

# **International Conference**

19 - 21 August 2013

## ***Bakhtin in India: Exploring the Dialogic Potential in Self, Culture and History***

***Jointly Organized by***

The Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar  
Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and  
Other Human Sciences, Baroda

**&**

The Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda

***Venue***

INFLIBNET, Gandhinagar

***Thematic Outline***

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## **Thematic Introduction**

by

**Lakshmi Bandlamudi**  
Convener of the Conference

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) has been emerging as one of the most influential thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, crossing cultural and disciplinary boundaries. His theory of dialogism shaped new perspectives on society and thought adding insights and value to theoretical formulations to various schools of critical thinking from humanism to structuralism to post-structuralism. Given Bakhtin's emphasis on plurality of points of view and dialogue across cultures, the relevance of his ideas to our times cannot be over-emphasized. He has given us analytical tools to articulate and make sense of the nature of differences and diversity in the world. In this age of globalization, where close encounters with other cultures is an immediate reality forcing individuals to negotiate differences, Bakhtin's ideas have even greater relevance.

Interestingly, if Bakhtin's works stand under the banner of plurality, open-endedness and diversity of language and social speech types, the cultural, philosophical and literary histories of India may well be brought under the same banner. As a multicultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society, India is the rare example of a country that has negotiated diversity at all levels. The idea of dialogue and diversity have central significance to the argumentative traditions that have developed in India over centuries and also in the study of literary and cultural texts that have originated in the confluence of cultures, both Indian and non-Indian. Even before Bakhtin's formulation of the idea of 'dialogics' something approximating it seems to have existed in India. However, only a systematic enquiry into the nature of the polyphonic traditions of India can reveal the problematic of the dialogues that marked the living traditions of culture, religion and philosophy in the Indian subcontinent. Did classical Hindu traditions and Buddhist systems of thought share a dialogic space of interaction? Bhartrhari and Nagarjuna are important landmarks in Indian thought, but are there meeting points between them? What was the nature of relations between Sanskrit and other Indian languages? Were the various translation traditions dialogic in nature? How did Bhakti and Sufi traditions enter into a dialogue? We know King Akbar sponsored translations of Sanskrit, Turkish and Arabic texts into Persian and Prince Dara Shikoh translated major Sanskrit texts into Persian. What is the nature of the dialogue that marks these exchanges? What was the creative impulse that worked in the origin of Indian languages around the beginning of the last millennium, most of which used prominent Sanskrit texts in their separate ways? During the colonial phase, these argumentative traditions were apparently in decline. Did the hegemonic structures of power contribute to the production of monologic discourses? One may approach Orientalism or Indological texts from this point of view. We also need to explore how dissent and dialogue can be promoted in contemporary India through discussion and debate.

Though there have been scattered and sporadic attempts to use Bakhtin's concepts of polyphony, dialogue, heteroglossia and carnival in the study of literature and culture in India, this is the first time an entire conference will be devoted to the systematic exploration of Indian thought and culture from Bakhtin's points of view. The conference will explore the main ideas from Bakhtin's works such as architectonics, aesthetics, answerability, philosophy of act, ethical responsibility, dialogism in literary texts, cultural life and media (television, film, internet etc.), and in ancient and recent histories and more importantly the iconoclastic wisdom of carnival as they relate specifically to Indian ethos. These wide ranging topics will be explored across academic disciplines. Furthermore, the versatility of analytical categories like speech genres and chronotopes will be examined.

The overarching framework of the conference is to explore the dialogic potential in the culture and thought of India in the canonical, non-canonical and contemporary traditions. The conference will attempt to address broadly the following questions:

- If classical Indian philosophy is inherently dialogic, has it been taken over by monologic impulses? What historical factors contributed to this change? How then do we reclaim the dialogicality?
- The immediate reality of Indian culture is that it is multi-lingual and multi-religious, which necessitates a dialogue. What are the factors that enhance or inhibit dialogue in such complex environment?
- What does a Bakhtinian reading of the literary canon from various regions reveal?
- Do we gain new insights in the philosophy of living language by setting up a dialogue between Bakhtin and the Sanskrit grammarian Bhartrhari or Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna?
- How do various traditions of tika or tarjuma or anuvad reflect the dialogic nature of Indian culture?
- How far have the various literary genres contributed toward opening up of Indian society by interrogating dominant structures of power?
- What do we learn about aesthetics as a category from a comparative study of Bakhtin and Abhinavagupta?
- What are the philosophical dimensions of laughter and grotesque body images? How do performance traditions in India contribute to the transgressive aesthetics of the carnivalesque and add new dimensions to Bakhtin's works on Rabelais?
- What steps must academic institutions take to facilitate dialogue across disciplines? How do disciplines relate to each other and inform the production of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences? What are the strengths and limits of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary works?
- Dialogue is a dynamic process charged with temporalities in which all the parties involved get transformed by moving away from their assumptions. How do competing viewpoints find articulation in contemporary society? As educators, how do we promote intra-psychic dialogue of competing ideas to promote dialogic consciousness?
- Has the emergence of the Indian nation-state created a centrifugal tendency in the culture inhibiting dialogue? How do we promote inter-religious and inter-regional and inter-lingual dialogue?
- How do we look at social phenomena like caste and tribe from the standpoint of dialogism? Does the emergence of Dalit literature mark a phase of dialogism that is emancipatory?
- How can Bakhtin's ideas be productive in the discussion of issues related to gender? Can we review the canons from the perspective of women using Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and carnival?
- Can Bakhtin's views of language and culture contribute towards a critique of colonial history and its repressive regime by retrieving the subversive potential of marginalized culture and the contemporary rewritings of canonical texts of the colonial period?
- These topics are only suggestive; one is free to ask similar questions regarding any aspect of life in the Indian subcontinent that has bearing on the ideas of dissent and dialogue and will create new possibilities of dialogicality. We would appreciate if theoretical discussions are supported by close readings of texts—literary, philosophical, cultural or political.

## **Program Schedule**

**Monday, August 19**

10:00 – 11:30 am

### **Inauguration**

Venue: Auditorium, INFLIBNET

Chair: R. K. Kale

- 10:00 – 10:10 am - Welcome by E. V. Ramakrishnan  
10:10 – 10:20 am- Welcome by Prafulla C. Kar  
10:20 – 10:35 am – Inaugural address by Y. K. Alagh, Chancellor, The Central University of Gujarat  
10:35 – 11:10 am - Thematic Introduction by Lakshmi Bandlamudi  
11:10 – 11:25 am – Remarks from the Chair  
11:25 – 11:30 am – Vote of Thanks by Balaji Ranganathan

11:30 – 11:45 am

### **Tea**

11:45 – 1:00 pm

### **First Session**

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Lakshmi Bandlamudi

### **Keynote Address**

Speaker: Sunthar Visuvalingam

Topic: “Tradition, Transgression, and Liberty”

1:00 – 2:00 pm

### **Lunch**

2:00 – 3:30 pm

### **Second Session**

#### ***A: Bakhtin: Postcolonialism/Postmodernism***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Atanu Bhattacharya

1. Lajwanti Chatani, “Devaluing Culture, Misrecognizing the Self: Revisiting India’s Colonial Encounter”
2. Ananya Ghoshal, “The Hypertextual and the Postcolonial–Bakhtin and Interactive Media”
3. Bhumika Sharma, “Understanding the Postmodernist Psychology through Bakhtin’s Dialogic Consciousness: A Literary Overview”

***B: Dialogue: Theory and Practice***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Navaneetha Mokkil

1. Elizabeth Prakash Christian & Mittal Kanubhai Patel, “Bakhtin’s Theory of Utterance and Dialogism”
2. Narendra Kumar, “Orality, Theatricality and Intertextuality in the Folk Epic of Pabuji”
3. Kailash C. Baral, “Exotopy and Bakhtin”

3:30 – 4:45 pm

**Third Session**

Plenary

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Jasbir Jain

Speaker: Sura P. Rath

Topic: “Carnavalesque (Non-)Closures in *Salaam Bombay* (1988) and *Kahaani* (2012): Social Critique, Narrative Circle, and Epistemic Resolution”

4:45 – 5:00 pm

**Tea**

5:00 – 6:30 pm

**Fourth Session**

***A: India: Politics of Dialogue***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Lajwanti Chatani

1. K. M. Johnson, “Dialogism to Answerability: The Mediation of Gandhi and Bakhtin in 21<sup>st</sup> Century”
2. Santosh Gupta, “Continuing Dialogues with the Past: Dialogicity in Gandhi and Nayantara Sahgal”
3. Sunil Sagar, “Indian Intellectual Tradition, Bakhtin and Some Concerns”

***B: Bakhtin and the Politics of Marginality***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Kailash C. Baral

1. Nutan Kotak, “Tribal Women’s Word/World: A Bakhtinian Dialogic Analysis”
2. Darshana Trivedi, “Understanding Others: A Study of Dalit Women’s Writing through Dialogism”
3. Nirja Vasavada, “In ‘Dialogue’ with Self, History and Culture: Exploring Dialogical Potentials in Mahesh Dattani’s *Final Solutions*”

**Tuesday, August 20**

10:00 – 11:15 am

**Fifth Session**

Plenary

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: E. V. Ramakrishnan

Speaker: Craig Brandist

Topic: “The Early Soviet Critique of Indo-European Philology and the Bakhtin Circle”

11:15 – 11:30 am

**Tea**

11:30 – 1:00 pm

**Sixth Session**

***A: Dialogue in Indian Intellectual Traditions***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: N. Rajaram

1. Meera Chakravorty, “Indian Dialogical Tradition: Challenges and Celebrations”
2. Ami Upadhyay & Dushyant Nimavat, “Dialogic-Classical Indian Philosophy with Special Reference to *Argumentative Indian* by Amartya Sen”
3. P. Milan Khangamcha, “Indian Philosophy of Language: A Modal of Pan-Linguistic Reference”

***B: Literary Genres: Possibilities & Challenges***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri

1. Vaishnavi Upadhyaya, “Bakhtin’s Views on Novel as Represented in *A River Sutra – An Indian Tapestry*”
2. Jyoti Rane, “Dialectic of Monologism: Why Novel could not Develop as an Indigenous Genre in India”
3. Raminder Singh (Sandhu), “Bakhtinian Thought and Medieval Punjabi Literature”

1:00 – 2:00 pm

**Lunch**

2:00 – 3:30 pm

**Seventh Session**

***A: Dialogue and Self***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Meera Chakravorty

1. Bini B.S., “Answerability, Alterity and Annihilation: The Self and the ‘Confessional’ Writing”
2. Lakhpriya Gogoi, “Exploring the Potential of Dialogic Self-Narration: A Bakhtinian Reading of Selected Autobiographies from India”
3. Foara Das Gupta, “Dead Text or Living Consciousness? Bakhtinian Poetics in the Francophone African Context”

***B: Polyphony in Indian Novels***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Santosh Gupta

1. Manashi Bora, “Dialogism in Rabindranath Tagore’s *The Home and the World*”
2. Jasmine Anand, “Bakhtinian Reading of V.S. Naipaul’s *India: A Million Mutinies Now*”
3. Sangeeta Borthakur, “Polyphony and the Novel: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s *Shadow Lines*”

3:30 – 3:45 pm

**Tea**

3:45 – 5:00 pm

**Eighth Session**

Plenary

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Craig Brandist

Speaker: Elizabeth Chaliier-Visuvalingam

Topic: “The Rule of Freedom: Rabelais, Bakhtin, and Abhinavagupta”

5:00 – 6:00 pm

**Ninth Session**

***A: Bakhtinian Interpretations of Ramayana***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Jyoti Rane

1. Shreyasee Datta, “From Ignorance to Eminence: A Select Study of the Women Characters of *Ramayana*”
2. Rajashree Bargohain, “Locating Polyphony: A Study of the *Ramayana* in Assam”

***B: Dialogism & Queerness***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Darshana Trivedi

1. Cornelia-Catrinel Dunca, “Dialogism, Queerness, Abjection: A Speculative Engagement”
2. Gayathri P. J., “The Queer and the Carnavalesque: Problematization of Sexual Discourse in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani”

6:00 – 7:30 pm

**Tenth Session**

***A: Gendered Voices in the Re-interpretations of The Mahabharata: A Bakhtinian Perspective***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Balaji Ranganathan

1. Arnapurna Rath, “Chronotopes of ‘Love’ and ‘Death’ in Pratibha Ray’s *Yajnaseni*”
2. Shamali Gupta Bose & Gaurav S. Gadgil, “*Mahabharata* in Kalyug: A Bakhtinian Perspective”
3. Shaweta Nanda, “‘Herstory’: Re-Reading of Indian Epics from the Feminine Perspective”

***B: Gendered Chronotopes in Indian Novel***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Bini B.S.

1. Bharati Chakraborty, “Voice, Silence, Voice: A Dialogic Reading of Ashapura Devi’s *Pratham Pratishruti*, *Subarnalata* and *Bakulkatha*”
2. Roshni Patel, “Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity: A Study of Krupabai Satthianadhan’s *Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Life*”
3. Paromita Chakrabarti, “Talking Texts, Writing Memory: A Bakhtinian Reading of Meena Alexander’s *Fault Lines*”

8:00 – 9:00 pm

**Dinner**

Venue: Infocity Club

Dinner hosted by Prof. R. K. Kale, Vice-Chancellor, The Central University of Gujarat

**Wednesday, August 21**

10:00 – 11:30 am

**Eleventh Session**

***A: Dialogue in Sikh Tradition***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Ajay Dandekar

1. Navjot Kaur, “*Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and the Spirit of Dialogism”
2. Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri & Jaswinder Singh, “Bakhtin and the “Bani” of Saint Ravidas in the *Guru Granth Sahib*”
3. Jasbir Jain, “The Dialogicity of Travel: Nanak’s Udasis”

***B: Crossing Over: Language/Chronotopes***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Rama Rani Lall

1. Payel C. Mukherjee, “Dialogic Encounters in Cosmopolitan Knowledge Spaces”
2. Pooja Mehta, “Translation as a Dialogue: A Perspective”
3. Pooja Venkatesh, “The Context in Flux: Dialogicality of Self Impacted by Voluntary Family Migration”

11:30 – 11:45 am

**Tea**

11:45 – 1:15 pm

**Twelfth Session**

***A: Carnavalesque in the Performance Traditions***

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Urmila Bhardikar

1. Rajni Mujral, “Bakhtin and Prahasana: Grotesque Body and the Aesthetics of Transfiguration”
2. S. Umesh Chandra, “Logics and Dialogics of Performance Traditions in India”
3. Sudhir Kumar Pandey, “Transgressive Aesthetics of Carnavalesque in Nautanki”

## ***B: Critical Perspectives on Dialogue***

Venue: Room No. 242

Chair: Arnapurna Rath

1. Lizy Thomas & Shilpa Thomas Parmar, “Crossings Boundaries in Bakhtin’s Discourse in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”
2. Monali Chatterjee, “Bakhtin and the Implications of Social Discourse”

1:15 – 1:45 pm

### **Valedictory Session**

Venue: Auditorium

Chair: Prafulla C. Kar

1:45 – 2:45 pm

### **Lunch**

### **Plenary Speakers’ Bio-Notes**

**Craig Brandist** is Professor of Cultural Theory and Intellectual History in the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies, and director of the Bakhtin Centre at the University of Sheffield, UK. He is the author on numerous works on Russian literature, cultural theory and intellectual history including *Carnival Culture and the Soviet Modernist Novel* (1996) *The Bakhtin Circle: Philosophy, Culture and Politics* (2002), *Politics and the Theory of Language in the USSR 1917-1938* (2010) and *The Dimensions of Hegemony: Language, Culture and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (forthcoming). He is currently working (with Peter Thomas) on a book about Antonio Gramsci’s time in the USSR.

