

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND CULTURE STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF BURDWAN

TWO-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

GENRE STUDIES: THE IDEA OF THE NOVEL

6 & 7 March 2019

Venue: Department of English and Culture Studies, The University of Burdwan

CONCEPT NOTE

This seminar is a continuation of the sustained engagement of the Department of English and Culture Studies, University of Burdwan with the idea of genres and their evolution. The novel is in many ways central to modern genre studies given that it cannibalizes every other genre to come into being. As Mikhail Bakhtin notes, it is a genre whose exoskeleton has not yet hardened, which is in a perpetual state of being and therefore a perfect example of the carnivalized state.

The ‘rise of the novel’ — a highly contested phrase that was popularized by Ian Watt — coincided not only with the rise of a reading-interpretative community and the middle class, but also with women emancipation and the growth of what is generally known as print modernity. Jane Austen’s novels such as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Northanger* and *Abbey* are replete with references to the new novel reading experiences and patriarchal perceptions regarding such readings’ transgressive dimensions.

The novel is also of the greatest interest to students of English and modern vernacular literatures in India because it was the first dominant genre to come via the colonial enterprise in South Asia and one that both represented and reproduced colonial cultural dominance. It shaped the most important vernacular literary expressions of South Asia. Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s *Rajmohan’s Wife* marks a rupture in terms of preferred representational aesthetics and the embracing of the ideology of realism in Indian *bhasa* literatures from the 19th century.

Exciting studies in writers of the British novel and subcontinental readers have formed the cutting edge of contemporary reader response, library circulation, publishing history and reading history projects.

Abstracts of papers in the areas mentioned below, but not confined to them, are invited for the conference:

- The idea of genre
- The idea of the novel
- Debates regarding rise and continuity of the novel
- Novelty and/or traditionality of the novel form

- The South Asian novel
- Realism, post realism, and the novel form
- Women and the novel
- The novel's interpretative community in 19th century England
- The novel's interpretative community in 19th century India
- Adventure and science fiction novels
- Diaspora, transnationalism, border crossing and the novel
- Neo Victorian novels
- Children's novels, detective novels, crime fiction, the hard boiled novel
- The novel reader, libraries, and publishers of novels
- Graphic novel
- Novelization of other literary genres
- Death of the novel

Short abstracts, in not more than 150 words, must be mailed to the seminar organizers at thenovelseminar@gmail.com by 03.03.2019. Intimation regarding acceptance of abstracts will be mailed by 04.03.2019. No TA/DA will be provided to participants. The seminar organizers may arrange for local hospitality, the expenses for which will have to be borne by the participants. Seminar kit, lunch and other refreshments will be provided to the participants on both the days of the seminar. Participants may register for the seminar free of cost, and will be provided with certificates at the end of the second day's proceedings.

For enquiries, please contact:

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