



Decolonising the Panel, Deconstructing the Gutter

Two-day Virtual International Conference on Postcolonial Studies in Comics and Graphic Narratives from South Asia

Organized by

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Patna**

In association with Postcolonial Studies Association, UK

25th – 26th September 2021



Concept Note

Practice of comics and the academic history of comics studies are often found Eurocentric. Readers often favour the traditional comics, either American or Franco-Belgian or Japanese Manga. They find the aesthetic flavour in them and most of the unorthodox graphic storytelling are left out. With Charles Hatfield's *Alternative Comics* (2005), comics studies include the "other" voices and thereby the untold stories and unforeseen graphic patterns of the colonised and indigenous people are celebrated. The affiliation of comics studies with Auto/biography studies, Feminism, postcolonialism, postmodernism opens an arena for the readers/researchers of comics and graphic narratives to develop a new field of studies. To refute the Eurocentric nature, the first step is to decolonise the panel of comics and to deconstruct the gutter (space between panels). South Asian illustrators (e.g., Dyuti Mittal, Ikroop Sandhu, Sreejita Biswas, Pinaki De, Argha Manna, Priyanga Singh et al.) break the shackles of the western

philosophy of comics and successfully experiment with their own graphic storytelling pattern. Some of them are also celebrating provincial illustrating styles (e.g., Gond paintings, Madhubani Paintings, Patta Chitra, Nakshi kantha Art etc.). Decolonising the panels helps the illustrators to spontaneously respond and express the feelings in the panel. This practice only creates individuality. There are several fields of comics – comics on activism, comics on history, Auto/biographical comics, comics on medical treatment etc. As western culture is different from eastern culture, the structure of South Asian comics should be "of the people, by the people, for the people."

Since 25th September is celebrated as the "National Comic Book Day," this two-day virtual conference brings attention to the lesser-known comics from South Asia and attempts to bring together the illustrators and researchers to see the different perspectives.

We invite abstracts for 15-minute presentation on topics including (but not limited to):

Comics on Activism

Comics and Graphic Narratives for "Other" voices

Historical Comics

Comics with Regional Flavour

Medical and Microbiological Comics with an "Other" flavour

Auto-Biographical Comics

Celebration of "Local" in South Asian Comics

Distinguished Speakers



Amruta Patil

Amruta Patil, is an Indian graphic novel author and painter. Patil spent her childhood in Goa. She has a BFA from Goa College of Art (1999), and Master of Fine Arts degree from Tufts University, School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (2004). She worked as a copywriter at Enterprise Nexus (Mumbai) in 1999-2000. She was the Co-founder, Editor of the quarterly magazine, 'Mindfields' (2007-2012). She was awarded TED Fellowship in 2009. Her debut graphic novel, *Kari*, commissioned and published by VK Karthika at HarperCollins India, explored themes of sexuality, friendship and death; and heralded Patil as India's first female graphic novelist. Her two subsequent graphic novels *Adi Parva: Churning of the Ocean* and *Sauptik: Blood and Flowers* make up the Parva duology which retells stories from the *Mahabharata* from the viewpoint of the narrators (*sutradhar*) Ganga and Ashwatthama respectively. Exploring themes of sexuality, friendship and death, Patil is heralded as India's first female graphic novelist. She was awarded the Ministry of Women and Child Development's Nari Shakti Puraskar in March 2017 at the hands of the 13th President of India, Pranab Mukherjee.



E. Dawson Varughese

E. Dawson Varughese's research explores English medium literary responses to post-millennial New India, in doing so her work engages with the various experiences of living in urban India and evolving ideas of 'Indianness'. Her first monograph is entitled *Beyond The Postcolonial* and was published by Palgrave in 2012 and in 2013, *Reading New India* was published with an Indian edition with Bloomsbury India. In 2016 *Genre Fiction of New India: post-millennial receptions of 'weird' narratives* was published by Routledge in which she explores the proliferation of 'mythology-inspired' novels in English in India. In 2018, Palgrave published *Visuality and Identity in post-millennial Indian graphic narratives*. She is currently extending her work on Indian speculative fiction in English. An independent scholar (PhD, Nottingham, UK, 2007), she divides her time between the UK and India. She was a Visiting Fellow at the University of Delhi in 2017 (English) and 2018 (Sociology). E. Dawson Varughese is a Senior Fellow at Manipal Centre for Humanities, (MAHE), Manipal, India where she works part of the year. See her work at beyondthepostcolonial.com.