**Elizabeth Chalier-Visuvalingam** has doctorates in Indology, philosophy, and anthropology from Banaras Hindu University and the University Paris X, France. She has also been a Senior Visiting Fellow pursuing post-doctoral research at the Sanskrit Dept. of Harvard University. Her specialization is the worship, both ancient and contemporary, and significance of the transgressor-god Bhairava in South Asian religions, including Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, pre-literate tribal communities, and syncretic settings. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in the Kathmandu Valley, Banaras, and other regions. Her French (postdoctoral) D.Litt. dissertation was published by Peter Lang in 2003. There is a strong comparative and metaphysical dimension that makes her approach relevant to the enigma of Dionysus in ancient Greece, crime and punishment, contemporary terrorism, etc. Her most complete essay on Bhairava in English is “Brahma and Bhairava: The Problem of the Mahabrahma” in Alf Hildebeitel, ed., *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees* (Albany: SUNY, 1989). Her extensive entry on Bhairava, jointly written with Sunthar Visuvalingam, will soon appear as a scholarly resource in the Hinduism section of the Oxford Bibliography Online. She has also published several articles, in both French and English, on the literature of minorities, particularly that of the Jewish communities in India, exploring such themes as the figure of the Other. She has taught at Boston University, Eötvös Loránd University at Budapest and is currently teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and Western philosophy and French literature (including Rabelais) for the French Baccalaureate.

**Lakshmi Bandlamudi** is a Professor of Psychology at LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York. She earned her MA from Columbia University and Ph.D. from The Graduate Center, City University of New York in Developmental Psychology. She has been engaged with Mikhail Bakhtin Studies for more than two decades and has published in several reputed journals and presented papers at various international conferences connecting myths, culture, history and consciousness. In reviewing her presentations at various International Bakhtin Conferences since 1991, Clive Thomson noted in the journal *Dialogue, Carnival, Chronotope* that she was the 'lone voice' in bridging Eastern and Western philosophies and humanities and social sciences. Two of her publications were on comparative analysis between Mikhail Bakhtin and the Sanskrit grammarian Bhartrhari: "Crossing Time and Space: Bakhtin's Dialogic Encounter with the Sanskrit Philosopher-Grammarian Bhartrhari" (1998) in *Recherches Semiotiques/Semiotic Inquiry* (Vol.18); "Voices and Vibrations of Consciousness in Genres: A Dialogue between Bakhtin and Bhartrhari on Interpretation" (2011) in *Dialogue, Carnival Chronotope* (43-44), Moscow. She is best known for her recent book, *Dialogics of Self, The Mahabharata and Culture: The History of Understanding and Understanding of History* (Anthem Press, UK 2010). This interdisciplinary work explores the interrelationships between individual and cultural historical dynamics in interpreting the epic text, using key concepts from Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Bandlamudi approaches the problem of interpreting a familiar historical text as a two-faced Janus, looking into the domain of culture in which the text permeates, and into the unique meaning that the text has in the lives of specific individuals. She argues and demonstrates that the interpretive act is at the intersection of several histories – that of the individual, individual's past relationship with the text, and the history of the text and the very history of understanding. Soon after this book was published she spent six months in India as a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellow and had the opportunity to present this work at various universities and research institutes across India. During this period she conducted further research on the evolution of *The Mahabharata* at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune. Bandlamudi is also the author of a travelogue, *Movements with the Cosmic Dancer: On Pilgrimage to Kailash Manasarovar* (2006, Motilal Banarsidass), which includes a Foreword by H. H. The Dalai Lama, and an Introduction by Dr. Karan Singh. This work records the spiritual journey against the backdrop of the physical journey in the Himalayas, weaving Hindu and Buddhist tales with philosophies of Kashmir Saivism, Sri Aurobindo, Nietzsche and others.

**Sunthar Visuvalingam** is best known for formulating "transgressive sacrality" as a paradigm for comparative religion taking the ritual clown (vidusaka) of the Sanskrit drama, the brahmanicide god Bhairava, and the tantric praxis of the Hindu polymath Abhinavagupta (11th C) as his starting points. His 1984 PhD on "Abhinavagupta's Conception of Humor: Its Resonances in Sanskrit Drama, Poetry, Hindu Mythology, and Spiritual Praxis," was recommended for a D.Litt. degree and earned a special commendation from the Vice-Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University. His seminal paper on "Transgressive Sacrality in the Hindu Tradition" (1985), first presented to an interreligious conference in New York, subsequently became the focus of an international pilot-conference (1986) at the annual South Asia conference at the University of Wisconsin (Madison). His theorizing in this area, which draws explicitly from the work of Georges Bataille, Roger Caillois, and Laura Makarius, has been compared to Victor Turner (liminality) and Mikhail Bakhtin (carnival). A key application of this paradigm has been an acculturation model of "Hinduism" and Indian religious history. He wrote the concluding essay reviewing all the other contributions to Alf Hiltebeitel, ed., *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees* (Albany: SUNY, 1989) from the perspective of transgressive sacrality. His other comprehensive and polemical overviews, including "Towards an Integral Appreciation of Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics of Rasa" (2006) and "Hinduism: Aesthetics, Drama, Poetics" in Frank Burch Brown, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Religion and the Arts* (in press), explore aesthetic

sensibility as a possible resolution of the ethical problem posed by the dialectic of interdiction and transgression. Since 2001, while working as an independent consultant, Sunthar has been hosting the multilingual [www.svAbhinava.org](http://www.svAbhinava.org) website to facilitate international collaborative research on intercultural issues along these lines.

**Sura P. Rath** is professor of English at the University of North Texas at Dallas. A graduate of Ravenshaw College and Utkal University in Odisha, and Tulane University and Texas A&M University in the United States, he has held elected office as President of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association twice. He was a senior Fulbright lecturer in American Literature in India (2004), and a visiting professor at the Stockholm University in Sweden and at the Center for Contemporary Theory in India. In 2009 he was named Director of the “Abraham Lincoln without Borders” international conference in South Asia by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission of the US Congress, and received one of five distinguished global service awards from the Commission. In 2010, he was appointed to the Fulbright selection board for a three-year term. He has edited nine books: *Rotations of Unending Time: Selected Poems of Sitakant Mahapatra* (2013), *Abraham Lincoln without Borders: Lincoln’s Legacy outside the United States* (2010), *Humanities in the Twenty-first Century* (2009), *Dialogics of Cultural Encounters: Nations and Nationalities in Periods of Conflict* (2007), *U. R. Anantha Murthy’s Samskara: A Critical Reader* (2005), *Reflections on Literature, Criticism and Theory* (2004), *Theory and Praxis: Curriculum, Culture, and English Studies* (2003), *Sitakant Mahapatra: The Mythographer of Time* (2001), and *Flannery O’Connor: New Perspectives* (1996). He has published a dozen book chapters and more than fifty articles in professional journals worldwide, guest-edited special issues of the *South Central Review* and the *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, and presented dozens of papers at conferences world-wide. Rath’s scholarly interest centers on cultural and intellectual history, especially on dialogical readings of diaspora and global displacement; his approach is inter-disciplinary and his scope international as he focuses on authors such as Edward Said, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Sitakant Mahapatra, Shrilal Shukla, Flannery O’Connor, and Robert Penn Warren. He has offered revisionist readings of characters such as Kunti from *The Mahabharat* from a feminist perspective, and of topics such as feudalism and democracy from a ludic perspective. He serves as a co-editor of the *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, an inter-disciplinary international journal published in Delhi, and as an editorial board member of the *Flannery O’Connor Review* published by the Georgia College & State University.

### List of Participants

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### **Abstracts of Papers**

#### **Ami Upadhyay & Dushyant Nimavat, “Dialogic-Classical Indian Philosophy with special reference to Argumentative Indian by Amartya Sen”**

“India is merely a geographical expression. It is no more a single country than the Equator.” This statement that Winston Churchill once made may be right in one sense that no other country in the world holds such an astonishing mixture of ethnic groups, abundance of incomprehensible languages, varieties of climate and topography, disparate convictions, divergent customs, diversity of religions and cultural practices, and levels of cultural and economic development as India does.

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1981) set up a theory related to dialogism. It stated that there is necessity of creating meanings in a dialogic way with people. In his theory, Bakhtin emphasizes the chain of dialogues. According to him, every dialogue results from a prior one, and every new dialogue is to be present in future ones too. A ‘word’ is itself a dialogue as it includes and proves the existence of the ‘other’ person.

The concept of dialogic learning is not new to India. In *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (12) in “Yajnavalkya Khanda” Chapter 3 the dialogue between Yajnavalkya of Mithila, a legendary sage of Vedic India and Gargi Vachknavi, a female philosopher has great arguments in the form of question-answers. Arguments also take place between Brigu and Bhardvaj. Maitraiyi makes intelligent arguments. The *Bhagvat Geeta* is in a dialogue form between Krishna and Arjuna. All these examples suggest that dialogues have played a vital role in Indian philosophy. In my paper I will discuss dialogic classical Indian philosophy with special reference to Sen’s *Argumentative Indian* and “India: Large & Small.”

#### **Ananya Ghoshal, “The Hypertextual and the Postcolonial– Bakhtin and Interactive Media”**

The postcolonial and the hypertextual represent two distinctive indicators within the discourse of postmodern information technology and culture. In our postmodern condition, information technologies are having a profound impact on our literary and aesthetic practice by creating a new “Net” aesthetic that involves a rapid transition from the linear, univocal, authoritative aesthetic of passive encounters to one of open, multivocal, dialogic and nonhierarchical aesthetic of active encounters. Jay Bolter in *Writing Space* describes “hypertext” as a network of texts that allows the reader to choose any path—for all paths are equally valid readings ... and in that simple fact, the reader’s relationship to the text changes radically. A text as a network

has no univocal sense; it is a multiplicity without the imposition of a principle of domination. The intertextual hypertext, to a large extent resembles a postcolonial cultural experience where the constantly shifting, interpenetrating dynamic interaction between bodies and texts are positioned in relation to history, politics and culture—complicating traditional divisions between the personal and impersonal, and raising questions about the locus of the self itself. In my paper, I want to focus primarily on the contradictions and multiplicities inherent in the hypertextual environment to foreground the relationship between technology and self in the study of dialogue. In attempting to critically analyze our engagement with these and other newly emerging forms of interactive texts, I would focus on Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of the dialogic, polyphonic, multivocal novel, which he claims "is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other." I would also like to explore, if technology has been able to provide for us a "clean virtual space," a complete freedom of total disembodiment where categories of race, gender and class are irrelevant and whether such a claim is ever possible when postcolonial discourse acknowledges the necessity of locating the embodied self in a web of power relations.

### **Arnapurna Rath, "Chronotopes of 'Love' and 'Death' in Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni*"**

Pratibha Ray's novel *Yajnaseni* (1995) is a fictional retelling of the grand Indian narrative, *The Mahabharata* from the perspective of one of its own muted voices – that of Draupadi. Translated into English from Odia by Pradip Bhattacharya, *Yajnaseni* is a retelling of the story from a first person narrative point of view. Draupadi, one of the enigmatic characters of the epic, is also a "woman" who has suffered the onslaught of her own times and that of questions of the generations that were to come after her. Ray captures the polyphonic nature of the epic in the character of Yajnaseni. She presents multiple voices with an intricate interweaving of moments.

Draupadi's lethal engagement with both love and death in the novel could be creatively understood with Bakhtin's chronotopic motifs in "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." As a complex entity she combines the dualities of both love and fatality. The necessity of understanding the epic as a saga of multiplicity with dark and grey shades of human emotions is emphasized in Ray's interpretation of the character of Draupadi. A question that needs examination in a reading of the novel is: could we understand Draupadi's identity as rooted in the context of the temporal era she existed in or does she transcend the boundaries of time-space? Her name Yajnaseni signifies both abstract and concrete spaces. In addition, it would be interesting to observe the temporal nature of her character – as an entity designed only for an epic space or existing as a unique identity, independent of the epic dimensions of the text where she finds a place.

While the *Mahabharata* has the grandeur that an epic has in the "Bakhtinian sense," it also challenges Bakhtin's formulation of the firm division between the epic and the novel. Distinguishing between a "novelistic contemporaneity" and an "epic contemporaneity," Bakhtin has metaphorically described the former as "moulded in clay" and the latter as "moulded in marble or bronze" (Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel" 19). According to Bakhtin, the novel as a genre is based on a continuous flux in the time-space aspects. In this context, *Mahabharata* posits a challenge to Bakhtinian formulations of aesthetic divisions between novel and epic forms. It opens multiple layers of fictional retelling/recreations. It has the "novelness" that Bakhtin describes in both textures as well as in form. The contemporary nature of the epic is manifested through its characters like Yajnaseni, who live beyond the epic space.

Ray's *Yajnaseni* opens a creative strand of the epic that goes into a fictional rendering of *Mahabharata*. The novel was written before Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's acclaimed *Palace of Illusions* (2008), also based on the fierce feminine motif of Draupadi. Both Ray and Divakaruni have captured the lethal intersection between love and death in their understanding of the character of Draupadi. The chronotopic motifs of "love" and "death" are so intrinsic to Draupadi's character that they add a strong "humane" touch to her persona, making her existence palpable and real.

The analysis finally attempts to build a creative dialogue between "regional" novels like Ray's *Yajnaseni* and Bakhtinian concepts, through a focal thread of the theoretical concept of chronotopes.

### **Bharati Chakraborty, "Voice, Silence, Voice: A Dialogic Reading of Ashapura Devi's *Pratham Pratishruti*, *Subarnalata* and *Bakulkatha*"**

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, it attempts to situate Bakhtin in the early 20th century Bengali social periphery in order to engage into a rich dialogue between feminist and Bakhtinian critical approaches. Secondly, by means of a feminist dialogic reading of Ashapura Devi's trilogy, *Pratham Pratishruti*, *Subarnalata* and *Bakulkatha* the paper explores the idea that Ashapura Devi's novels, with formidable female narrators, have a polyphonic undercurrent all throughout their bodies hampering a linear reading of those female voices which again give a new form to a feminist-dialogic critique of the society of her time. Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism has been a favorite topic with a number of feminist critics for its ability to provide a podium for peripheral feminine voices to be heard amidst the clamour of the monologic, authoritative, and hegemonic male voices. Devi's literary works offer an interesting reading for Bakhtinian-feminist discourse in this regard. Feminist dialogic should not be taken as a monologic discourse that emphasizes the vigorously female voice to the exclusion of other social utterances. Here lies the importance of Devi's trilogy which offers the possibility of a dialogic female self enabling feminism from not restricting itself to a monologic voicing self. The paper shall finally attempt at offering a newer perspective on Devi's trilogy by showing the unique stand point taken up by her narrators who offer a newer, refreshing polyphonic representation of 'voice from periphery' by refusing to adhere to the monologic and stiff aloofness of 'feminist voice' often associated with gendered texts.

### **Bhumika Sharma, "Understanding the Postmodernist Psychology through Bakhtin's Dialogic Consciousness: A Literary Overview"**

Bakhtin has given us many analytical tools to understand the differences and diversity of the 21st century postmodernist and postcolonial world. His concepts like carnival, heteroglossia, and polyphony help to explain the nature of contemporary culture where one may find oneself engaged in an everlasting dialogue within and without. Perhaps, it is the compulsive human instinct of negotiating differences that generates a dialogic consciousness. Every individual, being a unit, constitutes merely a part of the whole. Yet, on the other hand, existing as an independent entity one also strives to attain completeness in oneself. In this process of self attainment the dialogic consciousness assumes central role, formulating a typical tendency of talking to 'self' with regard to the fragmented 'others' around.

Living in today's postmodernist era means living with differences and dissensions. Our contemporariness is a curious combination of east and west, real and virtual, and a process of redefining 'centres' in relation to the 'margins'. Being a part of the hi-tech multicultural global world, we experience these juxtapositions at every moment. These realities manage to coexist on account of peculiar postmodernist psychology of embracing the 'Others' while relieving

the apprehensions of losing 'Self' through dialogic consciousness. Since it is a vital question that how far one allows the 'other' to be accommodated as a part of the 'self' while negotiating differences, one needs to understand the nature of such barter at every level of consciousness. Perhaps, there is a dicey borderline drawn by each one of us in the process of resolving inner and outer contradictions.

