Webinar

on

“River in the Literary Traditions of India”

(06-08 October 2020)

**ABSTRACTS**

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***Prof. Kailash Baral***

**River Sutra: Poetics of River, Popular Culture and Bhupen Hazarika’s River Songs**

The present paper is an attempt to explore the river songs of Eastern India. The river songs of Bengal and Bangladesh, known as Bhatiyali, have been a significant song genre in music and rendition. There are many types of Bhatiyali. It is the great Music director, Sachin Deb Burman who has given his voice to many Bhatiyali Bengali songs and taken these songs out of Bengal and made them as part of pan-Indian song culture. Similarly, Bhupen Hazarika’s songs on Brahmaputra have given a new life to the mighty river. Instead of the boatman who is central to Bhatiyali, in Bhupen’s song the river Brahmaputra becomes the protagonist. Akshya Mohanti, from Odisha has immortalised Mahanadi in his *Ja re Bhasi Bhasija* while trying to reflect on the society as he follows its course from Sambalpur to the end of its journey. These river songs follow different trajectories from the boatman’s song, to the river’s song to a cultural song. The song culture in India is an essential part of our popular culture in that the river songs are pivotal in keeping with our cultural past as well as present. In this paper, I shall make an attempt to study selections of Sachin Deb Barman’s Bhatiyali, Bhupen Hazarika’s two songs (*Maha Bahu Brahmaputra* and *Namami Brhamputra*) and Akshaya Mohanti’s *Ja re Bhasi Bhasija*.

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***Dr. Arzuman Ara***

**River in the Migration Narratives of Assam**

Migration has been a continuous process in the history of human settlement. Assam is one such a region where different communities have been migrating for a number of reasons over the ages. Imperialism, colonial pecuniary practices, political exodus, and promises of a new life in the green fertile river-bank areas have been the causes of migration to Assam. There are a number of fictions from Assam that represent the migrant communities written in different languages. Rita Chawdhury’s *Makam ,* Chandana Goswami’s *Patkair Xipare Mur Dex,* Rudrani Sharma’s *Kanhibunor Malita,* Leel Bahadur Khatri’s *Brahmaputroko Chheu-Chhau* are some of the narratives that have earned the appreciation of the readers and critics as well. They represent the migrant Chinese, Ahom-Assamese, Miyans-Assamese and the Nepali communities respectively. Memory, nostalgia and the struggles for a new settlement mark the representation of the narratives focusing on the theme of migration and the migrant people which also represent a perennial human crisis. The narratives also display how the migrant communities see the ‘new alien land’ and its people and struggle for a space and a new life. The river has been an important trope in these narratives. Not only that the river provided a route of migration, but also the space of settlement in its banks and the *char*s to the migrants. The river plays a dual role in their life both as a livelihood giver and a destroyer of life. The life of the migrant communities surrounds the river and the course of the river in different seasons decides the fate of the migrant people. The river is like a living entity in these narratives- sometimes deified, occasionally demonized and mostly personified and humanized. The river also becomes an identity marker of the migrant people who are termed as *ujani, bhatia, chorua, pomua* etc. according to the location and flow of the river which is focused in these narratives displaying the process of political *otherisation* and assimilation. The culture developed through the proximity of the river finds an expression in these narratives making them cultural histories as well. The river-human relationship is of both love and hate that forms an integral part of the migration narratives of Assam.

The current paper would like to study how the rivers of Assam are represented in the sub-genre of migration narratives of Assam from the view point of culture studies.

