



International Virtual Conference

CONTAGION NARRATIVES: SOCIETY, CULTURE AND ECOLOGY OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH



About the Conference

The 'outbreak narratives' (Wald) emerging from across the globe afflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic have once again accentuated human vulnerability and have turned the spotlight back on the nonhuman (microbes, animals, climate and so on) and its 'confederation of agencies' (Iovino and Oppermann). The Corona pestilence, like its antecedents such as the Great Plague of London (1665-66), Spanish Flu (1918-1920), SARS (2002-2004) and Ebola

(2013-2016), narrates 'biological catastrophe[s]' (Caduff) of varying degrees as it puts forward embodied discourses of pain, fear, fatigue, exhaustion and suffering. The permeability of bodies (Alaimo) that COVID-19 foregrounds has sharp parallels with the human survival struggles in the otherwise toxified locations like those near nuclear dumps, landfills and factories.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore astonishing discrepancies in response to the threat among different locations in the Global North and South. Emerging records of strategies and successes from different regions indicate that resourcefulness in handling the pandemic is not necessarily correlated with affluence or the availability of the best healthcare. The contagion that rapidly spread from China to Europe and the US, arguably, has effectively highlighted the flipside of both high capitalism and globalisation.

The extensive periods of nation-wide lockdowns in response to the pandemic have unequivocally demonstrated that environmental despoliation is largely anthropogenic. News reports from across the globe point to several instances of environmental recuperation such as drops in air and water pollution, fish returning to water resources and the sightings of birds and wild animals in cityscapes. The entanglement of such upbeat tales of ecological healing with stories of multiple socio-cultural problems like insanitation, stigma, unemployment, poverty, and migration that countries, mostly in the Global South, confront suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic ought to be seen as a 'naturecultural' (Haraway) phenomenon.

The tragic stories of deaths from COVID-19, which are increasingly becoming part of our everyday reality, make us reflect on the complex causal network that has led to the spread of this 'zoonotic' disease. The fact that the disease has spread from animals to human beings makes us think more closely about our relationship with members of other species. Our attitudes to other animals range from kindness and condescension to hostility and clash for resources. When they are experimented on, they serve as instruments to satisfy our quest to understand the secrets of life. This is one precise instance where this outbreak gives us a motivation for looking more closely at the relationship between us and other animals.

More questions arise as we take a look at the larger ecosystem on which the living world is dependent. It has been observed that the outbreak of this disease is concomitant with an increasing number of extreme climatic events and both are argued to be connected to global warming. As pathogens mutate and increasing temperatures create conditions for the increased breeding of disease vectors, infectious diseases could become deadlier and more difficult to contain. Further, owing to unhealthy living conditions and dependence on daily wages, socio-economically disadvantaged individuals of the Global

South are more affected by infectious diseases in terms of health as well as their already low economic status.

As historian Yuval Harari noted, the virus SARS-CoV-2 has affected aspects of our lives that make us human, such as the possibility of close communication in a direct, face-to-face mode. If infectious diseases become recurring phenomena in a world transformed by climate change, all aspects of human life, including our notions of literature, films and other forms of art, would have to be re-thought. The ways in which our forms of aesthetic expression respond and change would be a matter of interest to this conference. Against this background, the two-day international virtual conference welcomes papers that analyses narratives from the Global South about deadly infectious diseases like COVID-19 by situating them in their wider medical (including biochemical), eco-social and cultural contexts. The conference is conceived as interdisciplinary and participants are encouraged to draw on theories ranging from the medical and environmental humanities, philosophy, gender, cultural and film studies, as well as various strands of social sciences.



Sub-themes include, but are not limited to

Contagion and literature
Contagion and language
Contagion and climate change
Contagion and environment
Contagion and the Global South
Contagion and social challenges
Contagion and culture
Contagion and philosophy
Contagion and films
Contagion narratives and technology
Contagion and gender

Publication

Selected papers from the conference will be published in conference proceedings with ISBN. Further information will be shared in due course of time.

