



DEPARTMENT OF
**HUMANITIES &
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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RESEARCH
SCHOLARS'
DAY
2023

FEBRUARY 18
OUTREACH AUDITORIUM





RESEARCH SCHOLARS' DAY 2023

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Schedule

Venue: Outreach Auditorium, Centre for Continuing Education

Date: February 18, 2023

Each speaker will have 15 minutes to present, and each panel will have 15 minutes to respond to questions.

Time	Paper titles
9:30 - 10:15AM	Inaugural Session Keynote speaker: Professor Azizuddin Khan, <i>Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Bombay</i> “PhD and Early Career Development: Personal Experience”
10:15- 11:30 AM	1. Saumya Suyal: “Bridging the Gap Between Cognitive and Non-cognitive Models in Environmental Aesthetics Discourse: Holmes Rolston III’s Approach” 2. Satyam Kumar: “Honorificity in Eastern Indo-Aryan languages” 3. Supriya Bajpai: “On the ontological status of viruses” 4. Kaamesh Singam: “Understanding Emergence in our Ontology Through the Framework of the New Mechanist Philosophy”
11:30- 11:45 AM	Tea Break
11:45– 1:00 PM	1. Shilpy Jain, “Textualising Folklore in Mamang Dai’s <i>The Legends of Pensam</i> ” 2. Aranya Bhowmik: “Locating Indigenous Knowledge in Art Practice of Indian Contemporary Women Artists of India” 3. Partha Dutta: “The Digital Technology Integration in Fine Arts: A Qualitative Study of Printmaking Practice in the Indian Art Education Scenario” 4. Gargi Ghosh: “ <i>Baha sari</i> leading the way: Understanding how a TV trend established “Handloom” supremacy in Kolkata sari market”
01:00 – 2 PM	Lunch
02:00 – 03:00 PM	1. Usama Ghayas Syed: “On the Relationship between Student Success and Well-being: A Reciprocal Causation Approach for School-Going Adolescents of India” 2. Debbani Bhattacharya: “Darjeeling: A tale of political dissent” 3. Anjali Yadav: “Social norms, collective behavior and public policy: Investigating water pollution in the Ganga river”
03:00– 04:00 PM	1. Pritha Chakraborty: “Localizing Ganga: The Representations of the River in Folk Texts from Bengal” 2. Angana Das: “In Search of Some Quiet: Reading the Everyday in Two Contemporary African Novels” 3. Mani Dixit: “Death (in) Visibility: Hervé Guibert”
4:00-04:15 PM	Tea Break



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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

04:15-05:15 PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Diksha Beniwal: "The 'untouchable' communist in Sujatha Gidla's "Ants Among Elephants""2. Manash Pratim Sharma: "The Idea of Cultural Association in Sultanate Architecture at Warangal-Sultanpur"3. Yashaswini Jayadevaiah: "Where Horror Stands Monumentalised"
05:15 – 05:45 PM	Vote of thanks and distribution of certificates

ABSTRACTS



RESEARCH SCHOLARS' DAY 2023

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Bridging the Gap Between Cognitive and Non-cognitive Models: Holmes Rolston III's Approach

Saumya Suyal

Abstract

The contemporary discourse in environmental aesthetics debates extensively on the appropriate approach to aesthetically appreciating nature. Scholars divide the various approaches into two categories- cognitive models and non-cognitive models. The former overemphasizes the role played by knowledge and the latter appears to reject that knowledge plays a fundamental role in aesthetic appreciation of nature and replaces knowledge with non-cognitive factors like emotion, bodily pleasure, and a sense of mystery. I argue that such a classification is problematic as it leads to the problem of duality which is extensively discussed and criticized by various philosophers including the ecofeminists like Karren Warren, and Val Plumwood. I suggest that we develop a model for the aesthetic appreciation of nature that bridges this gap by bringing the cognitive and non-cognitive factors together, thus removing any sort of hierarchy between them. I propose that Holmes Rolston III's approach, which he calls "participatory aesthetics" or the "ecosystem approach" at various places, allows us to do so. I argue against philosophers, like Emily Brady, Jonathan Prior, and Jorge Marques da Silva, who call Rolston's approach a cognitive model of aesthetic appreciation of nature. In this paper, I attempt to show that Rolston's approach provides a balance between cognitive and non-cognitive factors, and between scientific knowledge and subjective experiences.