Pinaki De

Pinaki De is a graphic illustrator-designer who regularly works for renowned publishers like Penguin Random House, Harper Collins, Hachette, Routledge, Primus, Oxford University Press, Singapore University Press (NUS), Bloomsbury, Orient Blackswan, Worldview, Pan Picador, Simon and Schuster, Permanent Black, Alchemy, Sage, Roli, Sahitya Academy, Rupa, and many others. He has designed almost 500 book covers to date. He is the winner of the PublishingNext prize for the best book cover design in India twice in 2017 and 2019. His book cover for “Kalkatta” by Kunal Basu won the prestigious Oxford Bookstore prize for the best cover design in India at Jaipur Literary Fest 2017. His layout design on Satyajit Ray’s archival manuscripts has drawn accolades from all across the globe. A Charles Wallace Trust Fellow, his Ph.D. is on comics theory. Pinaki is one of the editors of the prestigious annual magazine “Longform” (Published from Harper Collins, 2018) which is generally regarded as the first global comics magazine from India. He is the Indian comics advisor of Mangasia, the biggest ever exhibition on Asian Comics curated by Paul Gravett for the Barbican, London. His book-length comics on Partition is due next year. Pinaki juggles his creative work with academics as he has a day job as an Associate Professor of Raja Peary Mohan College, Uttarpara.



Subir Dey

Subir is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Design, IIT Delhi. He is the Chair for ComIN20, International Conference on Indian Comics. Previously he also taught at NID Ahmedabad and M.S University Baroda. He received a degree in Bachelor of Visual Arts with specialization in Graphic Design from Govt. College of Art and Craft Calcutta and Master of Visual Arts from M.S University Baroda with specialization in Illustration. He holds a Doctorate degree in Design from the Department of Design, IIT Guwahati with a focus on Comics studies. He received the Volkswagen foundation scholarship to attend a summer school on Transnational Graphic Narratives at the University of Siegen, Germany in 2017. His research areas include comics & graphic novels, visual language, graphic design, and semiotics. He is a practicing illustrator working in traditional and digital media and his musings can be seen on Instagram @subirdraws



Varsha Singh

Varsha Singh is Assistant Professor of English Literature at the Indian Institute of Technology, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India. Her teaching and research interests include Image Studies, Popular representations of Indian epics, Cultural translation and Literary Theory. Her Articles appear in the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (Routledge), *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (Sage), *The International Journal of Comics*, and the *Sahitya Akademi*. She is presently working on a national research seed grant in the area of Visual Culture in Contemporary India.



Tahseen Salman Choudhury

Tahseen Salman Choudhury is a comic enthusiast, researcher, reviewer, and the former host of the radio and YouTube based weekly pop-culture show "Comicbaj". He has presented his research work in several national and international conferences and also published in an international journal. He is also the first in Bangladesh to conduct university-level workshops on Teaching Business Ethics using Comics, Learning Nutrition with Comics, and Learning Social Etiquette with Comics hosted by the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). A marketing major, he has previously worked in a bank and an NGO. Currently, he is working as the Senior Research and Publication Officer at the Bangladesh Employers' Federation.

Submissions

We invite abstract submission from scholars of all backgrounds for regular presentation. Individual abstracts of about 150-250 words with an institutional affiliation (preferably as a word document file), indicating 'abstract' in the email subject line and your name in the file's title on the above mentioned themes must be submitted on or before 10th August 2021 to hssconferenceiitpatna@gmail.com. The selected presenters will be notified by 25th August 2021. The selected participants are required to register by 30th August 2021. Kindly prepare documents according to the MLA 8th Edition format. Questions and requests for more information should be directed to Dr. Priyanka Tripathi (priyankatripathi.nitjsr@gmail.com) or Dr. Partha Bhattacharjee (partha.bhattacharjee1990@gmail.com).

Post-conference Publications

The Conference will also bring out an Edited Volume (book) with an internationally recognized publisher or special issue in SCOPUS indexed journal, based on the selected papers presented in the conference.

Participation & Fees

Participants will be required to register by **30th August 2021** and pay a non-refundable participation fee of **INR 1500** (participants from India) or **USD 30** (participants from abroad).

Patron

Prof. Pramod Jain (Director, IIT Patna)

Conveners

Dr. Priyanka Tripathi, IIT Patna

Dr. Partha Bhattacharjee, Amity University Patna

You can submit your registration / participation fee by NEFT/Bank Transfer:

Name of the Account Holder: **Registrar**

Bank Name: **State Bank of India**

Account Number: **30957551934**

IFSC Code of the Bank: **SBIN0017164**

MICR Code: **801002005**

Address: IIT Bihta (17164), IIT Bihta Campus, Admin., Bihta - 801103

After successful completion of your payment process, you should send scanned copy of NEFT transaction ID proof / confirmation slip along with filled and duly signed registration form to hssconferenceiitpatna@gmail.com