Submission

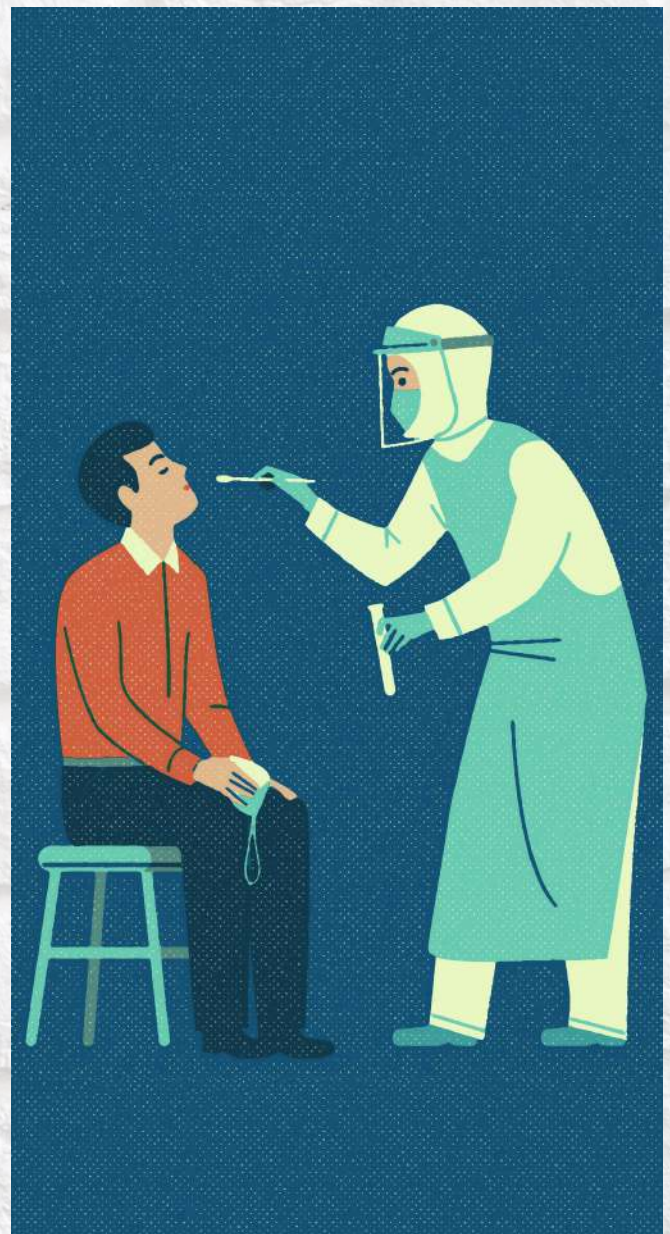
Abstracts of about 700-900 words on the above-mentioned themes should be emailed to contagion.narratives@gmail.com on or before July 24. The abstracts, typed in MS Word (Times New Roman, 12, double space) should contain the title, name and affiliation of the author, and email address.

Note

- A registration link is provided on the last page of this brochure. Registration is free.
- Registered presenters will be provided with the link for virtual presentation.
- Details regarding the link to the virtual conference and password will be communicated to the registered email address by August 22, 2020.
- The conference organisers will issue e-certificates to all the registered participants who attend a minimum of three sessions.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Abstract Submission	July 24, 2020
Notification of Abstract Acceptance	July 31, 2020
Registration Opens	August 12, 2020
Registration Ends	August 21, 2020
Submission of Full Paper	August 22, 2020