Keywords: environmentalism, environmental ethics, environmental aesthetics, aesthetic appreciation, cognitive models, non-cognitive models



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Honorificity in Eastern Indo-Aryan languages

Satyam Kumar

Abstract

Every language employs some approach to make it sound dignified or courteous while remaining non-offensive and different languages exhibit different strategies to develop interpersonal relationships. Politeness has been studied widely in Linguistics from various perspectives and it can show up in language use in phonological, lexical, and/or syntactic ways. Hence, languages utilize various strategies to express politeness. Lakoff (1972) states that “honorificity” is grammatical encoding to express politeness. Specifically, it is a way to employ the word "honour".

According to some researchers including Shibatani (2006), Kashyap (2008), and Hong (2013), although all languages communicate politeness in some way, only some languages exhibit well-developed honorifics.

The objective of this research is a detailed study of the phenomenon of honorificity in various Eastern Indo-Aryan Languages (EIALs) including Thethi, Angika, and Magahi. We have enlisted various politeness strategies like causatives, interrogatives, vocatives, passives, affirmations, and others. We have used currently popular theories of honorificity like Hong (2013), Yamada (2019), and Speas and Tenny (2003) to throw light on manifestation of honorificity through addressee agreement or MAP. We also show various sites of honorifics in different languages. Moreover, we attempt to present a case study of contact-induced change among EIALs and proposed a similar study for honorificity in EIALs.

Keywords: honorificity, politeness, caustatives, vocatives, passives, affirmations



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On the ontological status of viruses

Supriya Bajpai

Abstract

Viruses present pressing conceptual and philosophical questions regarding their nature, classification, and place in the biological world (O'Malley 2014, Mayr 1953). One of the issues is the notion of individuality and the diachronic identity of a virus: is it the virion or the entire cycle? This has ontological implications and may lead to the conclusion that the traditional substance-based metaphysical notion of individuality should be replaced with a process ontology. As Dupre and Guttinger (2016) suggest, the widespread symbiosis in biological systems blurs the boundaries between an organism and an entity. Their position challenges the uniqueness of an organism. They also suggest that ontologically, biological systems are processes. In this context, they challenge the substance view (that viruses are distinct entities that follow their own intrinsic (and pathogenic) agenda) based on two arguments: symbiotic systems can include viruses, and viruses must be seen as processes. This paper examines Dupre and Guttinger's (2016) position on unfolding the ontological status of viruses by revisiting the scientific classificatory system. The scientific grouping is based on attempting to have a natural division identifying and defining natural kinds. There are various aspects of biological, chemical, mineral, psychological disorders, and other natural kinds. This paper explores the philosophical underpinnings of seeing viruses as a natural kind. It probes into the significance of viruses understood in terms of the property cluster. Taxonomic classification deals with homeostatic property clustering of the species, but these properties seem vacuous regarding viruses. The paper also investigates historical accounts and classificatory mechanisms to understand the nature and status of viruses. The four main categories to classify something as a species are: similarity, breeding, ecological niche, and evolutionary history. When it comes to viruses, all these categories get challenged; as a result, the paper explores the case of viruses as individuals (biological). An argument from the new mechanistic viewpoint of viruses is presented where they are explicated as having a dualistic nature as an entity and activity. Viruses depend on host cells for their multiplication, and the mechanistic viewpoint explains this dependence comprehensively. Thus, the paper presents to posit viruses as entities.