According to Bakhtin, the 'I' cannot maintain neutrality toward moral and ethical demands which manifest themselves as one's voice of consciousness. On the other hand human psychology leads to deviate, being charged with a fascination while confronting anything that liberates the 'Self' from the pressure of such demands. Bakhtin's concepts of the unfinalizable self and the idea of the relationship between the self and others lead us to understand this postmodernist psychology as reflected in many Indian literary and cultural discourses. How do we perceive an individual in relation to the specific socio-cultural code which inhere multiple intercessions? The present paper attempts to discover the fundamentals of this 'postmodernist liberation' through some selected Indian literary works which explain the psychology behind the working of dialogic consciousness. It may be explained through the understanding of mechanism that always strives to attain a point of equilibrium.

Postmodernist literary discourses bring out the characters grappling with inner dissensions especially when standing amidst multiple cultures sharing traits of all. As a 21st century world citizen, one may feel the affinity with these characters that rebel against their own parameters. Perhaps they represent the postmodernist psychology which questions various cultural norms evoking a dialogue between freedom and restrictions, individual and social, and real versus virtual. It is an everlasting quest for refined version shaped by the dialogic consciousness of the post modernist world.

### **Bini B.S , "Answerability, Alterity and Annihilation: The Self and the 'Confessional' Writing"**

The paper looks mainly at the complex dynamics of alterity and answerability with reference to the genre of 'confessional writing.' It is also a reading of the symbolic erasure of the self through writing and the actual annihilation of the writer through the act of suicide. Bakhtin's idea of answerability is not about the didactic functions of art. It has a more nuanced philosophy of alterity. The term, 'confessional,' with its religious-moralistic connotations might look problematic when I use it to imply writing that captures one's own lived or constructed life-worlds. I retain the term 'confessional' in the paper precisely because of its dialogic and ethical undertones. Writing one's life and the writer's life have a complex mutuality operative through moments of entanglements and dissociations. In the 'confessional,' the other and the modes of alterity are accommodated through a communicative-performative-participative act of reading and interpretations. Presumably, 'confessional poetry' makes a dark carnival out of one's intimately personal life and self. The carnival here is a metaphor of participation, giving access to many 'others' or an amorphous crowd (readers) to an otherwise unapproachable domain of the self. The act of writing is an act of opening up or covering up; it is a phenomenological reengagement with the selves that go into the construction of a narrative persona who performs a multi-logic, multi-pronged speech act with a heterogeneous assemblage of readers. Whether the life and the self manifested therein are authentic is not the concern. Once the life and the self become a text, they live through polysemic interpretations performed by diverse perspectives. To illustrate how a monologue encompasses cacophonous dialogues with oneself and the readers, I use the works and lives of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton. What is being celebrated in the dark carnival of their poetry is death and it is ultimately a paradoxical obliteration and assertion of the self. The paper look into the suicides of these writers in the light of the Bakhtinian idea of answerability.

## **Cornelia-Catrinel Dunca, “Dialogism, Queerness, Abjection: A Speculative Engagement”**

Dialogism, as a methodological tool, can be brought to bear quite effectively upon the multiplicities of (literary or social) Indian cultural ethos. Read dialogically, the often polyphonic, often dissonant voices of state apparatuses, for example, permit a gesturing towards transgressive spaces and practices, towards the space of the carnivalesque, perhaps.

At the same time, one cannot but eye with suspicion the uneasy relationship that dialogism as it is currently constructed, has with the abject, with the figure of the abjected. From a particular queer feminist position, one particularly interested in identities and identity formation, but identities as processes of becoming, shaped in something that could be described as the polyphony referred to above, one is bound to raise a quizzical eyebrow at what appears to be a complicity of dialogism as a methodology, purely with the realm of the symbolic, taken for granted as all-encompassing. Does the symbolic, then, afford us the possibility to approach meaningfully narratives and lives, which have not been part of the idealized heteroglossia of India? Does the symbolic, towards the fissures of which the carnivalesque gestures, provides the language of the abject? Does the engagement with the symbolic on terms generated within itself allow for an engagement with the language of abjection—in social theory, in philosophical framing of existence, in literary endeavours?

If one is to read literature, specially Indian queer literature, as ‘probably a version of the apocalypse that seems to me [Kristeva] rooted, no matter what its socio-historical conditions might be, on the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so—double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject,’ how does that shape our relationship to dialogism, as a framing tool, as a reading lens, but more importantly, as a philosophical position?

The paper attempts to engage with a peculiar triad: the philosophical context out of which dialogism emerges, and which it, therefore, bears within itself even at moments of methodological disavowal; the contemporary philosophical and social delineation of queer lives and narratives (with special emphasis on lesbian lives and narratives) in India; and the overarching reaching towards the semiotic, through abjection, as an attempt to reclaim, in what may yet be a dialogical process, what has been, as a matter of course, swept under the carpet as belonging to a pre-symbolic world. A number of texts will provide points of arrival and departure—vocal, if one is to construct it in these terms, voices of abjection. The idea is not to fix a new framework, to tweak dialogism into suitability to queer theory, specially made in India. The idea is to explore, in the dialogic interaction between the elements of the triad mentioned earlier, what are the possible philosophical openings which might prove useful in our academic and lived engagements with queer lives.

## **Craig Brandist, “The Early Soviet Critique of Indo-European Philology and the Bakhtin Circle”**

In the first third of the 20th Century Russian philologists and orientalists developed a path-breaking critique of Indo-European philology in which the entanglement of scholarship and imperial ideology was subject to sustained scrutiny for the first time. The idea that while the East had declined, the expressive potential of Sanskrit had been transferred to European languages, leading to the rise of an allegedly superior culture and justifying colonial expansion was analysed and rejected. It was replaced with the idea that not only were all languages of a mixed nature, but that the presence of the same semantic material, from individual linguistic roots to forms of poetic metaphor and plot were the result of a universal process of material and cognitive development. While this idea permeated much positivist thought at the end of

the 19th Century, it took on a specific form in Russia at the time of the Revolution, and led to some unique formulations that have generally been associated with the work of the Bakhtin Circle. The current paper will explore these ideas, and discuss how Indian narratives were incorporated into a universal historical poetics that radically transformed thinking about the history of literature. Bakhtin's work of the late 1930s will be shown to have drawn on these ideas, and that they can better be appreciated with reference to the debates in which they emerged.

### **Darshana Trivedi, "Understanding Others: A Study of Dalit Women's Writing through Dialogism"**

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin was a Russian philosopher, literary critic, semiotician and scholar who worked on literary theory, ethics, and the philosophy of language. His theory of dialogism discusses every level of expression from live conversational dialogue to complex cultural expression in other genres and art works is an ongoing chain or network of statements and responses, repetitions and quotations, in which new statements presuppose earlier statements and anticipate future responses. The dialogic work carries on a continual dialogue with other works of literature and other authors. It does not merely answer, correct, silence, or extend a previous work, but informs and is continually informed by the previous work. Dialogic literature is in communication with multiple works. This is not merely a matter of influence, for the dialogue extends in both directions, and the earlier work of literature is as altered by the dialogue as the present one is. Taking this in account I would like to read and strike a dialogue between three texts on and by dalit women: *Sangati* by Bama and *The Grip of Change* by P. Sivakami and Savitri.

Dalit feminism has been described as a "discourse of discontent," "a politics of difference" from mainstream Indian feminism, which has been critiqued for marginalising Dalit women. Dalit feminist discourse not only questions Indian feminism's hegemony in claiming to speak for all women, but also the hegemony of Dalit men to speak on behalf of Dalit women. In such a scenario, Dalit women like Bama themselves taking the pen to articulate and record their experiences of hurt and humiliation subverts centuries old historical neglect and a stubborn refusal to be considered as a subject. *Sangati* is a record of their experiences of the joint oppression of caste and gender faced by multiple Dalit women; is in a sense an autobiography of a community. Again the dialogue between all three texts and especially their women protagonists analyses Dalits women's oppression as a triple jeopardy of oppression by double patriarchies—"discreet" patriarchy of their own caste and an "overlapping" patriarchy of the upper caste—as well as poverty. Even after sixty years of constitutional democracy the hegemonic potential of this ideology still holds and the Dalit women's question remains unresolved. The present attempt at analyzing and constructing dialogue specimens is to see how they narrativize, textualize and problematize these vital socio cultural and political questions of our times and contexts in order to reach out in new directions therefore is not just an academic exercise but is a cultural emergency and part of an inevitable cultural studies initiative.

### **Elizabeth Chalier-Visuvalingam, "The Rule of Freedom: Rabelais, Bakhtin, and Abhinavagupta"**

The best vantage point for understanding transgressive laughter is the principle of 'freedom' (svatantrya), the central concern of Rabelais (1494-1563), Bakhtin (1895-1975), and Abhinavagupta (11th C.). The medieval Christian dispensation revolved around the opposition, alternation, and complementarity between the stern, ascetic, otherworldly spiritual ideal of the Church and the periodic extended license of the popular carnival that rejuvenated this world of piety by rendering it topsy-turvy. Through Rabelais, the erudite

monk and priest, who embodied the transition to the 'humanist' era the unschooled obscene clamor of the primordial folk found unvarnished expression in early Renaissance literature. No longer capable of appreciating much less endorsing such celebration of the beast in Man, post-Enlightenment intelligentsia had sought to minimize the 'Rabelaisian' by reducing its thrust to negative anti-clerical satire, or rebuked its capricious author wherever his excesses became too obvious. By rehabilitating carnivalesque laughter as intrinsic, fundamental, and universal, Bakhtin provides precious keys for interpreting and generalizing its transgressive dimension sanctioned by both popular culture and elite esotericism in India.

However, Rabelais' own philosophy finds explicit expression towards the conclusion of *Gargantua* (1534) in the *Abbey of Theleme* (chapters 52–57), the content and language of which breathes nothing of the carnivalesque and that Bakhtin simply dismisses as irrelevant. The 'material lower body stratum' (defecation, fornication, gluttony, etc.) celebrated throughout the earlier *Pantagruel* (1532) was gradually excluded from *Gargantua*, if not repressed, and scatology becomes minimal by the Fourth Book. Such 'self-censorship' in deference to the 'humanizing' Renaissance ethos of moderation is paralleled by the self-distancing, even disdain, of the new elites from the surviving oral mass culture. Even while cultivating a superior and exclusive literate world, their medieval counterparts had, on the contrary, fully participated in carnivalesque laughter. Age-old festivals parodying and profaning ecclesiastical rites were not only held in the vicinity of and with the sanction of the Church, but were also officiated by the lower clergy. Condemnation of Rabelais by the faculties of theology was perhaps directed less at these 'happy fooleries' per se than at their 'normalization' through literary consecration.

The complicity between literate elites, inheritors of Vedism now inspired by Tantrism, and the carnivalesque transgressions of popular festivals is more comprehensible through Indian esotericism as embodied by the Great Brahmin. Mystic, theologian, philosopher, and literary theorist par excellence, the 'conservative' Abhinavagupta, worshipped the ultimate metaphysical principle as the terrifying Bhairava, all-devouring god of brahmanicide, for whom nothing was too disgusting. The explicit aim of such secret practices, mirrored in the folk carnival, was not a social revolt against the existing order but the liberation of Consciousness from both external constraints and inner compulsions. The ascetic and interdictory dimension (*sankoca*) of spiritual discipline was but the prerequisite for such expansive (*vikasa*) creativity that continued to publicly respect the established norms.

Theleme, as its name suggests, is founded on liberty: "Do what thou wilt!" But for Rabelais such 'Christian' spontaneity now presupposes taming and 'redeeming' the beast within through interiorizing the spirit rather than the letter of the Law. The revolutionary potential of such freedom, even and especially in the globalized political realm, is what Bakhtin's biased reading of Rabelais has unleashed.

### **Elizabeth Prakash Christian & Mittal Kanubhai Patel, "Bakhtin's Theory of Utterance and Dialogism"**

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin was a Russian philosopher, literary critic, semiotician and scholar. He worked on literary theory, ethics and the philosophy of language. His writings, on a variety of subjects, inspired scholars working in a number of different traditions.

According to Bakhtin, an expression in a living context of exchange is termed as "word" or "utterance." It is the main unit of meaning and is formed through a speaker's relation to otherness, i.e. other people, others' words and expressions and the lived cultural world in time and place. Bakhtin termed it as "addressivity" and "answerability." It is always addressed

to someone and anticipates, can generate a response and anticipates an answer. Discourse/strings of utterances are therefore fundamentally dialogic and historically positioned within and inseparable from, a community, a history, a place.

“Any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive... Any utterance is a link in the chain of communication.” (*Speech Genres*, 68, 84)

Bakhtin believes that there exists a gap between two persons communicating. He says that “understanding cannot be understood as emotional empathy or as the placing of oneself in another’s place (the loss of one’s own place). This is required only for the marginal aspects of understanding. Understanding cannot be understood as translation from someone else’s language into one’s own language” (*Dost.* xxxiii). Bakhtin sees this gap as existing in all communications, no matter how simple. Caryl Emerson quotes, “Two speakers must not and never do, completely understand each other; they must remain only partially satisfied with each other’s replies, because the continuation of the dialogue is in large part dependent on neither party knowing exactly what the other means” (*Dost.* xxxii). The gap can be narrowed, but not be closed.

Bakhtin’s communication legacy reaches beyond rhetoric, social constructionism and semiotics because he has been called “the philosopher of human communication.” Bakhtin concentrates heavily on language and its general use. We shall consider here, focusing particularly on a key concept of his theory: ‘Theory of the Utterance and Dialogism’. In this essay, we intend to present the nature of communication in everyday language use. We will highlight examples from the work of others that support Bakhtinian concepts.

### **Foara Das Gupta, “Dead Text or Living Consciousnesses? Bakhtinian Poetics in the Francophone African Context”**

The paper explores the possibility of looking at a text as “living” and raises a polemical question “Dead text or Living Consciousnesses?” in the context of contemporary literary analysis of Francophone African literature. Arguing that literary criticism limited to the isolated meditation on textual or contextual parameters of linguistics or themes is similar to the dissection of a dead body into its constitutive parts (of visible signs), the study adopts the poetics of the dialogical in Bakhtin’s theory to understand the living principle (of dialogic threads) that animates and binds the entire work.

The motivation behind the study is the corpus of novels of the West African writer, Ahmadou Kourouma (1927 - 2003), which cannot be analyzed completely using traditional stylistic methods. The problems are related to the logic and ordering of utterances such as elaborations, justifications, hesitations, invocations and tone of voices which send conflicting messages resulting in ambiguity. In the absence of clearly defining syntactic markers, utterances cannot be assigned to specific speakers.

Bakhtin’s theory of the novel enables us to disentangle voices and intentions. It is not a question of recognizing the visual signs in the text but of listening to utterances in, around and beyond the written discourse. The text is not dead; rather it is the forum of a lively debate between the narrator, the characters and the author, into which the reader is drawn to participate.

The study using Bakhtinian poetics provides a deeper insight into the dynamics at work in the novels of Ahmadou Kourouma as the following examples illustrate:

In the first novel of Ahmadou Kourouma, *Les Soleils des Indépendances* (1968) Bakhtin's poetics proves to be useful in detecting a difference in tone and content between utterances (sometimes between words in an utterance) in relation to the interlocutor addressed: the dialogism in the couple (Fama and his wife Salimata) works at an intimate level, that between different characters in the text (the Muslim priest, the witch doctor, the impoverished prince) operate at an ideological level; and at the personal level there is the dialogism between narrator and reader wherein the narrator plays the role of a persuader trying to change the belief systems of the reader.

*Monnè, outrages et défis* (1990) treats the common theme of colonisation but a dialogic understanding of the work adds new meaning to the novel. Dead colonial facts of history come to life as dialogic debates rage from the text in an atmosphere of total freedom. Suppressed and marginal voices participate on an equal footing with other voices.

Likewise, Kourouma's novel, *Allah n'est pas obligé* (2000) brings us to the living presence of the child-soldier, Birahima who is unable to introduce himself in clear terms without running into long justifications. These elaborations do not carry much significance unless they are seen from the dialogic angle. Birahima's self-appraisal brings to the fore his identity-crisis as he tries to judge himself dialogically from the perspective of the "other."