Keynote Speaker

PROF KAREN LAURA THORNER

is Harry Tuchman Levin Professor in Literature and Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, USA. She has authored three major scholarly monographs: *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Harvard, 2009); *Ecoambiguity: Environmental Crises and East Asian Literatures* (Michigan, 2012); and *Global Healing: Literature, Advocacy, Care* (Brill, 2020). Prof. Thorner is also the author of multiple (co)edited volumes and more than 70 articles/book chapters on a range of fields in literature and cultural history globally. She is interested in a wide range of research fields such as the medical humanities, health humanities (including chronic illness, death and dying, mental health, and disability), environmental humanities; displacement, migration, diaspora; social justice, including inequality, and economic, health, racial, criminal, and environmental justice; gender, Asian/global feminisms, gender and leadership; trauma; and global and comparative indigenities. Her detailed profile can be accessed at <https://complit.fas.harvard.edu/people/karen-thorner>

Plenary Speakers

PROF DILIP M. MENON

is the Mellon Chair of Indian Studies and the Director of the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. He was educated at the Universities of Delhi, Oxford and Cambridge and earned his PhD from Cambridge. His research for the past decade has engaged with issues of caste, socialism and equality in modern India. He is the author of *Caste, nationalism and communism in south India: Malabar, 1900-1948* (Cambridge, 1994), *The blindness of insight: Essays on caste in modern India* (Navayana, 2006), *The cultural history of Modern India* (editor, Social Sciences Press and Berghahn, 2006), *Capitalisms: Towards a Global History* (co-editor, Oxford, 2020), and the translator of Potheri Kunhambu's 1893 Malayalam novel *Saraswativijayam* (Book Review Literary Trust, 2002)

DR ANDREW FENTON

is Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Calgary. His research interests include animal ethics, philosophy of animal cognition and behaviour and Buddhist philosophy. He has authored or co-authored papers that have appeared in journals like *Biology and Philosophy*, *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, *Developing World Bioethics*, *Journal of Animal Ethics*, *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, *Journal of Ethics in Mental Health*, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, *Neuroethics*, *Public Health Ethics* and *The Monist*.

DR KALPITA BHAR PAUL

is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Krea University, Sri City, Andhra Pradesh, India. Her research primarily captures the changing trajectory of the human-environment relationship and its impact on environmental ethics and environmental sustainability. She has been working in the Indian Sundarbans for over a decade. She has published widely in international journals such as *Environmental Ethics*, *Environmental Philosophy*, *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, *Ethics & the Environment*, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* and *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*. Currently, she is completing her monograph on the Sundarbans, which is going to be published by Cambridge University Press. She, by collaborating with a national award-winning documentary filmmaker Sourav Sarangi, is also making a documentary on the Indian Sundarbans.

Poet

ARUNDHATHI SUBRAMANIAM

is the award-winning author of eleven books of poetry and prose. Widely translated and anthologised, her volume of poetry, *When God is a Traveller* (2014) was the Season Choice of the Poetry Book Society, shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize. She is the author of five books of poetry, most recently *Love Without a Story* (Amazon Westland, New Delhi, 2019), *When God is a Traveller* (HarperCollins India, New Delhi, 2014 and Bloodaxe Books, Newcastle, 2014). As a prose writer, her books include *The Book of Buddha*, the bestselling biography of a contemporary mystic, *Sadhguru: More Than a Life* and most recently, *Adiyogi: The Source of Yoga* (co-authored with Sadhguru). As editor, her most recent book is the Penguin anthology of sacred poetry, *Eating God* (Penguin Ananda, 2014).

About VIT

VIT, one of the premier institutes in Tamil Nadu, was established in 1984. It is a major, comprehensive, student-centred research university dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and service. VIT today comprises various schools and interdisciplinary research centres offering undergraduate, postgraduate and research programs in various disciplines. The institute was established to provide quality higher education at par with international standards. The campus has a cosmopolitan atmosphere with students from all corners of the globe. Presently the student's strength has crossed 25,000. Our Memoranda of Understanding with various international universities are our major strength. The mission of VIT is to educate students from all over India, including those from the local and rural areas and from other countries, so that they can become enlightened individuals, improving the living standards of their families, industries and society. VIT provides individual attention, world-class quality education, and takes care of character building. There are student and faculty exchange programmes, to encourage joint research

projects for mutual benefit.