Key Words: Migration, River, Narrative, Assam

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***Prof. Kalidas Misra***

**River as a Frontier in the Indian Literary Imagination, with special reference to Odia literature**

This presentation shall try to discuss the ways the river has been used in the Indian literary imagination as a frontier to map not only the freedom and exuberance and unalloyed happiness, but also as a defiled paradise where escape is possible only through an imaginative leap, only through a feel and realization of the expanse, scope and limitless reach of the artist. This is to suggest that the eternal Saraswati, the river of creative energy is buried within and we are to tap the depth and immensity of this river through art that transcends time. Mine would be a comparative study bringing such texts like Mark Twain’s *Life on the Mississippi*(1883), *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Ezra Pound’s "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" (1917) translated it from the original Chinese version by Li Po, Ernest Hemingway’s “The Big Two-Hearted River” (1925), and Richard Brautigan’s Trout Fishing in America (1967), [*koenig* of the river (1978) by Derek Walcott](https://www.google.co.in/search?biw=853&bih=432&q=koenig+of+the+river+derek+walcott+summary&spell=1&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwig96aGvv3hAhUB3Y8KHSqKDbIQkeECCCkoAA) and place these alongside such Indian texts on rivers like Ganga , Mahanadi, , Padma , Vaikai flowing through the ancient city of Madurai. Writers like Mayadhar Mansingh (Mahanadire Jyotsna Vihar), A K Ramanujan (A River), Jayanta Mahapatra ('Evening Landscape by the River' and ' From Temple' ) R. Parthasarathy (“River, Once”) and Dom Moraes ( Serendip, Letter to My Mother, ) have addressed manifold aspects of life in the process of engaging their creativity to talk about rivers which are manifest both as a physical frontier and also as a deep river of the mind buried within.

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***Prof. Amith Kumar P V***

**The Riddle of the River: River as Mystical Space in the Indian Literary Imagination**

The paper undertakes an attempt to examine the manner in which river has been represented as a mystical space by fiction writers from India. The Indian literary imaginary associates rivers with magical and anagogic possibilities that challenge rational thinking and provides us a perspective concerning human habitation around the rivers which is aberrant and absurd. Rivers seem to be posing several riddles to the people around it and also to the readers of the fiction. Rivers are the zones of esoteric activities and preposterous occurrences that question the notions such as ‘normal living’, ‘peaceful existence’ and ‘natural order’.

In order to substantiate the ideation concerning riddles and rivers in the Indian literary imaginary, the paper seeks to investigate three novels: Esterine Kire’s *When the River Sleeps* (2014), M Mukundan’s *On the Banks of Mayyazhi* (1974: Tr. into English 1999), and Sarnath Banerjee’s *All Quiet in Vikaspuri* (2016). Each of these novels deals with a river, the condition of people living around it, and more importantly, the enigma that pervades the river. The rivers present themselves us complex puzzles to the dwellers who seem to have internalized the mysteries and accepted the bewilderment as part of human condition. The paper seeks to critically investigate the river conundrum in the literary imaginary and seeks to ask certain questions; such as, how do rivers transform themselves into sites of enchantment? On a larger perspective, what purpose is served by representing rivers as enigmatic zones that bemuse and perplex the readers? What subversive role do rivers play in terms of warning human actions of ecological exploitation?

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***Dr. Alankar Kaushik***

**Telling the tales of a River: Visual Narratives of the Brahmaputra in Select Assamese Films**

The river Brahmaputra is more than a geographical entity for the people of Assam valley. The daily lives of the people revolve around the river and its numerous tributaries and streams. The river Brahmaputra intertwines itself with the life of Assam. As it enters the land through the eastern Himalayan foothills and flows into the sea in the west, it reveals many stories to form a colourful identity. The river is looked up to with love and respect in this land. After all, it is the ‘Burha Luit’ or old river Luit for the people of Assam. Brahmaputra has also been at the core of Assam’s folklore, inspiring literature, cinema, art and music.

Interestingly the river Brahmaputra exists in history and folklore not essentially only because of the tributaries but because of the human life associated with the tributaries. There is a distinction between ‘horunodi’ and ‘bornodi’ (small and big rivers). Human association with the rivers gets manifested in different forms of art including visual medium like cinema.

This paper will attempt to look at the human relationship with the river through different genre of cinema being produced from Assam considering the river Brahmaputra at the center of the narrative structure. The paper shall look into three fiction cinemas namely ‘Bornodi Bhotiai’, ‘Kothanodi’ and ‘Nedekha Nodir Ghat’.