Bakhtin's poetics have special significance in the postcolonial scenario. Internal conflicts and secret intentions emerge from dialogic encounters of the postcolonial subject with his interlocutors. The profound influence of the "other" in the discourse of Kourouma's novels enable us to uncover effaced questions and unspoken rebuke or hidden polemic as Bakhtin calls it. Certain stylistic traits in the corpus like metaphors, repetitions, abundance of conjunctions and conflicting juxtapositions can be interpreted in a new light. The discreet masking and unanticipated unmasking of voices make a special case for study in the use of irony.

### **Gayathri. P. J, "The Queer and the Carnivaleque: Problematisation of Sexual Discourse in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani"**

Bakhtin's advocacy of a pluralist ontology and epistemology accounts for an inclusive philosophy of life and culture. His dialogics in multifarious ways helps philosophers and theorists to redefine their monologic and essentialist discourses. The pluralism and dialogicality of his theory create a discursive semantic space for accommodating difference and accounting for the diversity of existence and engagement. His discourse thus subverts the logocentric and foundational assumptions of Western philosophy and language and makes the marginal central and the central marginal. If his concepts of heteroglossia, dialogism, polyphony and ethical responsibility question the univocality of the signifiatory process of cultural practices and life, his notion of the carnivaleque radically undermines the dominance of all hegemonic discourses.

For Bakhtin, the carnivaleque is a speech genre which occurs across a variety of cultural sites, particularly in carnival itself. Carnival occurs on the border between life and art and is a sort of life itself based on the logic of play. It is a performance where there are no boundaries between performers and audience. Shattering the conventions, it admits diverse voices to create new perspectives which can unravel the relative nature of all that exists. Carnival and carnivaleque create a social space that is marked by freedom, equality and abundance. Carnival is a syncretic, ritualized pageantry which shows a particular perspective. It is a particular moment of life, at once real and ideal, universal and particular, where it escapes its official character and attains a utopian freedom. Even the self is transgressed through the practice of masking.

Carnival makes everything volatile, playful and porous. It questions and abandons all hierarchies and power structures through inversions, debasement and profanations enacted by normally muted voices and agents. Carnival, thus, is both a celebration and a deconstruction. It celebrates the marginal and the peripheral and deconstructs the dominant and the hegemonic. It creates an alternative vision of life based on the pattern and logic of play. Dismantling the hierarchies and barriers, it envisages a life of mutual co-operation and equality. It replaces the false unity of the dominant system and replaces it with the lived unity of contingency. According to Bakhtin, carnival opposes the fixity of natural order and social hierarchies and views ecology and social life as relational becoming.

In the light of this Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque, this paper would like to examine the plays of Mahesh Dattani, which perform a sort of carnival. Dattani's plays deal in a special way with the life of the queer, who are marginalized in articulating their sexual orientation. They are deprived of their sexual identity and are compelled to remain outside the discourse of sex and sexuality in society. Dattani's plays perform a carnivalesque function where these marginals occupy the central stage. This paper would like to examine how the carnivalesque works in his plays to undermine the hierarchical and the monologic discourse of heteronormative sexuality. It analyses how the marginal/subversive discourse of the queer becomes carnivalesque in subverting the univocal discourse of the dominant sexual discourses.

### **Jasbir Jain, "The Dialogicity of Travel: Nanak's Udasis"**

The present paper proposes to examine the dialogics of travel which in itself is necessarily a two-way encounter between the worlds of exteriority and interiority and which allows for a multiplicity of reactions, emotions, ideas and reflections. Semi- removed from the normal existence of daily life, it is neither a condition of exile nor of ascetic withdrawal. The focus will be on Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, who traveled widely on foot crossing borders and cultures and entered into religio-philosophical discourses with pundits, priests, mullahs and qazis over a period of several years. These journeys – there are four major ones - were to eastern parts of India, then towards the south and Ceylon, the third was to Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet while the fourth was Mecca, Medina and Baghdad. His travels were called 'udasis' the Indian language word for a condition of loneliness, emptiness or a certain restlessness. In his case the restlessness was not for worldly belonging but a spiritual quest. Travel was both a literal and a spiritual wandering in search of meaning and the Supreme Other.

A contemporary of Kabir (1440- 1518), Nanak (1469-1539) can be viewed against the background of the Bhakti and the Sufi movements, which though similar were slightly differently motivated. Yet both marked social relocations, were resistance movements and resulted in new social possibilities. Nanak's predecessors were men like Baba Farid (1173-1266) and Amir Khusro (1253-1325), both of Sufi inclinations and culture shapers. Farid's verses have a place in the Guru Granth Sahib. He contributed to the establishment of Punjabi as literary language, while Khusro was both a poet and a musician. The fact that the Gurbani is set to classical ragas can be traced to that.

Working with the theoretical background of Bakhtin and Said, the paper hopes to analyze the monological dialogue as well as the dialogical monologue, look at the roles of inspiration and reflection, the generation of new thought, the rejection of fixities and elimination of the ego. Further it proposes to open out the dynamics present in the dialogicity of travel. And the consequential flow into culture.

### **Jasmine Anand, “Bakhtinian Reading of V. S. Naipaul’s *India: A Million Mutinies Now*”**

The proposed paper aims to look at the dialogic potential in self (individual/ collective identity), culture and history through V.S. Naipaul’s *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). Naipaul here shifts the focus of historical attention from macro to micro level, that is, towards the gradual evolution of individual lives in comparison to his earlier travelogues on India. Here the personal and the public history merge together. He sees a million mutinies breaking out in the margins: mutinies of castes, of class and of gender. Through the multiple voices of people from different corners of India from its offices, kitchens, galleries and chawls; in Dalit and women movements one can precisely perceive the working of Bakhtinian dialogics. Significantly, there is a change in author’s viewpoint from *An Area of Darkness* and *India: A Wounded Civilization* to *A Million Mutinies Now* as myriad viewpoints articulated by many different characters emerge independently. The characters are not only objects of the author’s word, but subjects of their own directly significant word as well. Bakhtin sees this quality as a kind of dynamic and liberating influence which conceptualizes reality, giving freedom to the individual character, thus subverting the ‘monologic’ discourse. This particular non-fictional work is inherently dialogic, as it incorporates a broad range of human voices; some associated with the characters, others with the author, and still others apparently unconnected and free-floating. Included within this medley are the voices of authority (such as the author’s), but they are consistently undermined, contradicted, and enriched by the voices of subversion. All these voices interact and collide to create heteroglossia, in which there is no “last word,” only a continuing dialogue. Here Naipaul almost becomes de-voiced in comparison to his earlier work. In this book he has been able to come to terms with the plurality and paradox of India. He observes the individuals, records their opinions and places them against those of an earlier generation. Million voices speak of a million mutinies. Each narrator discloses a special struggle that had led to a special development. In this book, Naipaul has overcome his obsession with his response to India and looks at the country through the eyes of its people. But through the study of various personal histories, he delineates the contradictions in the public posturing and private lives of most of these characters. It is this internal, vertical split in the lives of the people that reflects, at the macro level, in form of insurgency/rebellion/mutiny.

### **Jyoti Rane, “Dialectic of Monologism: Why Novel Could not Develop as an Indigenous Genre in India”**

The main thrust of this paper is that novel as a genre could never have emerged in the communitarian Indian society. It is easy to imagine dialectic in a dialogical situation but in spite of its multilingualism and multiculturalism communities in India have remained monological. The logic of the community was always dictated by a select few who, by creating various differences managed to appropriate its voice. The result was that antithesis to a thesis was never really antithesis in the true sense and the result was always an oppressive synthesis which would in some way lead to further empowerment of the hegemon of the community.

The paper seeks to draw a parallel between the emergence of novel as a genre in Europe as explained in the article “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse” by Mikhail Bakhtin and the absence of those conditions in India which shaped our entire culture and were shaped by the culture in return making us straight forward (in the Bakhtinian sense) and monological.

In India Novel as a genre made its appearance in vernaculars only after the English language had found a stable footing among the elite in India. English was a language which was not encumbered by semantic lexical elements such as the use of honorific pronouns which made piety an inseparable aspect of social behavior. This effectively put an end to any possibility of

travesty, parody and the carnival, which according to Bakhtin are essential conditions for any novel to come into existence.

Ganeshan in his “Study of the Hindi Novelistic Literature” laments the fact that even today one fails to find the variety of experimentation in style and matter in Hindi novel which can be seen in the Western novels. He also states that Hindi novelistic form was an adaptation of the English novel which reached Hindi writers through translation of Bangla novels. One more reason why novel did not evolve indigenously in India is the particular brand of Multiculturalism which has existed in India from time immemorial. The impenetrable walls which communities erected around themselves enabled a peaceful and perennial existence. There was neither conflict nor dialogue. Such compartmentalization continues to this date and even a slight inkling of interference can cause a flare in communal sentiments. So English enabled the ‘Indian writer’ “to look at language from the outside, with another’s eyes, from the point of view of a potentially different language and style”( p138, “From the Prehistory...)

The paper aims at giving serious consideration to Bakhtin’s contention that a complete transformation in our ideas about the world can occur only under the condition of ‘thoroughgoing polyglossia and dialogism’.

### **K. M. Johnson, “Dialogism to Answerability: The Mediation of Gandhi and Bakhtin in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

Bakhtin and Gandhi are two great thinkers—though in completely different domains – who emphasized the roles of dialogue and answerability (interpersonal reciprocity) in social life. Though Bakhtin developed the concept of dialogism to account for the “double voicedness” of language and novelistic discourse, as Ken Hirschkop observes, he had in mind various kinds of literal dialogue, which characterize Western liberal political debate and the philosophy of ethics. For Bakhtin, life is an ongoing, unfinalizable dialogue, which happens at every moment of daily existence. He considers open-ended dialogue as the single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life. He observes:

Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue, a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogue fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (*TRDB* 293)

This focus on the dialogue involves a Socratic search for truth and a countering of the official ready-made truth. “Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction” (*PDP* 110). Bakhtin envisages dialogics as an effective way of resisting all kinds of monologization and essentialization in language, philosophy and public life. This dialogic orientation of all his discourse directly leads him to the notion of answerability. Unlike the Habermasian notion of answerability which relies on rationality and rational consensus, Bakhtin conceives of answerability as interaction. It is an interaction between a person and another, which modifies the persons in dialogue and the community. It is a question of mutual reciprocity which sustains humanity and the world at large.

Gandhian philosophy is primarily a dialogic philosophy which bases itself on the question of dialogue, mutual reciprocity and responsibility. His principles of non-violence and ahimsa rest fundamentally on the principle of the dialogic discovery in narrative. Gandhi’s concept of truth is a process of becoming as the actor experiments with different notions of truth and

dialogue with oneself and others. In his autobiography, he emphasizes the role of the narrative mode of thought in attaining truth. The narrative mode essentially involves dialogism and effectively counters monologism.

This paper therefore tries to understand how Gandhi and Bakhtin negotiate the concepts of truth, answerability, non-violence, ahimsa, dialogue and finally human existence and his ontology. What are the points of convergence and negotiation between Gandhi and Bakhtin? How far the notions of dialogism and answerability can create a philosophical framework for confronting the contemporary issues of terrorism, exploitation, violence, oppression and injustice? How far can these concepts mediate and negotiate the contemporary globalized world which is apparently unified and at the same time fraught with internal contradictions? How relevant are these Gandhian and Bakhtinian concepts for the 21st century? I will try to address these questions.

### **Kailash C. Baral, “Exotopy and Bakhtin”**

Exotopy or outsideness is one of the crucial concepts of Bakhtin. The Bakhtinian circle is not complete without exotopy. This concept is associated with his surplus of vision in a plenevalent domain to recognize multi-voicedness. Outsideness is also philosophically potent as it brings into focus the relationship between the “I” and the other. Some theorists believe that the outsideness of Bakhtin is nothing but a substitute for otherness. Explanations such as this do not bring the required criticality to the understanding of outsideness. In fact, the concept of outsideness generates many questions such as: is outsideness an unrealized/unrealizable antinomy to insideness? Is it part of the philosophical duality being bound to a binary? Is it structured or unstructured as a concept? Outside its implication in a polyphonic domain in narratives could this concept be explored in other domains? It seems that Bakhtin has not offered an expanded understanding of outsideness except that he makes it relational. Having kept these questions in mind, I would in this paper endeavour to explore if there is an Indian way of understanding outsideness.

### **Lajwanti Chatani, “Devaluing Culture, Misrecognizing the Self: Revisiting India’s Colonial Encounter”**

Among the many encounters and experiences that have come to shape contemporary India, colonialism remains the most poignant. Colonialism was simply not just the rule or governance of one political entity over the other; rather it was the imposition of an alien and perhaps intractable culture over the social, cultural and political life of India. On both sides of this encounter, the idea of cultural engagement was deeply problematic. For the colonial west, India was to be modernized, and “set free” by ridding her of her cultural traditions and captivating her in the cultural values of her oppressor. For India and Indians, on the other hand, aping the colonial west would not only serve to liberate India from the past but also help catapult her into an era of progress, reason and modernity. Almost all modern Indian thinkers, except Gandhi, seem to have accepted the fundamental superiority of the colonial culture of the west. For both sides, the encounter was essentially non-dialogical and positioned on a fundamental devaluing of the culture of the colonized and misrecognition of the self.

Contemporary India continues to be guided by this non-dialogical understanding of inter-cultural relationships. In fact, attempts to ‘return’ to any account of a local or historical reading of culture are similarly guised in the garb of a modern and postcolonial reading of culture and the self as the other. Recognizing, or misrecognizing the self as the other, remains the main obstacle to any meaningful cultural dialogue and this continues to be the nature of cultural exchange in postcolonial India.

The main concern of this paper is to revisit India's colonial encounter, in particular to draw from Bakhtin's reading of culture, his understanding of cultural inter-textuality and his conception of the individual. The paper argues that any attempt of engaging with India's postcoloniality, reviving the self and reinvigorating a meaningful cultural dialogue would necessarily entail reading and learning from Bakhtin. The paper, marginally though, tries to draw a relationship between the plurality and open-endedness of Bakhtin and Gandhi's politics of ahimsa.

### **Lakhipriya Gogoi; "Exploring the Potential of Dialogic Self-Narration: A Bakhtinian Reading of Selected Autobiographies from India"**

Mikhail Bakhtin's cardinal concept of 'Dialogism' talks about the presence of plurality and diversity of 'voice', 'language' 'interaction' in one single language. Bakhtin states that the "word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way." Bakhtin also says that all discourses have a dialogic orientation. On the basis of this very statement of Bakhtin, it seems quite possible to search for the potential of dialogism even in the so-called 'monologic' accounts'. Monologic accounts are supposed to talk about one voice, one language without any 'dialogue' or 'interaction between 'languages'. But does it happen in every monologic account? To investigate into this question will be the intended study of this proposed paper. In order to look into the problematic and polemics of the presence of 'dialogism' in monologic accounts the paper will take into account some of the Indian autobiographies. Autobiography as the life-story of one individual is generally supposed to be monologic accounts of the autobiographer's self. However, this very question of exploring the 'self' in an autobiography in a way, leaves room for us to investigate how the 'personal' self of an individual in the process of narration incorporates plurality of voice and language and thereby tend to be 'dialogic' in account. The proposed paper intends to study the theoretical paradigms that go into the making of this dialogic dimension of an intensely monologic genre. In doing so the autobiographies of M.K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Verrier Elwin will be read as texts where the personal self always gets mixed up with the broader 'national' selves and leaves scope for infinite occasions of dialogic interaction between multiple selves/languages.

### **Lizy Thomas & Shilpa Thomas Parmar, "Crossings Boundaries in Bakhtin's Discourse in the 21st century"**

The life and work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), and the reception of his work both before and after his death, constitute one of the most remarkable stories in modern intellectual history. Bakhtin was a Russian and studied classics at St Petersburg University. Bakhtin was proved a successful writer after his death. He gradually emerged as one of the leading thinkers of 20th century. He was a great philosopher. He insists on the social rather than the individual nature of the utterance. He introduces an "architectonic" or schematic model of the human psyche which consists of three components: "I-for-myself," "I-for-the-other," and "Other-for-me." I-for-myself is an unpredictable source of identity, and Bakhtin argues that it is the I-for-the-other through which human beings develop a sense of identity because it serves as a combination of the way in which others view me. Bakhtin has been called "the philosopher of human communication." His philosophical project on the nature on language, literature and moral responsibility places the discourse of language in a particularly unique context. For him crossing language boundaries was perhaps the most fundamental of human acts.