VIT Vellore obtained grade "A" for all the programmes offered by the University during the re-accreditation processes in February 2015. The University was recently ranked No.1 Private Engineering Institution by MHRD, Govt. of India. VIT – Recognised as Institution of Eminence (IoE) by the Government of India.

About the Department of English

The Department of English is part of the School of Social Sciences and Languages. The school offers language courses at basic and intermediate levels for UG and PG programmes in a diverse set of disciplines that come under science, technology, commerce and management to enable all learners to avail opportunities across the globe. The department aims to build communicative competence and confidence in students of engineering and other streams. In addition to teaching communicative English, the faculty members carry out research in different areas in literature and the humanities.

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Contact Us

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Assistant Professors
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Registration Link

<https://forms.gle/6HJGCRRe4cATyZof6>



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School of Social Sciences and Languages
Department of English

We cordially invite you to the International Virtual Conference

on

**Contagion Narratives: Society, Culture and Ecology of the
Global South**

Date: 25-8-2020 (Tuesday)

Time: 9 AM

Venue: Online (Zoom & YouTube Live)

Zoom Meeting Details: <https://chennai-vit.zoom.us/j/96497510956?pwd=bXg3T2laamJHVIRmRGF4RTh6ZGhXUT09>

Meeting ID: 964 9751 0956

Passcode: 939579

YouTube live link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUQnb0JccgeaLOv5ZCqH-bg>

Dr Sreejith Varma R.
Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat

Dr Sarika Gupta

Dr G. Velmurugan

Assistant Professors, English

HOD, English

Dean, SSL

International Virtual Conference

Contagion Narratives: Society, Culture and Ecology of the Global South

August 25-26, 2020

Vellore Institute of Technology Vellore

Time (IST)	Event
Day 1, 25 August	
9:00-9:30 AM	Inauguration & Welcome Address Speakers: Dr G. Velmurugan, The Dean, SSL Dr Sarika Gupta, The HOD of English Introduction to the Conference Topic (Organising Secretaries, Dr Sreejith Varma + Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat)
9:30-10:45 AM	Keynote Address - Prof Karen Laura Thornber, Professor of Comparative Literature, Harvard University, USA
10:45 AM-11:00 AM	Break
11:00 AM-12:00 PM	Plenary Session 1 - Dr Kalpita Bhar Paul, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Krea University
12:20-1:30 PM	Paper Presentation Session-I (Parallel Sessions)
1:30 – 2:30 PM	Lunch

2:30-3:30 PM	Plenary Session 2 – Prof Dilip M. Menon, Professor of History, University of Witwatersrand
3:35-5:00 PM	Paper Presentations-II (Parallel Sessions)
Day 2, 26 August	
09:30-11:00 AM	Panel Discussion (4 members) → Dr Satyajit Rath + Dr Feroz Hassan + Prof J. Devika+ Dr Bindhulakshmi P. (Moderator - Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat)
11:00-11:10 AM	Break
11:10-11:50 AM	Plenary Session 3 – Poetry Reading by Arundhathi Subramaniam (Poet and Non-fiction Writer) (Interlocutor: Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat)
12:00-1:30 PM	Paper Presentations-III (Parallel Sessions)
1:30-2:30 PM	Lunch
2:30-4:00 PM	Paper Presentations-IV (Parallel Sessions)
4:00-5:00 PM	Plenary Session 4 – Dr Andrew Fenton, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada
5:00-5:30 PM	Valedictory (Prof Ajanta Sircar) & Vote of Thanks (Dr Sreejith Varma)