The paper shall attempt to explore the human bonding that exists with the river across civilization keeping in mind the inseparable relation of Nature with the everydayness of the people residing in the riverine areas of Assam.

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***Prof. D. Venkatrao***

**River and Nmemocultural Practices in India**

The essence of the sky is said to be sound; the sky is the guardian medium of wind, light and water and their respective essences of touch, sight and taste. The elements are cumulative in their emergences – the latter contain the former. This cumulative set of elements and essences goes into the formation of the earth and its olfactory essence. The convergent dynamic of the earth brings forth every formation and relation – be it moving or rooted, animate or inanimate. As every emergent formation is exposed to the relentless logic of dissolution – the process sketched here gets inverted when dissolution sets in. Memory as an effect of this process, tracks this very dynamic of emergences and dissolutions. Culture is a formation of such palimpsest memories. Indian culture embodies millennially extended memories about the elemental processes indicated here; the most prominent one among these is water – in its congealed and cascading formations. Amara specifies twelve features of the cascading waters and names over forty rivers. Like the replenished flows of waters, rivers spurn immeasurable waves and weaves of memory. Such lively memories pulsate in verbal and performative modes from times immemorial; they immerse and animate millions in a shared experience of a cherished inheritance: *tirtha*s and *mahatmya*s vibrate and proliferate on the flows of rivers. Memories tend and endure the shifting currents of the river and weave a filial bonding with it; they adopt, accommodate with humble regard and let the dance of the elemental unfold. But the force of the flow and the weaves of memory get interrupted when they are ordered to serve an end. The elemental cannot be commanded and subordinated to a particular regime of order. Vritra and even Indra project such corroding auto-immune impulse – with calamitous consequences. Today the elemental – the waters – is increasingly invaded by such demands and commands. The elemental responds violently to such regimes of supremacy. We are beginning to see the reactive fury of the elemental to the anthropo-centred command system. This presentation is an initial inquiry into the Indian cultural memory of the elemental. It draws on the verbal and performative modes to suggest the ways in which Indian cultural memory tended the elemental over millennia and undermined the anthropo-centred world order.

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***Prof. Bijay K. Danta***

**Redemption Narratives and the Apotheosis of Rivers**

This paper seeks to examine the role played rivers in integrating literary cultures and critical geography with reference to the Baitarani River of Odisha. Puranic texts such as *The Garuda Purana* mention the Baitarani as a river in hell, and as a river that divides the world of the living from the other world. Most puranic texts also seem to delight in creating a discourse of fright and offer—a narrative of redemption—for the consumption of a certain kind of readership, graphic details of the river of dread. Interestingly, the river also forms part of the last journey of the worldly subject, and must be crossed alone. This river is the ultimate measure of a person’s virtuous deeds in the world of mortals that include, among others, austerity, piety, pilgrimage, ritual gifts to the brahmin, especially of cows. As there is no boat, only the pious manage to cross the river by holding onto the tail of the cow gifted to the brahmin. Initially mentioned in the puranas without any geographical specificity, the river figures as a physical river in *The Skandha Purana* and *Matshya Purana*. In *The Padma Purana*, however, the river is made to come to the world of the living by the penance of Parshuram. The river is no longer the river of hell but is a deliverer of mortals from the world of sin. As if on cue, the river finds a geographical location. The Baitarani figures as a river in Odisha in ‘Tirtha Parva’ of *The Mahabharata*, completing a sacral-social-spiritual trajectory of sorts. The river not only produces but also circulates narratives of redemption. Significantly, it prompts the worldly subject, portrayed mostly as a sinner, to donate liberally to the poor and to the Brahmin. The river emerges as the condition and consequence of a ritual-centred economy—rise of holy cities, investments in places of pilgrimage and religious travel culture—that feeds off already familiar tropes of sin and redemption.