He was fascinated by the multiplicity of languages – not only Russian, English, French but also scores of different 'languages' that exist simultaneously within a single culture and a single

community. Translation processes were important for one social group to understand another for children to understand their parents and for the academics to understand each other in the same university.

Thus our paper will focus on ‘dialogue’ and communication in multilingual society. Further our paper will focus on the translation as the key factor to understand different cultures. The role of translation, the dialogue pattern and the importance of languages spoken in the different region will be analyzed. It will also discuss Bakhtin’s point of view on dialogue, discourse, in a multilingual world and the translation aspects.

### **Manashi Bora, “Dialogism in Rabindra Nath Tagore’s *The Home and the World*”**

Though Rabindra Nath Tagore’s *The Home and the World* was written in 1916, much before Mikhail Bakhtin put forward his thoughts on dialogism in the novel, yet Tagore’s work can be studied in the light of Bakhtinian ideas. Bakhtin in his *Discourse in the Novel* (1934-35) had identified the interrelationships between the languages of different groups of people containing their distinctive world views as the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel. Tagore’s *The Home and the World* is an interesting example of this heteroglossia. The three main characters in the novel Bimala, Sandip, and Nikhil embody a range of views on gender roles in society, on the Swadeshi Movement then taking place in the country, and on the broader issue of human conduct in this world. Nikhil and Sandip, though friends, differ widely in their approach to life in general and the Swadeshi Movement in particular. The energetic, firebrand Sandip who would not shy away from asking Bimala to get money out of her husband’s coffers for the nationalist cause is quite a foil to Nikhil whom he makes fun of as someone who achieves little because of too many moral scruples. Bimala, the demure Bengali bahu (daughter-in-law), mistress of the “home” for centuries, makes her foray into the outer world of nationalist politics spurred on by her husband Nikhil and Sandip, who represent progressive views in regard to women’s role in society as opposed to the traditionalism embodied by Bimala’s sister-in-law, the Bara Rani. Apart from these three, who belong to the educated, well-to-do class there are other characters belonging to other classes and creeds like the poor tenant Panchu, the zamindar Harish Kundu, and the trader Mirjan who bring their different perspectives on life and the nationalist movement to bear on the unfolding of the story.

*The Home and the World* records the profound change coming over Bengal in the early part of the twentieth century in the wake of British colonialism and the resistance to it which necessitated the involvement of women as well as men. The different characters in the novel articulate their different viewpoints in the debates and discussions current at the time on topical issues of gender, nation, and modernity as well as questions on human life in general. The proposed paper is an attempt to study the novel in the light of Bakhtinian ideas on dialogism and heteroglossia and their applicability in the Indian context.

### **Meera Chakravorty, “Dialogues: Challenges and Celebrations”**

Indian culture is necessarily dialogic, rich in content and argumentation and impressively original which animates a remarkable legacy and the historical and academic challenges that engendered it. Whether it is the question of measuring the basic feature of our universe as the Indian logicians attempted to raise or issues like running the government, the insightful and unusual way of public discussions are commonly found in many treatises. Often strikingly different arguments unflinching in their intellectual and emotional realism are as instructive as at times irreverent explaining how the capricious functioning of religious forces can bring in an existential disarray.

In the history of public debate in India, the tradition of 'Jijnasa' (an 'Enquiry into') has been a characteristic feature of Indian thought. The ancient scholarly texts like the *Upanishads* depict different 'Sabhas' or assemblies in which scholars like Gargi, Yajnyavalkya, Shakalya and others appear to participate quite often. Compellingly argued, original in its approach, thoroughly researched and ranging widely in the theoretical voices it invokes the *Upanishads* open up fresh ways of thinking about various issues. At a later period, the Indian Buddhists reveal a great deal of concern and commitment to discussions as a means of social interaction. The Buddhist Councils held at various places mentioned as Rajagriha, Vaishali, Kashmir and Patliputra were mainly concerned with in depth discussions exploring possible solutions in religious matters, but also addressed meanings and wider implications of social and civic duties and responsibilities. The association of Ashoka, who ruled over the bulk of the Indian sub-continent with the largest of the councils, is of particular interest, since he was strongly committed to making sure that public discussion could take place without animosity or violence. Ashoka tried to codify and propagate what must have been among the earliest formulations of rules for public discussion—a kind of ancient version of the nineteenth century 'Robert's Rules of Order'. The toleration of diversity has also been explicitly defended by strong arguments in favour of richness of variation, including fulsome praise of the need to interact with each other, in mutual respect, through dialogue (Sen: 2005). Emperor Akbar's efforts in sponsoring harmonious dialogues in which scholars of different faith participated suggest the genuine interest to celebrate both the institutionalized and the non-institutionalized critiques. Besides, both in Indian philosophical literature and in Classical Sanskrit literature like *Mrichhakatikam*, *Mudrarakshasam*, *Meghadutam* and others the celebration of diversity is amazingly rich.

In contrast with such a legacy many incidents in recent years holding the brief for the Hindu culture have increasingly become disconcerting and repellant phenomenon. This divisive way used as a strategy by some have earlier resorted to the destructive ways of bringing in revivalism merely to gain vote bank shares. What is reassuring is that the ordinary people on the one hand may have not been able to locate in this context a complex issue but still have been able to associate themselves with the broad-based cultural process and equally been able to wisely turn up to deny and defeat such obnoxious attempts.

### **Monali Chatterjee, "Bakhtin and the Implications of Social Discourse"**

Mikhail Bakhtin developed a dynamic view of language. His ideas are often referred to as Dialogism. He did not regard language as a structure that reflects society and class interests, but as a dynamic, multi-accentual phenomenon that dislocates authority and subverts or mocks from within anything solemn and authoritative. His significant treatise, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929) shows how Dostoevsky developed a 'polyphonic' (or dialogic)) form that does not attempt unification or subordination either with reference to the characters in the novel or with reference to the viewpoints of the author. This has been an area of extensive debate and research; I have tried to discuss this aspect in the paper. This paper also intends to raise questions pertaining to the relevance of Bakhtin's ideas where individuals negotiate differences through their inevitable transactions with other cultures in this age of globalization

Bakhtin's notion of 'carnivalisation' fits in very appropriately with the post modern notion of 'heteroglossia', the multiplicity of interaction. Bakhtin's 'carnivalisation' has been taken as the folk energy, the life-enhancing force that debunks the standard and the authoritative version or view point. This can also be compared to the anekaanta vaada in Indian Thought. The concept of carnivalisation has significant applications to the literary texts as well as literary

genres. An attempt has been made in this paper to explore these applications. This paper proposes to speculate upon the tenets of Bakhtin's theories upon literature and question its sociological relevance to the present day in the context of literature in general and all works that can be included under the umbrella of English literature in particular.

### **Narendra Kumar, "Orality, Theatricality and Intertextuality in the Folk Epic of Pabuji"**

Pabuji is the folk deity of Bhil and Rebari communities of Rajasthan. *The Par of Pabuji* is a pictorial rendering (on a long painted cloth scroll) of the exploits of the Rathor king of Kolu in Rajasthan, Pabuji. The reading of this Par is a ceremonial act of invoking the deity through singing and reciting Pabuji's life of valour and sacrifice. The theatrical performance of reading involves active participation of a Bhil Bhopa (playing on Ravanhatta and rendering the arthav part) and Bhopi (showing a lamp to enlighten the Par and singing the gav part). The Par functions both as the text and the portable temple of the deity.

This folk epic manifests intertextuality in the form of vernacularisation of the classical epics – the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and inspires an investigation into the process of myth formation. The site of Par reading offers a site of Bakhtinian carnival, and the text of the Par and the act of reading contain the elements of dialogic imagination.

The narrative of the Par raises some pertinent question regarding the cultural practices. What is the relationship between the classical/mainstream and the oral/vernacular literature and culture? What are the sites and possibilities of their interaction? How this interaction transforms the cultural identity of the marginal cultures? How the appropriation of classical epics empowers the marginal societies?

The present paper investigates into orality, theatricality and intertextuality as they occur in the folk epic of Pabuji to answer these questions. The vantage ground for the present purpose remains Bakhtin's writings. The researcher uses the English translation of the epic of Pabuji (*The Epic of Pabuji*) by A.D. Smith and interviews with the people involved in the perpetuation of this folk tradition.

### **Navjot Kaur, "Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Spirit of Dialogism"**

The idea of dialogue and diversity has had significant importance in the multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society of India over the centuries. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in the twentieth century has added new insights and perspectives to it. According to Bakhtin, dialogue is an antidote to monologism, generates difference and as a consequence, has the potential to expand the capacity to cross cultural and individual borders in a process called transgression.

Bearing this in mind, my paper will focus on the dialogism of the Sikh Scripture, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. It is a unique text of inter-religious spirituality unknown in the history of world religions. Its dialogism is registered in the exploration of inter-religious space by the Sikh Gurus. It carries the compositions, not only of the Sikh Gurus but also those of the Bhakti and Sufi Saints prominent among them being Bhagat Kabir and Shaikh Farid. The Bhakti thought of *Guru Granth Sahib* imbibes the divine experiences of the early Bhakti, assimilates the historical intrusions and consummates itself into Sikh devotion. Going through such interesting cultural phases, *Guru Granth Sahib* exhibits the very complex dialectics of devotional, ethical and socio-philosophical streams of thought.

In my paper, I shall discuss the selection and treatment of the Bhagat Bani encountered in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the canonization of it. I will then examine the various issues related

to the Bhagat Bani from the perspectives of the notion of a universe of discourse, the theory of the Divine Name, the idea of religious pluralism and the issue of self-definition. To fully understand the extent of interaction and mutual influence between the Bhakti tradition and early Sikh tradition, the paper further examines the Sikh Gurus' treatment of the verses of Bhakti Saints in *Guru Granth Sahib*. These were crucial for shaping the emerging Sikh identity. Sikhism, as it has emerged, fundamentally overcomes the dualism of spiritual and temporal that was present in traditional religions and philosophies of the world and lays the basis of a new way of thinking that poses a unified philosophy of existence i.e. miri-piri. It connotes both the materialist concept of human existence and the spiritual aspect of the human soul.

Based on my above study, it is evident that dialogism has the potential to open new pathways and in this spirit *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, today denotes unity of aesthetics, morality and praxis.

### **Nirja Vasavada, "In 'Dialogue' with Self, History and Culture: Exploring Dialogical Potentials in Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions*"**

*"Chidananden krushnena prokta svamukhatorjunam  
Vedatrai parananda tatvartha gyanasamyuta" (Gita Mahatmya)*

The above mentioned sloka from the *Geeta Mahatmya* indicates that the Geeta is 'authentic' and full of knowledge of all the Vedas and Puranas, as it is narrated by Lord Krishna. The Geeta, unlike other religious texts, is supposed to be the only text that is created by God, and thus has the 'authenticity' and 'originality' despite being just a spoken or narrated text, and not written. However, this notion of having the 'original' meaning was challenged by literary critics and linguists in both Indian and Western philosophy. In Indian Aesthetics, the theory of Dhvani denies the possibility of a solid and single meaning, while Western theorist like Bakhtin advocates the plurality of meaning by giving the theory of dialogism, polyphony and heteroglossia. According to Bakhtin, every expression – whether in the form of simple-conversational dialogue or in the form of literature/art, is an ongoing chain, in which every word is rooted in some context, and may have multiple meanings. Etymologically, the word 'text' is derived from the Latin *texere*, *textum*, which means 'to weave', 'woven'. Traditionally, a text was the 'fabric of words' or signs which made up a work of literature. It made the work 'permanent', a theological idea which is mentioned in the statement quoted in the beginning. It is also important here to note that the very act of 'writing', penning down, as opposed to 'speaking' makes the work permanent. However, for the theorists like Bakhtin, a text cannot be a compilation of words that have a single theological meaning. Bakhtinian notion of dialogism recognizes the multiplicity of perspectives and voices.

Taking into account this discourse on Bakhtinian notion of 'dialogue', the paper focuses on Mahesh Dattani's play *Final Solutions*. The play becomes significant in the context of this notion mainly because of its form. The play, in itself is polyphonic, literary, as Dattani has shown two selves of a single character – Hardika and Daksha. The play also includes the Diary as a form, which, again, has a dialogic nature. This way, both the form and the content of the play carry the Bakhtinian Dialogic and polyphonic nature.

### **Nutan Kotak, "Tribal Women's Word/World: A Bakhtinian Dialogic Analysis"**

Like all marginals of this world tribal women of India have been deprived of their fair share in the creation of Indian philosophical, social, and even anthropological discourse. The powerful upper-caste men have predominantly controlled the dialogues undertaken for these discourses. Nobody ever felt the need to consult the tribals, nor were they allowed to participate in the process of creating these discourses. If the tribal men were kept out of this

highly subjugated knowledge formation, then the women being involved seems like a utopian scenario.

Till recently these tribal women were even almost absent from the canonical literary forms. In fact not much has been written about the whole tribal community; one of the major reasons could be that the tribal-non-tribal interface is a fairly recent phenomenon.

The questions one asks are: Is there any need for tribal women to say anything about themselves? Do tribals have anything to say? Even the mythological depiction of tribals tries to justify the stereotypes held by the upper-castes. The Eklavyas and Shabaris have been depicted as minor characters, used only to further the narrative by juxtaposing their littleness against the greatness of the protagonist.

Today's postcolonial Bakhtinian world has enabled us to look at these people differently. The contemporary theorists are reexamining the concept of "the other" and critics like Bakhtin, Derrida, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and others have intensely debated in favor of the so-called "other."

This paper is an attempt to understand the tribal woman's world through the Bakhtinian analysis of her word (read literature). Most of this literature till recently has been oral literature. Hidden in the stories and the folklore is a treasure trove of the lived experiences of these women. Their survival strategies and their wisdom are essential part of these stories. The stories when told in their own language have a different interpretation of the tribals themselves compared to the prominent idea of who and what the tribals are. In Bakhtinian terms the "addressivity" and the "answerability" of these words is definitely worth examining. This paper attempts to decipher the Gujarati tribal literature—both by the tribals as well by the non-tribals, from the point of view of Bakhtin's Dialogism. The time and space modules created by Bakhtin are immensely relevant to this marginal community, especially the women and their absent presence. Mahasweta Devi's works on the lives of the tribals will also be discussed in this light during the course of the paper.

### **P. Milan Khangamcha, "Indian Philosophy of Language: A Modal of Pan-Linguistic Reference"**

This paper attempts to discern that, the distinction between word (sabda) and sound (dhvani), is indicative of the fact that, the difference in the external or physical form of languages (whether uttered or written) of the cultural communities or groups of the world nowhere reveals any different referents or objects in the world. That is, in as much as the common objects in the lived world is concerned, despite the variations in the outward forms of world languages; there is certain commonality in the cross-cultural concepts of meanings. Looking beyond the Wittgenstein's theory of language as a game, and the post-modern theories of hermeneutics and language, the said common elements on the conceptual and formal planes not only points to a likely context of a shared but diverse ontological space but also, that, they act as grounds for cross-cultural dialogue.

As far as its formal structure is concerned, the relationally and objectively complex nature of language indicated by its interrelated grammatical and logical analysis shows semantic sharability for almost all the speech-communities in spite of their physical variations. The presence of similar such conceptual structure engenders cross-cultural dialogue in any pluralistic society. A world view which while remaining a unified system, the close connection between the logico-grammatical analysis of the complex relation between word or sentence and meaning ontologically complex and diverse linguistic reference which seems to encompass the entire possible range of "what we (can) know" and "what we (can) say"

in terms of Bhartrihari's definition of substance as that which is referred to by pronominal words like "this" and "that" and "which is purported to be distinguished (bhedyā) by quality (bhedaka) from other substances by virtue of being expressed by some name or other" based on the Panini's rule prescribing ekasesha. This is related to Nyaya's "definition of definition" (lakshanasya lakshana); in the terminology of P. F. Strawson the process of "identification and re-identification" and Vaiseshika Sutra's similar view pertaining to the role of substance in distinguishing objects from one another (Samanya visesha iti buddhyapeksham, 1.2.3). There is a parallelism between the Aristotelian substance being discussed with reference to "subject" of predication and "subject" of change and the concept of dravya as the substratum of change and quality, and logico-grammatical concept of substantive-adjective relation (viseshya-viseshana sambandha). The Paninian concept of "Existence" as the "great summum genus" located in multifarious particular inferior substances and delimited world of word-meaning (padartha) are also discussed.