Keywords: viruses, biological species, natural kinds, new mechanism



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Understanding Emergence in our Ontology Through the Framework of the New Mechanist Philosophy

Kaamesh Singham

Abstract

My research is concerned with understanding what place emergence has in our ontology within the framework of the New Mechanist philosophy. It is both a philosophy of science and a philosophy of nature. There is a consensus among the New Mechanists that mechanisms are things in the world that produce, underlie or maintain various phenomena. They argue that mechanistic explanations and models offered by various sciences try to reveal such mechanisms in the world. The ontology espoused by the New Mechanists include entities (or objects or individuals), processes (or activities or interactions), properties (or capacities) and powers. In addition to these, mechanistic explanations posit levels and various horizontal and vertical relations among those levels. I argue that the New Mechanist philosophy provides a good framework for the discussion of emergence because we can construe emergence as a vertical relation between things in various levels. I take cue from (Gillett, 2016), (Gillett, 2017) for this construal of emergence as a vertical relation.

Keywords: Emergence, Ontology, Mechanism, Reduction



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Textualising Folklore in Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam*

Shilpy Jain

Abstract

In indigenous tribal communities, folklore is used as an invaluable instrument to communicate the cultural knowledge and maintain the socio-cultural identity of a group across generations. As an umbrella term, folklore comprises of verbal, material, and customary elements of a culture. India's north-eastern region, as a home to varied indigenous tribal communities with their distinct socio-cultural practices, has a rich folkloric tradition. The written literature emerging from these ethnic communities is often inspired by this rich cultural background.

The present paper examines Mamang Dai's literary representation of the Adi folklore through the fictional narrative of *The Legends of Pensam* (2006). The paper illustrates how the text incorporates the myths, legends, beliefs, customs and ritualistic practices of the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. The paper argues that the author's textualisation of the predominantly oral and ritualistic world of the Adis in a literary narrative represents the socio-cultural make up and political history of a hitherto unknown community from an insider's perspective.

Keywords: Folklore, orality, legends, myths, rituals, Mamang Dai, Adi tribe
Area: Northeast Indian English Literature



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Locating Indigenous Knowledge in Art Practice of Indian Contemporary Women Artists of India

Aranya Bhowmik

Abstract

Indian culture is woven together by a rich body of knowledge derived from indigenous conceptions of the natural world, human existence, and aesthetic principles. It can be found in every aspect of the knowledge system, including dance, music, art, and literature. To comprehend indigenous art, one must understand its fundamental relationship with the lives of the community that practices it. It is crucial to understand these traditions in the context of art, their inherent relationship to society, and how they continue to be relevant in the contemporary time. Indigenous art has become a vital part of many of the artistic languages found in contemporary art. This paper will navigate through the works of three prominent contemporary artists—Jayashree Chakraborty, Sheela Gowda, and Priya Ravish Mehra to understand the idea of materiality and indigenous knowledge in contemporary Indian art.

Beyond the institutional knowledge system that is disseminated through art education in India, certain artists have been able to create individual artistic languages that involve organic, indigenous materials and processes that enrich their practices as well as have an intrinsic connection with Indian society, culture, and craft traditions. The materials and processes show how diversity and indigenous values are rooted in this country's knowledge system, which was built before the colonial view of institutional knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge, Material, Contemporary Art, Indigenous, Craft



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The Digital Technology Integration in Fine Arts: A Qualitative Study of Printmaking Practice in the Indian Art Education Scenario

Partha Dutta

Abstract

Comprehensive printmaking could bring massive breakthroughs in traditional printmaking, which increases the path for artistic expression. However, many argue this loss of the original intent of printmaking and bodily attachment. Although, a thorough literature survey of existing publications and experimental artistic practices shows that many artists are exploring their print work with digital intervention and have received high artistic achievements. In the Indian context, the academic practice of printmaking is based mainly on conventional mediums. Regardless, there are many attempts to develop hybrid printmaking techniques. This current study conducted semi-structured interviews with college professors and professional printmaking artists to understand printmaking as an art educational tool. The collected data pointed to fundamental issues of experimental printmaking practice and research-related comprehensive understanding.

This study discusses the combination of printing technology, their relationship, and the potential for expanding printing technology. The semi-structured interview helped to understand current printmaking practices in the colleges of India. By analysing the discussion and studio visit experience, the researcher is trying to discover the possibilities of incorporating digital technology with conventional mediums and how this comprehensive technology encourages practitioners to dive into more diversified art.