If this projection seems to offer a convergence of mythopoeisis and apotheosis that appropriates the river as a god of redemption narratives—primarily driven by a multi-layered economic imperative—it is certainly not my intention to offer a chronological map of the river’s incremental evolution as a site of pilgrimage in India’s cultural history, especially in puranic texts. I only want to examine how in this medley of intertextual narratives, we see the emergence of a redemptive matrix. I want to examine how this matrix dovetails three important areas of critical geography. First, it calls for a convergence of shastric-spiritual engagements with different forms and degrees of sin and social transgressions with built-in rituals of redemption. Second, it integrates the social ecology of rivers as sites of pilgrimage with an awareness of the increasing power and environmental utility of rivers. Third, it imaginatively maps the rise of holy towns, especially on the banks of ‘sacred’ rivers, and investment in networks of travel cultures and alongside the logic of settled villages, animal husbandry and river-dependent agriculture. I argue that literary cultures play a large part in layering the convergence of redemption narratives with ritualistic patterns and redemption devices that give the river a sustainable social-sacral visibility. The Baitarani River of Odisha and the Vaitarini of the puranic texts converge in a critical geography that connects the evolution of India with a living riparian consciousness.

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***Prof. Subir Dhar***

**Rabindranath Tagore: Rivers of/in Imagination**

Throughout the long course of his creative genius, Rabindranath Tagore is acknowledged to have figured the trope of rivers not only in his poetry, drama and fiction, but also in his not-inextensive non-fictional writings. These figurations span a whole spectrum of application bridging the realistic and the literal and the metaphoric and the metonymic. Tagore also drew upon several archetypal resonances gathered around the image of rivers, like those of rivers as ‘yatra’ or journeys of life, passages through time, processes of change and development, progress equally as erosion and destruction, as Divine Mother, and even as an inviolable ecological ‘guna’ or principle. Beyond taking note of these largely accepted understandings of the river in Tagore’s conjectural imagination, this paper will however seek to unpack the poet-philosopher’s awareness of a certain sense of doubling which may be regarded as a key to his ideation about rivers – the notion that rivers are doubly ‘bordered’ (as by their two banks) and ‘bordering’ (functioning as borders or lines and markers, suggesting frames, separations and crossings-over).

Key Words: Rabindranath Tagore, border, *yatra, guna*, metaphor, metonymy

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***Dr. Shaona Barik***

**Uncanny Indian rivers in the British Mindset in late Nineteenth Century India**

After the mutiny of 1857 there was urgency on the part of the British to construct more number of administrative buildings and to improve modes of communications in order to intensify authoritative control over the Indians. Perhaps they thought such constructions would elude the natives of India into believing that the British rule was perpetual. The British ensured that bridges, railway lines, dams, barrages, roads constructed by them would exude the glory of the Empire.

Often the native superstitions meddled with British endeavor to carry on with various construction projects across the span of India. Rivers of India for them were erratic, unruly forces difficult to tame, a hindrance on the path of colonization. British men working in civil and military departments of the Empire often complained about the deviations that occurred in the course of the river *Ganga* annually. Such incredible changes in the path of Indian rivers gave rise to anxiety amongst the British. Indian rivers with their uncontrollable, frenzied forces horrified the British to such extent that they ended up thrusting the rivers with supernatural attributes.

Indian rivers attracted and repulsed the British simultaneously. Going back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century, we get to see how painters like Thomas Daniell, William Daniell contributed to the project of orientalism by making several sketches of Indian rivers. At times they deployed the trope of gothic, romantic sublime in such paintings. Indian rivers in their tempestuous state were sketched intricately to portray British apprehension about the rivers.