These and many more necessary logico-grammatically determined linguistic structures being formally developed in the Indian philosophy of language are also, to a great extent, discerned in other non-Indian counterparts. Their implied sense of across-traditions parallels provide us the ground for investigation into those similar semantic patterns so that, today's kind of problem wrought, still ideal diversity inherent in the idea of multiculturalism, may find a philosophical modal for undertaking serious pan-cultural dialogue.

**Paromita Chakrabarti "Talking Texts, Writing Memory: A Bakhtinian Reading of Meena Alexander's *Fault Lines*"**

This paper will use Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism that emphasize consciousness as a multilayered product of our interactions with our self and others, to read South Asian American Diasporic writer Meena Alexander's 1993 *Fault Lines: A Memoir* and the revised 2003 version as dialogic texts. Alexander's memoirs engage, contest and alter each other to disrupt the possibility of singular meanings and absolute truth. Instead, the texts offer a conflicting and incommensurate idea of the past and fractured yet intensely interconnected vision of the future. For Bakhtin, the presence of multiple voices inside as well as outside the self generates conversation which is articulated through language. Language, which is able to break the authority and autonomy of any single voice, allow all degrees of plurality and make connections with all kinds of otherness, is dialogic. Meena Alexander's 1993 *Fault Lines* and the 2003 version testifies to the impossibility of articulating one single way of knowing and being in the diaspora and acknowledges a dialogically constructed heteroglot world that leaves its trace in the anxiety and agony of certain habitation. All her attempts to define herself in finite, graspable categories fail; as the reality of multiple fractures, multiple migrations, that have cracked her up become pronounced. As she continuously negotiates the complex intersections of cultures, languages, race, gender, history, space and time, her perpetual search for language through which she can comprehend her past and her constant search for a safe home mark her writing of both the memoirs with a diasporic angst that embodies the trauma of fragmentation and dislocation. The violent splintering of the sexually abused self and the unspeakable trauma that the 1991 memoir masks is remembered through writing over in the 2003 version, by the relentless push of memory against history and the continuous wrestling of language of scholarship with the voice of the body. By choosing to write a memoir twice over, Alexander pushes against the boundaries of the 1991 text, prying open the dark memories of abuse sutured in silence and placed in the gap between forgetting and remembering. In Bakhtinian terms, her writing of the 2003 memoir is evidently an example of "dialogized heteroglossia" that cross-talks in multiple tongues: literally in Malayalam, Hindi, Tamil, Arabic, French, English and metaphorically to the 1991 memoir

in conflicting voices that hide as well as reveal, continue as well as disrupt and concedes as well as interrogates. A close reading of both the works show how Alexander is able to create a fountain head of composites that threaten to open the floodgates of memory, dislodge boundaries of literature and gender, and signal the upheavals and “perils” of contact zone. The paper asserts that 1991 *Fault Lines: A Memoir* and the 2003 revised version can be read as competing centripetal and centrifugal texts that operate in simultaneity and in constantly shifting moments of utterance; cautioning us about the painful unreliability of history and memory, and the deeply ambiguous contours of language and discursive representation.

### **Payel C Mukherjee, “Dialogic Encounters in Cosmopolitan Knowledge Spaces”**

In this paper, we attempt an analytical understanding of the knowledge spaces generated in the thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950), and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) through the trope of cosmopolitanism. There have been debates regarding the possibility of an existence of a cosmopolitan world and worldview. Critics have situated the concept of cosmopolitanism in different camps. Martha Nussbaum, for example, impinges on the necessity of producing world class citizens and opposes any kind of identity politics that ties down an individual’s alliance with local groups. Richard Rorty on the other hand, is of the view that a national identity is essential to define the individual identity. In our discussion of cosmopolitanism, we shall primarily focus on the theoretical frameworks provided by Tagore, Ghosh, and Bakhtin. Through this comparison, we intend to analyze the concept of cosmopolitanism in Tagore’s abstractions, Aurobindo’s idealization of the human space, and compare them with Bakhtin’s concept of dialogical plurality. The choice of the thinkers has been intentional, with a purpose to understand the creative bridges between eastern and western philosophical deliberations. The gap between the eastern abstraction of cosmopolitan ideology and the western experience of the concept through lived spaces is the core of our study. Tagore opposes fanatic nationalism and asserts on an allegiance towards a world community of humans. His “Viswa-Bharati,” which means the communion of the world with India, was designed to be an epicenter of knowledge and also act as a node of interconnected cultures. For Tagore, it was knowledge and knowledge generation that forms the basis of his vision regarding cosmopolitanism. Aurobindo Ghosh, on the other hand, understood cosmopolitanism through individual spaces. His thoughts have been expressed through Auroville, a planned township founded by Mirra Alfassa, his disciple and successor. The cosmopolitan aspect of the city lies in its charter which says “Auroville belongs to nobody. It belongs to humanity as a whole”.

Cosmopolitanism in the Indian context conceived by thinkers like Tagore and Aurobindo is at the level of abstraction. It is through Bakhtin’s concept of dialogic plurality that we are able to situate the idea of cosmopolitanism at the level of praxis in the social sphere. Bakhtin provides the perspective into the western ideas and ideologies both by opposing epistemological “-isms” and stressing on the significance of experiencing knowledge spaces. The Bakhtinian space is dynamic and open to combative, interpretative, cheerful interactions and other interrelations. This indeterminate cultural space has the gaps, silences, leaps, potential arrival of the next, and no subsumable voices.

In these dialogic encounters, there is a scope for a shift from the unified ideas to critical notions and alternative perspectives—a kind of polyphony. Thus, this paper is an attempt to creatively understand cosmopolitanism from the range of utopia and abstraction to a concrete possibility in cultural spaces.

## Pooja Mehta, “Translation as a Dialogue: A Perspective”

As stated in *Problems of Dostovsky's Poetics*, “The dialogic nature of consciousness is the dialogic nature of human life itself. The single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human existence is the open-ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds...” (Bakhtin, 1984, p.293) The Dialogic criticism proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin opens up the new perspectives to study language, literary work, culture, history and so on. He is also known as the philosopher of human communication.

India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual country. Diversity is born from multiplicity and diversity and dialogue go together. Translation has helped knit India as a nation throughout her history. It brought, and still brings languages closer to one another and introduces to one another diverse modes of imagination and perception and various regional cultures thus linking lands and communities together. In absence of translations the ideas and concepts like ‘Indian literature’, ‘Indian culture’, ‘Indian philosophy’ and ‘Indian knowledge systems’ would have been impossible. Translation also plays a role in extending the scope of language and reframing the boundaries of the sayable. New terms and coinages necessitated by translation create new vocabulary and contribute to greater expressibility. According to G.N. Devy, Indian consciousness is a ‘translating consciousness’.

If one applies Bakhtin’s theory of Dialogism or tries to study the connections between translation and dialogue, one finds interesting analogies between them. Translation is a dialogue. It is a dialogue between cultures, between languages, between author and translator, between translator and reader. Above all, it is a dialogue between two texts, the target and the source text. When a translator translates a text, he is in constant dialogue with the source text and the author. In the process dialogues take place between the known (text), the knower (author or the translator) and knowledge. In other words, it is a communication between the original author, translator and the knowledge which is revealed by the text. To Bakhtin, text is not a self contained organism and the language represented in the text is not an alien entity; instead it is a site for dialogic interaction of modes of discourse or multiple voices.

The term ‘dialogism’ denotes the quality of an instance of discourse that explicitly acknowledges that it is defined by its relationship to other instances, both past, to which it responds, and future, whose response it anticipates. In translation, the translator chooses and translates a part of one’s past and through his translation makes it present to himself and may be to others also and generates future for other readers, researchers and translators. A translated text serves as a source text for many languages in many cases and this process continues.

*Tarjumo, anuvad, bhashantar* etc. are words used to denote translation. Noted Gujarati poet and critic Umashankar Joshi has commented on the terms like *anuvad* and *bhashantar* used for translation. He says that *bhashantar* implies change of the language while *anuvad* implies an attempt to recapture and voice it again. In the process of recapturing and voicing the source text the translator is in constant dialogue with the author, with the culture, with the language. Voloshinov also says that to understand another person’s utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it and to find a proper place for it in the corresponding context. Any true understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding a word in a foreign tongue is the attempt to match it with the ‘same’ word in one’s own language.

Any word is dialogic in nature according to Bakhtin; then the language, and translation too is dialogic. In this light, I would like to discuss Translation as a dialogue in detail.

## **Pooja Venkatesh, “The Context in Flux: Dialogicality of Self Impacted by Voluntary Family Migration”**

Emerging adulthood is characterized as a developmental phase of life where self-reflection is impacted by the experiences of youth, primarily that of adolescent youth. The perceived experiences of Erikson’s classic stage of identity exploration, supply food for thought for the emerging adult thinking in retrospect. Thus, where the experiences of adolescence become crucial in the emerging adult’s process of reflection and identity formation, migration adds to the fluctuations and variations already present: The main institutions one engages with during adolescence are usually the family, school, peer groups and interest clubs or hobby circles and the underpinnings of self-formation find root in the experiences shared within these social spheres. Hence, the nature of these institutions becomes paramount in tracing personal histories and mapping self-anchors. When the nature of these systems is dynamic and constantly changing, the individual interacts with multiple copies of the same systems in varying contexts, within several short spans of time. In this manner, the growing adolescent encounters the context in flux, and negotiates one’s sense of self within multiple levels of variations.

In order to understand the impact of changing contexts on identity formation, the Dialogical Self Theory (DST), developed by Hubert Hermans based on the works of William James and Mikhail Bakhtin, has been chosen as the theoretical framework of this study. The DST is particularly relevant because (i) it understands the self as comprising Me-positions drawn from the immediate environment and therefore underscores the importance of context, (ii) the theory parallels Indian conceptions of selfhood, where ‘I’ and the ‘Me’ positions are analogous to the ‘atman’ and ‘ahamkar’, and (iii) the framework understands it from the perspective of the ‘self as the experiencer’ and does not typecast based on predefined identity and acculturation archetypes.

In-depth interviews of nine participants between 18 to 25 years, who have migrated intra-nationally (between states) and internationally (across countries), have been conducted and are in the process of analysis. Qualitative coding and analysis from pilot study indicates the potential to understand the dialogicality within differing I- and Me- positions, arising from experiences of migration (such as multiple conceptions of student self arising from different school experiences). The analysis has also indicated the dialogical nature of symbols associated with migration (such as ‘home’, ‘where one is from’, and other attached to spaces). Furthermore, the role of Roland’s we-self or the familial self becomes important to consider as the family becomes the common denominator within different forms of migration: this study also hopes to understand the dimension of the we-self within the dialogical and the particular role it plays in formation of self.

## **Rajashree Bargohain, “Locating Polyphony: A Study of the Ramayana in Assam”**

The Ramayana is considered to be the *adi-kavya*, the first poetical composition in the classical Sanskrit tradition which has served as an immortal and inexhaustible source of inspiration for poets down the ages and across geographical and cultural locations. To quote Bakhtin’s remark in *The Dialogic Imagination*, “texts continue to grow and develop even after the moment of their creation...they are capable of being creatively transformed in different eras, far distant from the day and hour of their original birth” (422). The number of Ramayana tellings and their enormous hold upon the social, cultural, religious and political imaginations of the societies in South and South East Asia has been extensively studied by Ramayana scholars. Until about the middle of the twentieth century, Ramayana scholarship was basically focusing on a textual, philological outlook which holds the view that the Ramayana of Valmiki is the ‘original’ or ‘authoritative’ text, also taking into account the text’s long history of transmission through

various derivative versions and forms. However, more recent scholarship on the Ramayana tradition has adopted a non-hierarchical view in analyzing the different manifestations of the Rama story available across an impressively vast array of cultures, communities, genres, languages and viewpoints. This approach enables the analysis of the various Ramkatha tellings in the context of the social, cultural or political matrix within which it is located and evolved. The numerous tellings within the fluid and heterogeneous Ramayana tradition take on different forms according to the changing concerns of the people who have undertaken and adopted the telling. The 14th century Assamese poet Madhav Kandali says in the course of his Ramayana: “Valmiki wrote in various rhymes. I have with great care, looked into them and have written in condensed form from what I could understand in my own way. Who there is, who will understand all the ‘rasas’? The poets write in the ways of the peoples; sometimes they supply things of their own and sometimes they lengthen as the subjects would demand. It should be borne in mind that there are not words of God but are the creation of man. So one should not take offence at my diversion.” An earlier poet Harivara Vipra proclaims the presence of polyphony of viewpoints in his work Lava-Kushar Yuddha. His Assamese words can be translated into English as: “Some are pleased when a pada (a single couplet in Assamese) covers a Sloka; others are glad when a Sloka is elucidated by adding new materials. Harivara Vipra has composed these pleasant verses of the Asvamedha sacrifice by taking the essence of different viewpoints.”

This paper will make an attempt to analyse and identify this polyphony within the Ramayana tradition by examining regional tellings of the Ramayana or tellings found among marginalized sections. In doing so, the paper will attempt to locate within them a challenge to the monologic, hegemonic and puritanical view of the Ramayana by manifestations of the Bakhtinian “grotesque body” and elements of the “carnavalesque” within them. The focus will especially lie on the Ramayana tellings found in Assam, including the Ramayana of Madhav Kandali, as well as the folk variations of the Ramayana in the region found in the form of lullabies, wedding songs, bihu songs, boat racing songs, magic spells, religious plays, magic spells and proverbs et al.

### **Rajni Mujral, “Bakhtin and Prahasana: Grotesque Body and the Aesthetics of Transfiguration”**

The paper will be engaging with the agentive role of grotesque body in constituting the aesthetics of transfiguration in Indian comic tradition. It aims to look at the status of the grotesque body in the genre of praahasana to elaborate on how the comic space allows itself for this formation mediated by carnivalesque. For Bharata *hasya* emerges from *sringara* in a low-mimetic mode. He identifies deformed body as one of the *vibhavas* of *hasya*. By taking Hasyarnava and other praahasanas for my study, I will attempt to elaborate on how this distorted, deformed and diseased body which Bharata refers to, that grotesque body as Bakhtin says, institutes carnivalesque discursively. The comic here emerges in the arena of the physiological and the body becomes a mode to embody the feeling of “rapture” in Nietzschean sense.

The grotesque body in these texts raises different questions about the role of transgression-transfiguration and laughter in art form: body as an agency and as a medium of the subversion, and how the body which is inherent to us transgresses the zone of the familiar and becomes an agency of subversion. The grotesque body in the text evokes laughter through its openness and its diseased and deformed form.

The body in the texts is a protruding, open body which evokes desire and enhances the need of release of emotions. This enhancement of emotions creates a desire for transgression. The boundary between the desire and transgression is the site where the grotesque emerges on and

through the body. Carnavalesque brings its effect results in transfiguration. The texts depict desire not as psychic rather as something which is rooted in the body and which emerges through the body in a physiological way. Thus body becomes a space where desire (psychic) interpenetrates the material body and in this interaction, in this process the grotesque transgresses from the space of the unfamiliar to the familiar, generating the possibility for the feeling of rapture which violates, transfigures and transgresses.