List of Presenters

- 1 Trayee Sinha -- Social Distancing Between the Genders: Challenges and Outcomes
- 2 Soniya S. Pillai -- Shadow and Self: H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds as an admonition to humanity
- 3 Preethi Jose -- Contagion Films: A representation of Present Scenario
- 4 Andrew Nyongesa, Justus Makokha and Gaita Murimi -- Pathologizing Otherness: Theorizing Parallelisms between Covid 19 Restrictions and Strands of Otherness in Contemporary African Novels
- 5 Ann Pereira and Dr Sarika Gupta -- Stigma that Stings: Biopolitics and the Poonthura Problem in Kerala”
- 6 Joy Sophy D. -- Train to Busan: A Hobbesian Nightmare.
- 7 Rinu Koshy -- Contagion as Crisis
- 8 Anwasha Roy and Abhik Mukherjee -- One contagious and one famine narrative: Interrelation between Satyajit Ray's Enemy of the People and Distant Thunder and their connection with the immediate present and impending future
- 9 Susmita Talukdar -- Contagious Narratives: Human Body in Negotiating Spaces from Quarantine to Funeral
- 10 Dr Anu Mary Peter and Dr. M. K. Senthil Babu -- Global Health Catastrophes: Graphic Medicine and COVID19 Comics
- 11 Neethu S. Nair & Aleena George -- Contagion Narratives: Psychological and Political Impact of Pandemic in Steven Soderberg's Contagion and Aashiq Abu's Virus
- 12 Shubangi Srivastava -- Canine ecologies under contagion pressures: Altered human-dog relations in pandemic struck India
- 13 M. Aishwarya -- The Resilience and Contagiosity of Art, Memory and Civilization in Emily St. John Mandel's Station Eleven
- 14 Saranya S -- Epidemics and the Underprivileged Section of the Society: The Importance of Spreading Education to End Exploitation
- 15 Yukta Talwar, Sangmitra, Himani Mahawar -- Stateless lives: Analyzing the plight of refugees in Covid-19 times
- 16 Mohua Ahiri -- The Confrontation with Death and Disease in the Refugee Camps in Bengal in the Aftermath of Partition
- 17 Dr.D.R.Pratima Roy -- Re-conceiving Contagion in Keats La Belle Dame Sans Merci

- 18 Rohini K Potti -- An Analysis of the Select Pandemic Narratives of the Past as Historical Tropes and their Bearing upon Covid 19
- 19 Dr. Savitha Sukumar -- Contagion Goddesses: Offering a Panacea for all Epidemics
- 20 Tiasa Banerjee -- Humanity, Contagion and the Metaphor of the Wall
- 21 Preethi Joseph --Exploring the 'New Normals': A Reading of the Magazine Narratives in the COVID-special Edition of Femina
- 22 Meghna Shinde -- Nature is Healing: Impact of Coronavirus on Environment
- 23 Sangeetha S. -- Queer Sensitivity: An Analysis of Psychological and Physical Changes in the Novel "Wilder Girls"
- 24 Sharmistha Das -- The Untold Story of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic: Interrogating the Cultural (non)Representation of this Historical Trauma
- 25 Chaitanya. K -- 'Literature from Renaissance to Present day: A study on Society and Human Behaviorism during Contagion with Special Reference to Albert Camus' The Plague
- 26 C. Rajyalakshmi -- Contagion and Culture: A Retrospective Analysis
- 27 Johnsy Y.E. -- Contagion and Literature in Michel Foucault's Madness and Civilization (1961), The Order of Things (1966) and Discipline and Punish (1975)
- 28 A. Livine Ancy -- "I am Fighting for My Life": Representation of Covid 19 in the Web Comic I Think This Virus is Trying to Kill Me
- 29 Manjula Gaur -- Representation of Pandemics in the English Cinema
- 30 Linda Joseph -- 'Contagion' in Context: Mapping the Politics and Ideology Underlying the Mass Perception of the 'Other'"
- 31 Anil Kumar -- Perceived Threat of Covid-19 Contagion: The Effects of Emotional Contagion, Perceived Emotional Labor and Perceived Social Support on Employees' Services Performance Outcomes
- 32 Sujayita Bhattacharjee -- 'Exploring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Homeless Population of Urban India (to be moved to the in-list when we receive the revised abstract)
- 33 Soumyarup Bhattacharjee -- Rabindranath Tagore's Chaturanga and the Calcutta Plague: Medicine, Modernity and Nationalism
- 34 Jose Jacob -- Metaphors of 'Being Singular-Plural' : Language of the Pandemic in O V Vijayan's The Legends of Khasak
- 35 Krishna Chaitanya E. -- 'Contagion and Social Challenges in the Global Context
- 36 Saroja Ganapathy -- Contagion and the state: 7am arivu (Tamil: 2011)and Virus (Malayalam: 2019) as restitution narratives