Several uncanny stories about Indian rivers by the British got produced during the late nineteenth century. Rudyard Kipling’s “The Bridge Builders,” “Strange Ride at Morrowbie Jukes,” Alice Perrin’s novella *Waters of Destruction*, etc are examples of some such stories. Such tales reflect how the Indian rivers hindered the process of British colonization. Through those tales we get to see how the British while trivialising Indian superstitions had at times actually ended up internalizing those beliefs. Such uncanny tales project how those British who succumbed to strange phenomenon associated with Indian rivers came out of the straitjacket of Victorian morality and questioned the policies of the Empire.

Uncanny tales about Indian fakirs, *sadhus* inhabiting areas around Indian rivers got profusely circulated during this time. Alice Perrin’s tale “The Fakir’s Island,” her novel *The Vow of Silence* highlight upon the bewitching qualities of Indian rivers. It was as if the rivers infused the *sadhus* with strange powers which made the British revere them though some were disgusted by the sight of the *sadhus* as well. In the British imagination, sites around Indian rivers got linked with mysterious and attractive powers, which were often uncanny in nature, made more profound by the presence of the fakirs and *sadhus*.

The British constructed taverns, hotels, residential bungalows, sailors home on the banks of Indian rivers. One of the purposes of such attempt was to recreate the home, a place which would resemble the bank of the river Thames and would thus remind them of England. I will try to analyse through the tales mentioned above how and why the Indian rivers which the British targeted to tame down into a “homely zone” got converted to an uncanny space for some of them. What sort of anxieties, fantasies, repressed desires, guilt of having practiced injustices perhaps led to the burgeoning of uncanny tales about Indian rivers by the British in India?

Cultural exchanges between Britain and India in the nineteenth century led to the proliferation of British fictions inspired by Indian folk tales. For instance stories about *Sheekol Buri/ Jol Pisach*, ghosts of women who live in rivers, happen to be a part of the rich repository of age old Bengali folk lore. My paper would try to address how such tales stimulated the British to pen down uncanny fictions about Indian rivers.

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***Dr. Chand Basha***

**River of Plaintive Voices: Narratives of Modernity and Dispossession in Na.D’Souza’s *Island (Dweepa)***

The novella *Island* (“Dweepa”) written by the contemporary Kannada novelist and short story writer Na D’Souza unfolds myriad associations developed between Sharavati, one of the important rivers flowing in Coastal Karnataka, and natives living in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. The image of river has been given myriad meanings that are necessary to comprehend the cultural and social bonding between human beings and nature. In the views G S Shivarudrappa, the state poet of Karnataka, the river is metaphor for journey of soul and desire to meet the final destiny. Simultaneously, another state poet Da Ra Bendre depicts the river Shalmala as an inevitable beloved necessary for the full-fledged wisdom of an individual.

The paper grapples with the manner in which modernity has disturbed the relation between nature and various communities living in western-ghats. The idea of dispossession is not only applicable to human beings but also to the river Sharavati. The novella relies on metaphorical referents that disclose the various threats to the sundry identities of the river. Owing to the construction of a dame the role of the river is transformed and a life supporting river is made to aggressively destroy the natives who had worshipped it. Conversely, Walter Benjamin pointed out “there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism”. The novella narrativises how the modern projects meant to assist the growth of cities in distance disturb the existence of the river and its divine association with natives living on the bank of the river.

Adding to it, the island, which is affected by flood, becomes a site of polemical perspectives on the inner self of individuals. Each individual behaves differently in times of crises. The spectrum of hope, faith, trust, belief, fear, humanity etc. can be debated and elaborated through a family in the novella.

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***Dr. Sanghamitra Rai Verman***

**Riverine Trade Routes in Ancient India**

**KEYWORDS: Rivers, Trade, Trade Routes, *Jatakas*, Classical Accounts, *Arthasastra*, Caravan Art**

Overland and overseas trade existed since ancient times. Humans traded from one part of the world to the other, linking people, transferring technologies, ideas, concepts and philosophies. Intimate relationship existed between rivers, trade and commerce since antiquity. *Jatakas* made numerous references to concerted commercial activities of traders, both overland as well as overseas including riverine trade. Perennial rivers virtually served as an active route of communication in ancient India. Representation of boats on Indus seals and potsherds reveals presence of regular trade and commerce during the Indus Valley civilization.