### **Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri & Jaswinder Singh, “Bakhtin and the ‘Bani’ of Guru Ravidass in the *Guru Granth Sahib*”**

The objective of this paper is to study the “bani” of Guru Ravidass in the *Guru Granth Sahib* as an example of the “heteroglossia, multiple voices of a given culture, people and epoch” propounded by Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin in his seminal work *The Dialogic Imagination*. Polyphony, heteroglossia and dialogism are some of the key terms whereby Bakhtin postulates the concept of social discourse inherent in genres such as the novel wherein social conflicts and tensions are invariably underpinned. This study contends that Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin’s polyphonic ‘social discourse’ does not confine its modular application to the canonical Russian texts, rather its validity can be traced and tested in holy texts such as the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is more than a holy text. It is the only holy text in the world which has been respected as the ‘perpetual alive Guru’. Being a single text, the *Guru Granth Sahib* incorporates the holy Bani (in the form of hymns and Shabads) of seven Gurus, fifteen saints, eleven poet scholars and three Sikhs. Thus the total number of composers of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is thirty-six which validates our contention that the *Guru Granth Sahib* is a holy text embodying plurality of voices. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is perhaps the only religious text which incorporates the “bani” (hymns and “shabads”) not only of Sikh Gurus but also of the saints and scholars representing Hindu, Muslim, ‘dalit’ and other communities. Saint Kabir, Saint Sheik Farid and Guru Ravidass are among some of the saints who were from different religions and castes, yet their writings have been incorporated in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Since the study of the entire *Guru Granth Sahib* is beyond the scope of this paper, the present study will confine itself the “bani” of Guru Ravidass who was a dalit saint. The study will view the “bani” of Guru Ravidass as a writing that moves beyond the ‘private craftsmanship’ and achieves a status of social discourse by becoming a voice among the voices of Gurus and other saints. Guru Ravidass, apart from his spiritual teachings, has voiced the social inequity and tensions prevalent during his time thereby critiquing the impregnability of casteism and other social ills rampant under the Brahmanic model of social hierarchy. Thus the “bani” of Guru Ravidass works as one of the voices in the *Guru Granth Sahib* which can be viewed as a polyphonic social discourse as propounded by Bakhtin.

### **Raminder Singh (Sandhu), “Bakhtinian Thought and Medieval Punjabi Literature”**

Although it is very tempting to dwell here, solely and of course, in detail, on any one of the several concepts and ideas—dialogue, polyphony, architectonics, carnival, chronotope etc—advanced by Bakhtin or on its suitability and applicability in various but inter-related disciplines, yet I have confined myself to provide a synoptic account of the Bakhtinian thought in general and then tried to find its appropriateness in the realm of medieval Punjabi literature and culture, especially in the literary forms and genres of the time. Therefore, the article consists of two main parts. In the first part the scientific basis and philosophical roots of Bakhtinian thought and its further development will be discussed. The second part will deal with the analysis of selected medieval Punjabi literary genres with the insight provided by Bakhtinian thought.

There is an effort to chart, in the first part of the paper, how Bakhtinian thought emerges, affected by and shaped through various scientific and philosophical developments of the time. How and to what extent the different thinkers like Cassirer, Scheler, Brentano, Simmel, Buhler etc. across the various schools of German philosophy—neo-Kantian, phenomenology, gestalt theory— and scientific development specially in the field of physics play their role in shaping the Bakhtinian thought as we know it today? It is interesting to see in the wake of all these bases the approach Bakhtin develops to overcome the problems ranging from the specificity of literature to various contemporary philosophical and theoretical problems.

Furthermore, the article explores the Bakhtin circle's polemic with two towering figures in their respective field—Freud and Saussure. How does Bakhtin be able to pursue a totally different point of departure in linguistics? How he succeeds in bringing about a new way of looking at language that put much weigh on the importance of speech, utterance and dialogue? How he succeeds in advancing the notion of architectonic form that is able to solve the form-related issues ranging from the problem of the syntax to the problems of literary scholarship? A special stress will be given here on his concepts of heteroglossia and dialogism. Carrying forward this point of view regarding language drives him to discover the concepts as polyphony and carnival during his extensive study on the novel where he sees literature/novel as an utterance. Questions like what is carnivalized literature, what is the role of laughter and grotesque images in carnivalized literature will be addressed finally. However, the style of this part of the monologue may vary in the degree of execution from the order given here.

The second part concentrates on discovering the dialogic nature of medieval Punjabi literature and the roots of the concepts used by Bakhtin in Punjabi culture. One can easily find types of serio-comical genres and carnivalized literature within the realm of Punjabi folklore tradition. It is also interesting to see that how, in medieval Punjabi literature, Sufi poetry and Gurmat poetry get involved in a dialogue under the influence of Indian Bhakti Movement. The Sufi Movement itself is deeply impacted by the dialogue between Islam and Indian Bhakti Movement. Not only its ideological content but its forms are also in some sense, a result of interaction between two different cultures. Then comes the Guru Granth, the holy book of Sikhs. It is permeated with a dialogic sense of understanding. The notion of “the other” occupies an important place in the ideological orientation of this great poetic text. It is notable here that alongside the ideological content, forms and genres used in it are dialogised. Then there are “low” genres in medieval Punjabi literature that are highly carnivalized. This entire section will bring about the dialogicality inherent in Punjabi literature and culture with the help of special references from the relevant texts.

In the very end this article will recommend further systematic study to reveal factors that helped in repression of the dialogue at times from the period of Vedas to modern times and how these hurdles can be removed to reinstate dialogue.

**Roshni Patel, “Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity: A Study of Krupabai Satthianadhan's *Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Life*”**

Colonial India became the site on which the clash between tradition and modernity took place. This clash is reflected in the ambivalent attitudes of the nationalists, the reformers, the writers of that period towards colonial modernity. Stuart Blackburn and VasudhaDalmia argue that ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ cannot be categorized as static and monolithic categories (09). As various discourses of colonial times reflect this clash and colonial modern literature is one of them. The novel *Kamala, the Story of a Hindu Life* (1894) by Krupabai Satthianadhan reveals the indigenous customs and traditions oppressing women of the colonial India through the depiction of the life of Kamala as a child bride in the Hindu Brahmin orthodox family.

The novel illustrates the continuous conflict between tradition and modernity going on in the mind of Kamala, a colonial modern woman and the conflict is reflected through her inner dialogues. Moreover, the novel also provides various points of view of the characters through their speeches and dialogues. It is thus useful to take some insights from Bakhtin's idea of dialogism as he argues,

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.... Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel, each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized) (Bakhtin 262).

The novel is written in English language and the writer does not use the speech types like dialects. However, according to Bakhtin, the stylistically individualized speech of characters is but one of the types of compositional unity of the novelistic whole (262). In the context of the novel Kamala, it becomes an important moment when there occurs a dialogue between Kamala and Ramchander, her childhood friend and a relative. Here the voices of Kamala and Ramchander are dialogized. Kamala's voice which denies the desire clashes with that of Ramchander which wants the desire to be fulfilled. In the novel Kamala, speeches of characters are one of the fundamental unity through which many social voices are brought out.

This paper attempts to study the novel *Kamala: The Story of a Hindu Life* (1894) in the context of Bakhtin's idea of dialogism and tries to understand how the narrator uses the dialogue as a mode to show the inner battle or conflict between tradition and modernity which goes on in Kamala's mind. The paper attempts to show how through the mode of dialogue, on the one hand, the articulation of desire by Kamala marks the emergence of an individuated self in colonial modern Indian novel, and how on the other hand, it quickly vanishes in the name of shame and tradition. The present paper thus, attempts to study how Kamala confronts the clash of two voices of tradition and modernity throughout the novel and finally reaches to the conclusion of establishment of her goodness through the final act of denial of her love and desire for Ramchander. In the beginning, it is the voices of Kamala and Ramchander that are dialogized. Kamala's voice which denies the desire clashes with that of Ramchander which wants the desire to be fulfilled. Thus, the paper attempts to argue how the colonial modern novel is not monologic but dialogic in nature.

### **S. Umesh Chandra, "Logics and Dialogics of Performing Traditions in India"**

Bharata's *Natyashastra*, considered as the first treatise on dramaturgy, is contested as a compendium of performance traditions which were the result of interaction between Sanskrit theatre and other forms of theatre. This observation implies that what Bharata envisaged as 'the theatre' was a consolidation of various theatre forms which pre existed and co existed with Sanskrit theatre. The dialogic interaction which existed among the various performance traditions during the First or Second century AD, the period in which *Natyashastra* was supposedly composed, seems to have resurfaced in the later part of the Nineteenth century. This general assumption regarding a long hiatus in theatre activities in India is based on the non-availability of documented evidence of thriving theatre activities in India after the Tenth century. The British brought to India the European performance traditions along with European performance texts. After independence the endeavor to establish a decolonized national theatre began, which precipitated inconclusive debates over the existence of recognizable pre-colonial Indian theatre on which postcolonial Indian theatre could be built. Even before this search for elusive national theatre the commercial Parsi theatres and their

offshoots which are generally called as company theatres in Karnataka and Maharashtra, experimented with the amalgamation of Western and Indian performance traditions. In post independent India whether it is Suresh Awasthi's Theatre of Roots or Habib Tanvir's Mobile Theatre or Badal Sircar's Third Stage, the intense engagement with available performance traditions in India is evident. Along with engagement with performance traditions within India, the influence of Western performance traditions on Indian theatre demands attention.

This paper attempts to analyze the dialogic relationship among performance traditions within India as well as similar relationship with performance traditions which are considered alien by some sections of the society. This paper also intends to focus on the factors which are responsible for the tendency of resistance to dialogic exchange.

### **Sangeeta Borthakur, "Polyphony and the Novel: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*"**

Polyphony means diversity of voices in a narrative. Bakhtin's basic premise has emerged from an understanding that voices are multi-layered and are embodied in language. To him, we as human beings are constituted in language and the diversity of language use in social communication and ideological claims that participants in that language make characterize language as heteroglotic. Although polyphony implies many voicedness, it also represents the collective quality of an utterance that embodies other and other's voices in an individual utterance thereby creating a dialogic relationship between voices. The dialogic nature of utterances also controls the fictional narrative in any language. Fiction as a dominant literary form has been Bakhtin's concern. Bakhtin argues that the power of the novel originates in the coexistence of, and conflict between different types of speech: the speech of characters, the speech of narrators, and even the speech of the author. Bakhtin's prime concern is the multiple voices that constitute the context of any novel that disrupt the authority of the author's single voice. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929, trans. by Caryl Emerson, 1984), he contrasts the monologic novels of writers such as Leo Tolstoy that undertakes to subordinate the voices of all the characters to the authoritative discourse and controlling purposes of the author with the dialogic form of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels, in which the characters are liberated to speak. This paper attempts to explore polyphony in the context of postcolonial fiction. Postcolonial novels represent plural voices thereby subverting the very notion of a grand narrative. The questions that seek to be addressed while examining the postcolonial narratives are: Who is telling and speaking? What is authorial location and is the author identifiable with the narrator? From whose point of view is the story told? Is the narrator reliable--can you believe him or her? Or is he or she unreliable, unable to convey the story without distortion? How does the device of the narrator "frame" work in the story? How does the reader determine what the truth is about the events reported? In attempting to answer these questions and for a better understanding of Bakhtin's theory of fiction, I shall analyze Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines* as an example of postcolonial polyphonic novel. Reading a novel as a polyphonic novel, such as *Shadow Lines* gives us a different kind of understanding to reality. We are invited to search multiple meanings instead of finding a single and finalized meaning.

### **Santosh Gupta, "Continuing Dialogues with the Past: Dialogicity in Gandhi and Nayantara Sahgal"**

Nayantara Sahgal's novel *Lesser Breeds* (2003) enters into a dialogic relation with some of Gandhi's most important ideas. Gandhi selected and developed these ideas through his interpretation of the multiple traditions he lived with in Gujarat in the later part of the nineteenth century. Jainism, Shaivism, Buddhism, and, the Parsee and Arab communities, had their distinct cultures as well. *Lesser Breeds* is located in the political turmoil in India

during the 1930s and '40s when Quit India Movement and Civil Disobedience movement were testing the British empire's strength. Non-violence as the principal method of resistance had its detractors then also, both within the country, and outside in the world, as the two major wars devastated the rest of the world. Nurullah, the central protagonist, remains an outsider, observer and skeptic, like the "fool" that Bakhtin considers to be an important presence in most folktales and later in the novel. Nurullah's observations of the practitioners of non-violent resistance open up a dialogic discussion with the ideas of Gandhi and Nehru which have been extremely important. Sahgal's novel locates the issues into the contemporary context although the novel's story narrates the political events of India up to the 1960s.

Gandhi's habit of holding discussions with his own self, with other persons, traditions and texts mark his intellectual pursuits. In his *Autobiography* (1926) Gandhi is careful in describing the various discussions that he held over vegetarianism, moral values and, later on, non-violence and passive resistance. Gandhi's constant assertion of the tentative and experimental nature of his firmly held beliefs is part of his dialogic intra-civilizational probing for truth and highest moral values. 'Non-violence' was examined through a non-religious and non-ideological system, seen mainly as a test of personal fibre, integrity and inner restraint. The intra-civilizational dialogicity became important for Gandhi, and, for all postcolonial intellectuals as the twentieth century witnessed massive destruction the world over.

Sahgal's novel *Lesser Breeds* takes one back to the violence that prevailed in the different freedom struggles and the imperial quests made in the 1930s and '40s. The novel examines these ideas, suggesting their significance for the twenty first century world where violence continues to govern personal relations, as well as international dealings. Nurullah in the novel remains unconvinced, pondering over the ideas in an open and tentative manner seeking/offering new interpretations.

This paper would examine the dialogicity within Sahgal's novel with the important ideas of Gandhi and Nehru and the dialogicity within Gandhi's own process of thinking and arguments.

### **Shamali Gupta Bose & Gaurav S. Gadgil, "Mahabharata in Kalyug: A Bakhtinian Perspective"**

Carnivalism is the reverse of everything deemed normal and Bakhtin's emphasis on carnival goes against the idea that literature or art must be unified. He suggested that major works may be multi-levelled and resistant to unification. Much of the credit for establishing parody at the centre-stage must go to Mikhail Bakhtin.

Shashi Tharoor's work *The Great Indian Novel* is a parody of the *Mahabharata* set in the times while India was going through the throes of setting up a democratic republic. Mohandas K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose and many other national leaders make their presence felt, hidden behind the mask of characters.

If Bakhtin's strategy of the carnivalistic legend is to debase the hero and bring him down to earth, make him familiar, and humanize him, then we see this technique being used in Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*. This paper would attempt to study the subversive parodic structures evident in abundance in the character sketches of Ganga Datt, Dhritarashtra, Pandu, Vidura, Drona and the personification of democracy, political parties, the Indian Army, the media, The Civil and Foreign Services among others.

The mainstream Hindi film *Kalyug* (directed by Shyam Benegal, 1981), too is inspired by the great Indian epic *Mahabharata*. A dark film which unfolds the tensions and hatred between cousins belonging to competitive corporate families, encapsulates the moral brittleness of a

modern day society with its destruction and tragedies, violence and prohibitions, strategies and schemes. This paper would also attempt to study the character of Karna which amply demonstrates Bakhtin's grotesque realism, as a combination of life and death into a single bodily form. It leads to questions of the strength within the individual.

Is it then possible to look at Karna also as a character who is at the intersection of the public v/s private domain, wherein he represents the personal as well as the social form of human life?

On the other hand the importance of carnival lies in its celebrating of the grotesque body. The omnipotent sense of lovemaking and sexual release are pivotal to the carnival release... children born out of marriage, offsprings born out of dalliances with sadhus, the wife of Dharma Raj (a quiet, strong antagonist of the film resembling Draupadi), sensuously assuring her brother-in-law of love and care are evident in the film.

Ancient Indian dramaturgy prides itself of the vidushaka (the clown). The clown is often the sutradhara who can laugh at people, irrespective of the caste, class, gender of the characters in the act. Just as Bakhtin's carnival brings together the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid much of Indian folk theatre has the power of the vidushaka to turn life inside out and showcase that which is farcical in life.

We would also take up the Marathi comedy drama, *Yada Kadachit*, as a subtext, which uses elements of the traditional Marathi folk theatre form to turn the tables on the modern day politicians in an outrageously funny manner by subverting the conventional ideologies of social and political powers through characters and situations from the epic *Mahabharata*, affording the audience a liberation for their suppressed angst against hegemonic hierarchies.