Keywords: Art education, Digital technology, Printmaking, Graphic design.

Area: Art Education



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Baha sari leading the way: Understanding how a TV trend established “Handloom” supremacy in Kolkata sari market

Gargi Ghosh

Abstract

Baha sari is a trend coming from a Bengali TV serial that, despite existing almost eight years ago, still has its imprints deep on the 2023 sari market of Kolkata. Initially an original handloom product, it later came in power loom versions to meet the exceeding demand with its growth as a trend. Yet, the name “Handloom” latched on as the identifying medium for the material of those saris. Contrary to the literal meaning of the word, “Handloom” in Kolkata sari markets refer to machine made, light-weight, daily wear saris- a genre initiated from *Baha sari* and later continued by other TV inspired trends such as *Imon* or *Mithai sari*. Through a survey conducted in six major sari markets of Kolkata, the author tries to understand the relation between TV screens and sari shops and how the average sari wearing Bengali woman as an audience acts as the connection. Starting with the objective of tracing designs from TV into its audience’s lives, the researcher gradually follows how influential Bengali TV serials have been in causing a considerable boost on the sari market of Kolkata.

Keywords: Sari, Bengali TV serial, TV trend, Visual culture, Fashion influence.



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On the Relationship between Student Success and Well-being: A Reciprocal Causation Approach for School-Going Adolescents of India

Usama Ghayas Syed

Abstract

Over the past few decades, the emphasis on the positive understanding of human behaviour has increased manifold. This is also evident in the literature associated with adolescents. Student success and well-being have received increased attention from researchers. Although a number of studies have investigated the unidirectional relationship between student success and well-being, the relationship between the two is inconclusive. Specifically, the plausibility of reciprocal relationships between the two constructs has largely been ignored. Recognizing the presence of feedback effects in the engine model of well-being, the present study aims to investigate the reciprocal relationship between student success and well-being. A sample of 310 school-going adolescents from three schools, between the ages of 14 and 17 years, formed part of the present study. The methodological approaches that enable the estimation of reciprocal effects with cross-sectional data were used in combination with structural equation modeling (SEM) using instrumental variables. The results confirmed the reciprocal relationship, indicating that student success and well-being are reciprocally linked and influence each other in a stable feedback system. Furthermore, the results from multi-group SEM revealed that the model is robust and generalizable across boys and girls. The study is the first to investigate such a relationship in the Indian context and offers preliminary insights into a potential reciprocal link between student success and well-being. Implications for assessment, intervention, and policy-making, along with future research directions, are discussed.

Keywords: Student Success, Well-Being, Reciprocal Relationship, Structural Equation Modeling



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Darjeeling: A tale of political dissent

Debbani Bhattacharya

Abstract

This paper aims to look at the local political situation at Darjeeling and the manner in which vote bank politics is merged with identity politics. It uses secondary data to analyze the last two elections which took place in March as well as June, 2022. Borrowing the paradigm of political processes, the paper analyzes sociological implication of such political happenings. The fight for power in local bodies such as municipality as well as the Autonomous district council witnesses interesting election coalitions before and after elections. The fight for representation is not creating boundary with the “others” but within the ethnic community as well. There is a shift from charismatic leadership to practical politics when local parties enter into negotiation with the union and the state. This further gives way to a chasm between parties being supported by the state and those being supported by the center. The political shift is thus a reflection of shift in power relation with center and state as well.

Area: Political Sociology

Keywords: Political parties, negation, vote bank



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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Social norms, collective behavior, and public policy: Investigating water pollution in the Ganga river

Anjali Yadav

Abstract

Existing evidence shows the interconnections between collective behavior and social norms. Yet the challenges posed by collective behavior in managing common pool resources (CPR), which are often governed by social norms, remain unexplored. Against this backdrop, our research employs the theory of social norms to investigate the dynamics and complex interplay of collective behavior and social norms. We draw cues from Bronfenbrenner's model of socio-ecological systems to propose a novel framework that integrates behavioral and ecological systems.