Literary sources like the *Jatakas*, Classical Texts, *Arthasastra*, etc refers to extensive network of inland trade in ancient India. It was largely linked with presence of perennial and navigable rivers like Indus, Ganges, Jamuna, Sarayu, Kosi, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, etc. connecting important towns like Pataliputra, Campa, Kasi, Tamralipti, etc. They played prominent role in developing well knit trading connection with overseas ports like Broach, Muziris, Kaliana, Sopara, Paithana, etc.

Literary sources further corroborates to the presence of merchants who carried their objects on boats and ships through these perennial rivers and brought them to the ancient ports for further shipment to the outside world. Inland trading towns were linked with navigable rivers. Interestingly, although not port towns but these trading centres shows archaeological evidences of objects of foreign origin, mainly Roman. Classical writers like Periplus, Ptolemy confirms presence of vast quantity of Roman articles in these inland towns which could possibly not happen without the substantial use of navigable rivers.

People travelled in caravans as it was difficult to travel alone. *Atharva Veda*  even refers to the prayers of merchants for protection against wild beasts and robbers. In fact, water routes were preferred over inland routes to escape wild animals, robbers and also natural calamities which frequently made overland routes impregnable. *Arthasastra* refers to water routes as *Varipatha* and *Nadipatha.* Merchants in ancient India preferred to carry out trade through the river routes because it was comparatively cheaper, easier, safer and quicker. The *Mahajanaka Jataka* mentions that the people took *nadipatha.* They followed lower bank of the Ganges for sailing from Campa to Tamralipti and thence the traders sailed across the sea routes to reach *Suvarnabhumi*. Kautilya’s *Arthasastra* explicitly tells that the merchants used to move by the *nadipatha*. It further states that there was regular ferry services during Mauryan times regulated by the state and they were maintained at every important crossing. If someone crosses the river without permission he has to even pay a fine. Ancient Indians people were also efficient in digging up navigable canals, which served as important water passage. Numerous specimen of caravan Arts also testifies to the presence of prosperous trade routes through rivers and seas.

This research paper with the help of archaeological evidences and literary sources will try to decipher the role of perennial, navigable rivers in the development of trade in ancient India. Much work has been done on maritime trading network in ancient India but very few on ancient Indian riverine trade routes. Literary sources corroborating to the ancient Indian river trade routes will be studied carefully to construct the history of indigenous trade which contributed directly towards the growth, prosperity and proper distribution of economic resources among the people of the countryside.

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***Dr. Alka Lalhall***

**The anthropomorphism of rivers in folk songs of Himachal Pradesh**

*Saaye Saaye mat kar Raviye, ki minjo tera dar lagda….(Oh Ravi!! Do not burble because I am scared of your sound…..).*

*Chamba waar ki nadiyon par aawo Laal Rangi ae, ho Chamba do nadiyan vich ghar….. (The beautiful city of Chamba draws its identity from the two rivers, the Ravi and the Sal. The city is situated at the junction of these two rivers.*