### **Shaweta Nanda, “Herstory’: Re-Reading Indian Epics from the Feminine Perspective”**

“Reading is just as creative an activity as writing and most intellectual development depends upon the new readings of old texts. I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottle explode.” --- Angela Carter

One cannot help but notice the increasing engagement of contemporary women writers with Indian Epics, Myths and Fairy tales in their works. I intend to explore the possible reasons behind this phenomenon. Epics and myths are a fertile site in order to analyze the manner in which women have been perceived rather constructed and designed by patriarchy as silent, inferior, mad passive non entities or active monstrous creatures in the past. These myths are not dead but still continue to bind women in different guises thus, women writers explore how these mythic figures and stories have relevance for the present times too.

Plurality and open-endedness are the significant features of epics and myths that are not only ‘heteroglossic’ in nature but also lend themselves to multiple interpretations as they emerge from oral culture which is marked by fluidity and diversity. However, in the contemporary world these epics that have become fossilised since a ‘monologic’ and canonical version and interpretation of these has been standardized and popularized by various socio-political religious and cultural forces (like Television). This results in the marginalization and subsequently obliteration of other versions/readings of these epics.

As opposed this, Mikhail Bakhtin in his theory of “polyphony” appreciates the presence and renewal of multiplicity of worldviews in a text. Bakhtin argues for the need to facilitate

dialogue between different “social, cultural and ideological voices.” Bakhtin also rejects the notion of the closure of the meaning and conceptualizes how each discursive action (both spoken and written) is, “always in,” is always in dialogue with “other’s thoughts and, is filled with echoes and reverberations of previous utterances.”

Bakhtin’s theories provide the framework for my paper in which I wish to study the various revisions/ retellings of the classical Indian Epics especially *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* by women writers (like Shashi Deshpande, Nabaneeta Deb Sen, Pratibha Ray and Samhita Arni and Moyna Chitrakar) who prioritize the feminine perspective and narrate these male narratives from the points of view of women characters like Sita, Mandodari, Draupadi or Kunti. I wish to unearth the radical potential of these hitherto marginalized voices and how they engage with and seek to subvert and rupture the dominant official patriarchal “voices” from within the discourse. Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque, which talks about the mingling of the sacred and the profane and inversion of hierarchies along with focus on the body, becomes significant to understand these narratives that deal with female desire, sexuality, and deploy laughter and parody to give voice to the female experience and to critique patriarchal culture. Along with these, I also wish to engage with various folk/ Bheela versions of the epics that undercut the primacy of the standard version of the epics by not only giving alternative accounts but also by raising disturbing questions about male conceptions of heroism, female sexuality and caste politics.

Epics and myths no longer seem sacrosanct as women writers become “resisting readers” (J. Fetterley) who seek to appropriate, revise and re tell/ re write these “grand” patriarchal narratives from the feminist/ ‘womanist’ points of view. In doing so they radically “novelize” the myths by making them “dialogic” in nature by inserting polyphonic voices and accounts that intend to disrupt hierarchy of the Indian male narratives.

### **Shreyasee Datta, “From Ignorance to Eminence: A Select Study of the Women Characters of *Ramayana*”**

A perusal through the Indian epics presents a picture of a glorious kingdom with a powerful king raging violent wars and conquering enemies. They love their subjects, obey their elders and most importantly have deep reverence towards their dharma. In all these chivalrous pursuits women obediently support their men. That makes the superstructure of a blissful empire. With Bakhtin making a foray into the circle with his ideas on dialogism, the aforementioned picture becomes an outcome of one way of reading the texts. And unfortunately that became the prevalent and guiding interpretation for long. Bakhtin’s dialogic discourse paves the way for other possible ways of reading it. It helps in seeing beyond the standard representations. In his book *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* he writes that Dostoevsky’s works unfolds a plurality of consciousness, with equal rights and each with its own world. The characters in his work are ‘free people’ capable of ‘agreeing’ or ‘rejecting’. Overall, every character has a world of their own and they are internally independent. From mere puppets they become personalities in life. Rather than classifying the characters into subject and object, Bakhtin’s principle is to see someone else’s ‘I’ as another subject. My study would deal with the various other possible (available) interpretations of the *Ramayana* majorly focussing on the female figures. It would attempt to see deeper into the characterisation of women that previously would range from being a silent companion to sacrificial saint if at all they fit into the category of Woman. To give a wider perspective and to reinforce further I would include the modern works on the mythical women and on their (re-)casts. A section of my paper would deal also with the dialogue these mythical figures have entered with the time over the ages. This would take care also of the socio-political scenario that acts as a context to the literary artifices that

capture the spur of the period. To arrest the gradual progression the works would be arranged from the moment of trying to the point of success.

Thus my paper would attempt to bring to the vanguard the other interpretations to erase the lopsided presentations related to the mythical women figures who largely serve as the role model for the women of a nation.

### **Sudhir Kumar Pandey, “Transgressive Aesthetics of Carnavalesque in Nautanki”**

Mikhail Bakhtin notes that “the influence of carnival, in the broadest sense of this word, was great during all periods of literary development. However, this influence was in most cases hidden, indirect, and difficult to detect (*Rabelais and His World* 273).” Further, he points out that the element of carnival can only be seen in the ‘culture of folk humor.’ This culture of folk humor can be found in the Indian folk drama Nautanki. Nautanki offers a momentary and symbolic liberation through the performance in which the higher authorities are ridiculed and mocked at. This task, in Nautanki, is performed through Vidushak (clown) whose business is to make fun of the authority.

Though the element of carnival is visible in the Indian festival Holi, the Nautank performance adds a new dimension to the concept of carnivalesque which goes beyond the stage performance. For instance, the word nautanki itself connotes a sense of derision to any serious affair. This takes the Bakhtin’s notion and scope of carnivalesque as a temporary transfer to the established part of the everyday discourse in Indian culture. In fact the word ‘nautanki’ can be realized as an Indian linguistic counterpart to the word carnivalesque. The paper will try to establish and explore this linguistic aspect of the word nautanki in everyday Indian culture. Moreover, it will explore the inherent potentiality of folk theatre Nautanki to resist the sophisticated and hegemonic order and reassert its position as an inevitable source of entertainment among the rural Indian folk. A close examination into the nature and inextricable texture of the folk theatre explicates the fact that its deep seated appeal to the rural masses has emanated from its incorporation of the ‘Ordinary Culture’ which in itself defies the urban, hegemonic ruling class.

### **Sunil Sagar, “Indian Intellectual Tradition, Bakhtin and Some Concerns”**

As a long and attested tradition of core knowledge texts, thinkers and concepts, Indian intellectual tradition stands unparalleled for its sheer democracy of diverse views and dialogic or polylogic mode of constructing and celebrating discourse. Scholars in the West who came in contact with the Indian intellectual tradition were enamoured with it whenever they managed to keep an open mind and whenever they could bring themselves to accept that way before they began to formulate ideas, a tradition of discourse on all possible disciplines existed with multiplicity of texts and thinkers. Indian intellectual tradition does not require to be endorsed or interpreted by/through any Western scholar, but, in fact, it is required to underscore the fact that while the scholars in the West think highly of the Indian intellectual tradition and the way it has celebrated the spirit of discourse, it is the Indian academia that has lost touch with the said tradition. The Indian knowledge texts are not lying in wait for academic scholarship to re-establish itself. In fact, it is the academia that needs the Indian intellectual tradition, but unfortunately we do not seem to have any direct access to it; we have to take a route to Indian tradition via Bakhtin. Intellectuality does strange things to our conceptual frameworks. While there are innumerable scholars in salient disciplines who gave core knowledge texts in the Indian tradition, we have decided to leave them all and look for Bakhtin and read the Indological texts through Bakhtin. Bakhtin is not even half good as a scholar when one unfairly compares him (unfair to the tradition, and honour for Bakhtin) and privileges him

over the tradition of scholars such as Panini, Kautilya, Bharata, Gautama, Rajsekhara, Caraka, Bhartrhari, Sankara, Manu, to name a few. Bakhtin in India is not even a drop in the ocean for the Indian intellectual tradition; it is India in Bakhtin that matters, if at all, because that makes him relevant and faintly familiar when he evinces traits of polyphony and dialogic tradition.

The paper proposes to explore the way scholarship in the West can at the most learn a few things from the Indian intellectual tradition and can take up Indian conceptual framework as reference for their intellectual re-orientation, but Bakhtin or for that matter anybody as an Individual, Western or Indian, cannot be privileged over the entire tradition as a point of reference and means of interpretation for the tradition for the simple reason that it violates the fundamental concept of plurality and multiplicity in which Bakhtin is merely a small participant and when plurality and polyphony are to be celebrated, one wonders how one can privilege individuals and that too over a tradition of plurality and polyphony. If the purpose is to study the Indian intellectual tradition in its plurality and diversity, it would be better to stay away from celebration of individuals, Bakhtin or whosoever it may be.

### **Sunthar Visuvalingam, “Tradition, Transgression, and Liberty”**

The riotous carnival that regularly punctuated the ordered life of traditional societies, such as the spring festival of Holi and Muslim celebration of Muharram, was characterized by collective suspension of religious norms and prohibitions. The licentious eruption of the animal body and base instincts was epitomized by comic behavior and universal laughter that embraced all and spared none. A key initiator and symbolic focus of the Indian carnival was the mock-brahmin—often coupled with a long-tailed monkey or irreligious Muslim chaplain—who parodied and transgressed all the obligatory values invested in the sacred thread he continued to wear. This vernacular-speaking ‘great brahmin’ (maha-brahmana) was, however, a permanent and central fixture of the Sanskrit theater, where the joker stood beside and in dialectical opposition to the king-as-prime-mover, and was subtly identified with this pivot of the socio-cosmic order. His name alternates between those of highest Vedic pedigree and of a fertile ‘man of spring’ (Vasantaka), with numerous associations to this aphrodisiac season of Nature’s self-renewal. Brandishing a crooked phallic staff in often suggestive gestures, this obscene glutton was invariably depicted dancing in gay abandon with the teasing (palace) maids. Whereas laughter is frowned upon by the classical aesthetic (rasa) canon, this abusive (vidusaka) buffoon had to guffaw even during the most inappropriate turns of the narrative plot and his profanities were greeted in kind by the spectators. The literate, refined, and spiritual ethos of India’s traditional elite remained continuous with, grounded in, and nourished by ‘Rabelaisian’ popular culture.

The Mahabrahmana’s carnivalesque role found sanction in both ‘obsolete’ Vedic ritual and contemporary Tantric ideology. When the royal couple witnesses Carayana exultantly raising his staff as the maid grovels between his knees, playwright Rajasekhara (9th C.) is thereby re-contextualizing the obligatory fellatio of the ancient Mahavrata within the orgiastic Kaula practices that dissolved all barriers of caste and class. Abhinavagupta, who recommends restraint in the presence of the king, is himself the supreme theoretician and apologist of such transgressive sacrality incarnated elsewhere by Rajasekhara’s Bhairavananda. The hidden ritual role of this ‘secularized’ clown becomes evident when juxtaposed to the ‘anti-social’ laughter (attahasa) enjoined upon the naked Pasupata ascetic and the ludicrous iconography of the pot-bellied mouse-riding elephant-headed sweetmeat-demanding Ganesha, the most popular and endearing god of the Hindu pantheon. The enigmatic humor of these three cousins is presided over and sanctioned by the most sacred sound-syllable AUM. For the carnival is the temporal projection of a more fundamental, all-pervasive, and ever-present

dialectic of order and chaos, interdiction and violation, that governs and regulates the entire life of archaic societies.

The ultimate goal, through and beyond this outward oscillation, is freedom (svatantrya)—at the heart (hrdaya) of Abhinava's aesthetics of Indian culture—not only from external constraints of law and convention but also from the inner tyranny of our animal nature. The 'great brahmin' spontaneously transgresses the very norms he embodies only because, like the supremely creative artist, he has thoroughly internalized them. This is the 'humanist' principle that Rabelais extracts from the medieval 'Christian' carnival for our own Renaissance: "do what thou wilt!"

**Sura P. Rath, "Carnavalesque (Non)Closures in *Salaam Bombay* (1988) and *Kahaani* (2012): Social Critique, Narrative Circle, and Epistemic Resolution"**

After the critical and commercial success enjoyed by *Kahaani* (2012), an off-Bollywood movie set in Kolkata, its director Sujoy Ghosh admitted to several inter-textual allusions and inspirations in his making of the film: Satyajit Ray's films, and some Hindi films of the 1970s and the 1980s, in particular. Critics have also compared the fake pregnancy twist of *Kahaani* with similar sequences in the 2004 psychological thriller *Taking Lives*; the sequences toward the end of the film that explain the missing pieces of the mystery were compared with a similar technique utilized in *The Usual Suspects* (1995); and the director wrote that the film was heavily influenced by the color scheme of Pratima Visarjan, a water color painting by Gaganendranath Tagore. Yet, from a narrative structural perspective, as well as in its focus on social issues and their epistemic resolution at the end, the movie parallels Mira Nair's 1988 classic *Salaam Bombay*. Both movies address public social concerns: child labor, drug abuse, homelessness, sexual exploitation, prostitution, to name a few, in *Salaam Bombay*, and victimization of women, racketeering, and official suppression of murder/homicide cases in *Kahaani*. Equally important, both movies trace a private journey of personal discovery for their central characters in a big city: the adolescent Krishna (Chai-Pau) from a rural Indian village swallowed up by the urban streets of Bombay in one; and the NRI software specialist Vidya Bagchi lost in the barely illuminated twilight zones of Kolkata in the other. Most striking parallel between the two, however, lies in the carnivalesque non-closure of both films, as both characters immerse and fade into a "funeral" crowd, their private voices drowned in a public chant of death and resurrection, and the audience left with a penultimate ending and an invitation to a sequel.

I propose that these films illustrate something quintessentially Indian: the impossibility of final closure and the epistemic uncertainty of experience, and that Mikhail Bakhtin's insights on dialogism serve as a window to both.

**Vaishnavi Upadhyaya, "Bakhtin's Views on Novel as Represented in *A River Sutra- An Indian Tapestry*"**

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin as rediscovered has tremendous capacity to alter our views on self, history and culture. His main theories like dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia and open interpretation have proved to be authentic tools for the evaluation of a novel form which has yet not formed. In my paper I would like to analyse the novel *A River Sutra* (1993) by the Gita Mehta through the lens of these Bakhtinian theories.

I have selected the novel, *A River Sutra*, because it has a unique form of interconnected stories narrated by a nameless narrator who comes in dialogue with various people while he stays at his government bureaucrat's house at the banks of river Narmada with the aim of detachment

from this world. *A River Sutra* is a series of interlocking stories, spread across many centuries, reflecting the depth and complexity of India's spiritual landscape. There is not one story in the novel but many which are foregrounded in Indian culture, folklore, interaction of varied ideologies that might have taken place during the routine pre-colonialist period of India. Mehta refers continuously to Indian mythology, Vedas, Puranas, work by Shankracharya, Bhakti philosophy, Sufi, philosophy, and many other references to Ancient Indian Literature. This is not merely a matter of influence, for the dialogue extends in both the directions, and the previous work of Literature is as altered by the dialogue as the present one is.

Along with its historical chronotope it is also an exposition of contemporary Indian psyche; it provides a useful dialogue on spiritualism v/s materialism, detachment v/s attachment, love v/s its various shades, and modernity v/s tradition. It is exotica with an assertion to Indian cultural identity through a recognizable ethno poetic discourse. It does expound the exquisite tapestry of secular-humanistic tradition of India. The novel is kind of living and open-ended illustration of dialogue between myriad beliefs and philosophical systems of India that might have pre-dated before the British rule in India. The narrator, the reader, the speaker and the listener are participating in the dialogue. Dialogism appears to be a simple expression to the philosophical implications of narratology.

*A River Sutra* can be labelled as a polyphonic novel by Bakhtian classification of novels. A polyphonic novel is the one in which character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's, and in which those figures whose social perspectives oppose that of the narrator are represented not only as objects of authorial discourse but also as subjects of their own identity signifying discourse. Finally, within a polyphonic novel it is possible for the characters' differing social vocabularies to interact 'dialogically'. When this occurs, the conversation between clashing social perspectives creates an exchange in which each language reveals to the other what it did not know about itself, and in which new insights are produced that neither wholly were contained before.