Focusing particularly on non-point pollution sources, it is guided by two objectives. First, it identifies socio-psychological correlates of collective behavior that pollute Ganga. Second, it extends the application of social norms to the 'sacred' common pool resources and measures the attitude, behavior and knowledge of people about water pollution in the Ganga. Third, it will aid the implementation of bottom-up pollution control while factoring in nudge-based interventions for a pro-environmental behavioral shift.

This design-based research applied mixed methods for data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the evidence. Further, it employs instruments such as field experiments, questionnaires, document analysis and statistical modeling. The outcomes of the study will aid the policymakers to effectively tackle the problem of social dilemma and collective action, often encountered in the management of CPR.

Keywords: social norms, pro-environmental behavior, attitude-behavior-knowledge



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Localizing Ganga: The Representations of the River in Folk Texts from Bengal

Pritha Chakraborty

Abstract

The paper examines the representations of Ganga in the folk literature of Bengal through an analysis of *Mangalkavyas*—folk texts in the form of eulogies dedicated to deities. Through a comparative analysis of Vijay Gupta's *Padmapuran*, Kavikankan Mukundaram Chakrabarti's *Chandimangalkavya*, and Durgaprasad Mukhyopadhyaya's *Gangabhakti Tarangini*, the paper examines how the dominant “myth” of Ganga as a liberator and purifier was adapted within the social and cultural context of Bengal.

In the first section, through an evaluation of Ganga's relationship with the folk deities—Chandi and Manasa—in the mentioned texts, the paper traces the intersections between the canonised Brahmanical religion and the vernacular folk religion of Bengal. The second section examines Ganga's representations in Bengali Islamic *Punthi* literature through an analysis of Abdur Rahim's *Gaji Kalu Champabati Kanyar Punthi*, along with Islamic folk narratives from Bengal and Bangladesh, further highlighting the influence of the *Mangalkavyas* on the development and propagation of Islam in Bengal and Bangladesh.

The paper, thus, traces the localisation of Ganga within the regional context of Bengal through an analysis of the mentioned texts, thereby establishing the *Mangalkavyas* as a cultural tool of religious and cultural assimilation.

Keywords: River Ganga, Folk literature, Bengal, Mangalkavya, Localization, Myth, Culture, Religion



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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

In Search of Some Quiet: Reading the Everyday in Two Contemporary African Novels

Angana Das

Abstract

Contemporary African literatures has seen a marked shift away from the “divine” fusing with the “communal”, as Wole Soyinka put it, towards a “rediscovery of the ordinary”, or a departure from the excesses of spectacle, as noted by Njabulo Ndebele. My paper will explore how the mode of the ritual moves away from cultural and ethnic idioms to more mundane everyday practices as a site of reconciliation in contemporary African literatures. As a response to the earlier preoccupation with violence and spectacles of excess, contemporary novels from African writers deliberately move away from dramatizing their loss through questions of power and institutions, but rather in seeking reconciliation through a renewed appreciation of the mundane. This relegation of the state as irrelevant to the negotiation becomes significant as a new category of African experience, ‘Afropolitanism’, emerges to blur nation-state boundaries, rendering any possibility of dialogue with the state redundant. What emerges as a result is the possibility of forging new ties and communities, and repairing broken relationships through care, nurturance, and compassion, and everyday activities. I will look at two novels for this paper to explore this shift, namely Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go* (2013) and Nuruddin Farah’s *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014).

Keywords: Afropolitanism, ritual, loss, African literatures, reconciliation



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Death (in) Visibility: Hervé Guibert

Mani Dixit

Abstract

Death (in) Visibility discusses the notions of genre, language and style, and writer-reader interaction in Hervé Guibert's *To the Friend Who Did Not Save My Life* (1991), a semi-autobiographical work that tells the story of the author's experiences with AIDS. While keeping in mind the overarching themes of living-dying with and around AIDS in the late twentieth century and the anxieties of writing with illness, this project pays special attention to Guibert's photographic sense and his shifting position vis-à-vis his work, and how it affects the aesthetics of his text. By studying the thematic and stylistic features of the text critically, the project aims to examine different genre categories that seem to dissolve in it. It conducts a close study of the representations of death in Guibert's text and makes use of his collected memoirs and other texts to understand the context and tenor of his oeuvre at large. The project also tries to understand the reader's relationship with the AIDS narrative, especially the textual body in the hands of the reader, in the light of the ideas mentioned above. These ideas are discussed over three chapters of the project, evoking contrasts such as desire-death, candor-caution, exposure-veiling, fiction-nonfiction, etc., that populate Guibert's text meaningfully.