The promise of love, being dreaded for its might, a gift, a threat; the river not just has a motherly existence in literature but also has a powerful sensorial imagery. They are the repository of knowledge to ways in which people have given meanings to culture and nature around them. The rivers reveal ‘the way of life’ valued by the group at deepest levels. They are expressions of constitutive social order of the group be it gender constructs, ritual hierarchy, social relation, politico-jural systems and the like. The seasonal experiences of flooding, traversing the mountains, flowing through the plains, the rivers underline the socio-spatial relationship of the community with nature. They become an instrument of socialization; communicating the evocative emotions, moods and motivations of the community. The separation, parting, and the wisdom embodied in the river are orally transmitted through the folk songs. The rivers are set of cultural structures, through which identity of the population is lived. Gaddis of Himachal are a sub-structure to country’s rich and plural culture. To impinge on one thing that is evident about Gaddis is their multi vocal narration of their identity in the form of folk songs around river. The folk songs around rivers like Ravi, Beas, and others are stimulating in nature and efficacious in power to not only create a boundary of unique Gaddi identity but also sustain and conserve the cultural memories of the nomadic life. The metaphor of love, belongingness and identity among Gaddis is deeply rooted in their folk songs around river system of Himachal. The river systems have largely been presented in imaginative, emotional and grandiose narration of varied experiences and emotions in a community. The paper highlights the ‘unintelligible’ quotient of the folk songs around river system which has suffered at the hands of modern effects of music. I aim at presenting the meaning of the words/vocabulary, the gestures and movements involved in these songs. The Gaddis have weaved their life around primordial presence of river system. For Gaddis the rivers are conspicuous heritage of cultural landscape and identity. It transgresses between the world of social reality and metaphorical world. They contain a symbolic value which creates a group identity. The main aim of the paper is to study the semantics of river through folk songs among the Gaddi tribe. The paper portrays a quantum of meaning around river, the Gaddi folk songs become an empirical lens to the rich indigenous culture of the tribe.

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***Prof. Kotti Sree Ramesh***

***COSMOPOLITICS:* Reading the riverine stories of BVS Rama Rao’s *Godavari Kathalu***

“That politics has always been a cosmopolitics. . . .”, says, Bruno Latour. The ‘cosmos’, here for Latour, is a renewed meaning from Greek, which means disposition, an arrangement, a way to compose agencies, with the idea of beauty and ornament in addition to that of materiality. Citing the Belgian philosopher Isabelle Stengers’*Cosmopolitics*, Latour elaborates the term as the *politics of the Cosmos*, which foregrounds the connection between the cosmic and material forces. Interestingly, in Greek language, ‘Cosmos” means ‘order’, and ‘world’, as the ancient Greeks believed that the world was perfectly harmonious. Indian civilization, until the colonial rupture, has negotiated this connection in complex tradition and ritual. Subaltern communities too along the river’s, seas and in forests have negotiated this connection and ‘composed’ their lives in harmony with ‘nature’ for ages. So for Latour, “To speak of cosmopolitics is to say that the world has to be composed. To be composed and not to be unveiled, possessed, mastered, or abandoned for some other world, a world of outer space, of Pandora’s planet, or a world of beyond, a spiritual realm” (Latour, 2011). However, the modern capitalist ethic which has commodified ‘nature’ has disrupted this composition, and the communities living in harmony.

*Godavari Kadalu* (Stories) by BVS Rama Rao is a compilation of 13 Telugu short stories, (1989) based on the lives of riverine people. All the stories are located on either banks of Godavari River, in and around Rajahmahendravaram, in East & West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. The stories are set from upstream Papi Hills National Park to downstream Bobbaralanka. The Godavari river, India’s second longest, has nurtured numerous languages, cultures, biodiversities along its flow, crystallizing the idea of a river as a life principle. The living presence of the river, and the biodiversity it fertilized along its flow, combines to create a unique culture and world view for eons. Every aspect of the life of these riverine people is informed by the overwhelming presence of the river. Tribes, priests, fishermen, farmers, boatmen, own the river or rather the river ‘owns’ them as ‘Godaramma’(Mother Godavari) giving a different meaning to each of their lives. None of the riverine people in the stories complain about the river’s annual flood, even if it means, destroying their homes. Rather, they celebrate its coming. Each of the river’s ‘moods’ has a meaning to the people. They adjust their lives to its moods, as a child adjusts to its mother’s moods. But this ‘composition’ is however disturbed, when the ’outsider’, for whom the river is only a source of wealth, interferes, for extraction or profit. The interference need not always be an interference of the river flow, in an ecological sense, but an interference into the lives of these riverine people who have ‘composed’ their lives with the rhythm of the river. This ‘outsider’ is one who doesn’t understand this ‘composition’ the harmonious *cosmopolitics* of the life of the riverine people, deeply embedded in the life principle of the river. The ‘outsider’s’ exploitative, capitalist outlook is in conflict with the simple lives associated with the seasons and moods of the river. This paper will discuss this conflict in the select short stories of the anthology from an ecological, *cosmopolitics* perspective.

