colonial Rule," *Appropriations*, Journal of the Department of English, Bankura Christian College, vol. X (2014-15): 173-185.

----- "Mental Illness of the British Sahibs in Late Nineteenth, Early Twentieth Century Colonial India," *Lapis Lazuli*, vol.17, no. 2 (Autumn, 2017):11-22, accessed February 21, 2021, <http://pintersociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2-Barik-Shaona.pdf>.

----- "Journey of the European Occultists to India in Search of Esoteric Knowledge in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," *Gnosis*, vol. 14, no. 1 (October, 2017):111-121, accessed February 21, 2021,

http://thegnosisjournal.com/online/book/issue_1_45c48cce2e2d7fbdea1afc51c7c6ad26_9.pdf

----- “Margaret Noble or Sister Nibedita’s attempt to explain the goddess ‘kali’ to the British Children in her Seminal Work Kali the Mother,” *Heteroglossia*, Journal of the Department of English, Purulia, vol. VIII (2018): 63-71.

Papers presented in Seminars and Conferences

1. 3.2.24. Presented paper titled, “Love, Loss and Memories of the Europeans: A Study of the Churches and the Graveyards of Calcutta (1757-1840)” (online mode) in an international conference on “Love and Material Culture in the Arts and Humanities,” organised by the St Mary’s University, Twickenham, London.

2. 20.6.24 and 21.6.24. Presented paper titled, “Seances and Spiritual Practices as Healing Art: A Study of Women’s Art in Victorian England and Colonial India,” (online mode) in an international conference on “Psychiatry, Mental Health and the Arts, Past and Present,” organised by The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK.

3. Paper titled “ Health, Hygiene, Sanitation in Colonial Bengal: Case Studies of Windows (1860-1920,” selected for presentation at a conference on “ The Window as Protagonist in British Architecture and Visual Culture,” organised by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art on the 21st and 22nd of November, 2024, etc.

4. 28.6.2020. Paper title, ‘Haunted by the Empire: The British Man’s tryst with Epidemics in India during the Nineteenth Century’ in a webinar on ‘Literature and the Pandemic’ organised by the Department of English Visva Bharati, Santiniketan.

5. 7.10.2020. Paper title, ‘Uncanny Indian Rivers in British Mindset in Colonial India’ in a three- day webinar on ‘Conference on Indian Rivers’ organised by the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla.

6. 22.11.2018- 24.11.2018. Presented paper in an International Conference entitled “Workshops of Horrible Creation: 200 Years of Imagined Humans”organized by the Department of English Jadavpur University and Kalpabiswa Webzine. Title of presentation “British Fantasy about Constructing Clockwork Coolie in Colonial India.”

7. 6.2018-7.6.2018. Presented paper in two days national symposium entitled “Victorian Indian Identities” organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras. Title of presentation “Depiction of the Ghosts of Native Servants in Bodies of Works Produced by the British in India during the Late Nineteenth Century.

8. 23.3.18. Presented paper entitled “Reclaiming Agency and Exploring Freedom through Participation in Seances: A Study of the Victorian Women’s Interest in Spiritualism” in a one day symposium on “Female Suffrage and the Woman Question in Nineteenth Century Britain” organized by the Centre of Advanced Study, Department of English and the Centre for Victorian Studies, Jadavpur University.

9. Title of the Paper, ‘*Uncanny Tales reflecting the Memsahibs’* Traumatic Experiences in India’. Presented in a two-day international seminar (28-29th of January, 2016) on

Exploring Trauma Inter-Disciplinary Perspectives organized by Gour Banga University, Malda in collaboration with British Council.

10. '*Uncanny Tales Published by British Memsahibs in the Turn of the Century on India*' at UGC sponsored International Seminar on Gender Issues: Transcending Boundaries of Culture conducted during 19th and 20th of September, 2014 at Andhra University, Vishakhapatnam.

11. '*Non-Normative Sexuality in the Gotipua Dance Form*' at International Conference on Fourth World Literature and Culture held from 12th-13th September 2014, at Higher Education and Research Society, Pune.

12. '*Knowledge Production about the Indian Ascetics by the British in the Turn of the Century*' at National Students' Conference on Literary and Cultural Studies held from 10th-12th September 2014, at Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad.

Upcoming Projects

Chapter title: 'The Commodification of Indian Tigers' Body Parts as Luxurious and Occult Items: Exploring India-Britain Relationship (1858-1940)' to be published by Palgrave Macmillan.

A book project to be published by Vernon Press. Title of the book project, 'British and Other European Encounters with the Occult and the Uncanny in Colonial India (1840-1920): Cultural and Historical Perspectives'