Keywords: Life Writing, AIDS Narratives, Death in Literature, Ill Texts



RESEARCH SCHOLARS' DAY 2023

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

The 'untouchable' communist in Sujatha Gidla's "Ants Among Elephants"

Diksha Beniwal

Abstract

This chapter analyzes, through Sujatha Gidla's book titled *Ants among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India* (2017), how one's position of socio-economic subordination can be challenged by tackling class exploitation. This book, while emphasizing upon the Kambham family's status as "untouchables" in its very title, primarily traces the story of Gidla's uncle who sought to emerge from his marginalized social position by combatting class exploitation using the ideology of Communism. The memoir highlights intersectional functioning of the oppressive structures of caste and class in ostracizing a group of people, thus complicating our understanding of the position of subalternity, and one's attempt to emerge from it. Can class based oppression be challenged without addressing caste in India, and vice versa? Does contesting one automatically translate into battling the other? How does the idea or definition of social mobility for dalits fit within this complex of caste and class? While analyzing the complexity of dealing with caste and class, this chapter will try to understand how Gidla's Uncle K. G. Satyamurthi's political activism reconciles the two causes of fighting each of these hierarchical structures.

Keywords: Dalit Studies, Dalit Literature, Postcolonial Studies, Indian Middle Class, Caste and Class



RESEARCH SCHOLARS' DAY 2023

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Idea of Cultural Association in Sultanate Architecture at Warangal-Sultanpur

Manash Pratim Sharma

Abstract

This paper explores the multiple interpretations of the city of Warangal made by the pre-modern historical records, and the current scholarship and the way they consider the architecture of Warangal during the city's Sultanate rule. The objective of this study is twofold; first, to analyse the broader definitions of architectural reuse attributed to Tughluq occupation at the Kakatiya realm, focusing on the cultural assimilation of the Hindu-Muslim encounters in the turbulent era of the fourteenth century Deccan India. The other inquiry is to address the probable reasons behind Tughluqs retention and partial destruction of architecture at the Warangal fort complex. By means of the method of construction and material analyses of the surviving structures, the study intends to define the cultural proximity between the Hindu makers and their new Sultanate patrons who were culturally and customarily non-identical.

Keywords: Warangal, Sultanpur, Warangal fort, Kakatiya architecture, Sultanate architecture, Delhi Sultanate, Tughluq dynasty, architectural reuse, cultural assimilation

Research Area: Sultanate audience halls, Spatial and material reuse in Sultanate architecture at Warangal



RESEARCH SCHOLARS' DAY 2023

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Where Horror Stands Monumentalised

Yashaswini Jayadevaiah

Abstract

While India is celebrating her 75th year of Independence, it is crucial to know and acknowledge every facet of her journey towards independent statehood. Colonial heritage buildings and monuments throughout the suppressed colonies have inevitably brought sensitive issues leading to selective remembering and forgetting; India is not an exclusion. Being a heritage professional, the researcher traverses through her encounter with one such monument, which monumentalises the memory of pain and horror in pre-independence India. The monument and its historical context evoke multiple ethical, humanitarian, and socio-cultural questions putting selective remembering and forgetting of heritage at the center stage. Though the monument's purpose has seen a functional transformation in independent India due to changing socio-cultural and political scenarios, the researcher acknowledges the evocative relevance and heritage of the monument and its irrevocable relevance in the present polarised societies.

Keywords: Colonial monuments; Memorial and heritage; Evocative heritage; Past Condemnations; All Souls' Church - Kanpur Memorial; The Great Indian Mutiny/ First War of Indian Independence