Latour, Bruno: “Politics of nature: East and West Perspectives”. Ethics & Global Politics Vol. 4, No. 1, 2011, pp. 1-10

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***Prof. Jibu George***

**Rivers, Springs, and Lakes in Enchanted/Disenchanted Worlds: Religious World Views and Natural Phenomena in an East-West Retrospect.**

The talk will deal with the cosmotheistic/pantheistic world view of many non-Judaeo-Christian religions as opposed to a transcendent relationship between nature and the deity, Weber's disenchantment of the world, the status of natural phenomena in the Hindu scheme of things, and two new concepts to deal with religious beliefs/practices (including river beliefs). This will furnish an overall cultural-philosophical framework for the topics listed.

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***Dr. Praveen Mirdha***

**How the River/Water Speaks in the Partition Narratives of the Indian Subcontinent?**

River has existed as an essential theme in the literary traditions of India reflecting not simply the geographical culture of the country but forming part of the societal-cultural idiom of human life and emotions. River imagery has been represented from various points of view, the common among them being river as a symbol of human sorrow or happiness, meeting or parting, loss or gain. Novelists, short-story writers or poets have depicted river as an allegorical image of memory, grief, and regret. River/water motif is repeated through the Partition narratives to give expression to love, loss and longing associated with the irreconcilable nakedness, frustration and hopelessness integral to the grim reality of this human tragedy in the Indian subcontinent on the western as well as eastern borders.

Punjab – the land of five rivers – became an agency of great exodus in the history of the nation making the land a witness to as well as a receptacle of uncertainties, darkness, and violence in the wake of independence from the colonial rule in 1947. Punjab etymologically means ‘the land of five waters/rivers’ stemming from *panj* meaning five and *aab* meaning water referring to the five rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Satjuj and Beas which forms the *panjnad* flowing into the Indus in the north-western part of the subcontinent that was divided between India and Pakistan since the partition of the land. The 1947 defines the Punjab region with the violent migration and displacement, pain and suffering experienced by multitudes. The bloody division of land as well as the rupture of shared history, culture and memory of the Partition is reimagined in a poem by Sukrita Paul Kumar thus: *“…the pen/sliced the land of five rivers/giving birth to the sixth…/the bloody stream”*. This *‘sixth river’* redefines the land of historical tragedy and locates the place as a dark site of the bloodshed of millions of people across the borders. Gulzar’s story *‘Ravi Paar’* is an instance in this context. Manohar Malgaonkar, Khushwant Singh, Manto, Bhism Sahni, Amrita Pritam, Intizaar Huisain, and Krishna Sobti etc. lament the disaster of partition that involved millions of people uprooted from their homes. Debi, in *The Bend in the Ganges,* mournfully regrets that “the land of the five rivers had become the land of carrion” and “the two great rivers of humanity flowing in opposite directions…leaving their dead and dying littering the landscape” questioned the arbitrary political decision. On the eastern front the West Bengal Border runs through the lower Indo-Gangetic Plain where the reiteration of the river motif in the territory is manifest in *‘Water Stories’* (Arundhati Ghosh and Apuppen) which contains the memories of ‘missing’ relationships and ‘silences’ and *“the Ganges flowing red”* (Shankha Ghosh).

Partition Narratives display spaces of catastrophic violence, loss, homelessness, exile, madness and mutiliation of land/people and enunciates the geo-political implications of severed connections, swelling emotions and fluid memory through the metaphor of water/river that kindled literay imagination to give expression to the event through different literary representations. The paper would discuss how the land of culture and civilazation was turned into a river of blood making the greatest mistake in history an integral part of the consciousness of the literay writings of the subcontinent.

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