37 Ritika Sahu and Sambit Rath -- Narratives of gender, death, and social media in times of COVID:
Methodological experiments using ethno archaeological methods and text analytics

Serial Number	Name
1	Dr. Saroja Ganapathy
2	Dr. Varsha K.
3	Ishwary Prasad Lamichhane
4	Durgesh Malla
5	Avishek Ray
6	Dr. Premila Swamy D
7	Anna George
8	Dr. Chandra Upadhyay
9	Bhim Gurung
10	Aruna Karki
11	MD AKHLAQUR RAHMAN
12	Dr. Meenu B.
13	Dr. Meera B.
14	Dr. Abhik Mukherjee
15	Dhanya S. Nair
16	ASARA
17	Khum Prasad Sharma
18	Selishma Mohandas
19	M.S. Siddharth Prabhu
20	Huma Datt
21	Dr. Soma KP
22	RAMKIRAN B
23	Dwija Bai A. K
24	Padmini Sasikumar
25	Ambir Khadka
26	V. Sakthi priya
27	Sneha Srikanth
28	Dr. Susanta Ghosh
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31	Dr. Irum Alvi
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33	Raj Lakshmi Timala
34	Fitri Istikasari
35	Dr. J. Anil Premraj

36	AMAN KUMAR JAISWAL
37	Sunaina kumari
38	Suraj Kumar
39	Dr. Ajanta Sircar
40	SANTHOSH VINCENT K
41	Ida Grace A.
42	Shibashish Purkayastha
43	VINODHINI.T
44	Randal Houle
45	Dr.RUKMINI.S
46	AJANTA SIRCAR
47	RAMAN KUMAR PASWAN
48	Prashant Thote
49	Soumyarup Bhattacharjee
50	Dwija Bai A. K
51	Manita Gurung
52	PATEL VRAJ BHAVESHKUMAR
53	Dr. Irum Alvi
54	Gowri Sundararajan
55	Deepa Thomas
56	Ambir Khadka
57	Dr. Savitha Sukumar
58	Preethi Sara Joseph
59	S. Vijayalakshmi
60	M Susmitha Devi
61	Bhim Gurung
62	Aruna Karki
63	ASARA
64	Soma KP
65	Chetana Krishnan
66	Arun Shrestha
67	Dr. Anu Mary Peter
68	RAHUL KUMAR PASWAN
69	Fitri Istikasari
70	Saranya S
71	Sneha Srikanth

72	Utpal Bajracharya
73	Miss. Vinaya
74	Raghavi Ravi Kasthuri
75	Dr Usha Sadasivan
76	Dr. Shabeena Kuttay
77	J. ANIL PREMRAJ
78	Dr. S. Rukmani
79	ABHINAV RAJ
80	Sushant Kishore
81	Chaitanya. K
82	Dr.Susanta Ghosh
83	T S DHILEEP
84	SAMRAT HALDER
85	M. Aishwarya
86	Dr. Rukmini.S
87	M K Senthil Babu
88	DEBAJYOTI BISWAS
89	Dr. Prantosh Kumar Paul
90	Durgesh Malla
91	Dr. V. Anitha Devi
92	Jose Jacob
93	Prakash Bikram Raut
94	Kajal raj
95	Dr. Chitra V. R
96	Ramya Rajakannan
97	DEVARAJU
98	GOURISANKAR ROY
99	Varsha K
100	Suraj Kumar
101	Sunaina kumari
102	Rinu Koshy
103	P V NISHA
104	Huma Datt
105	Chandralega S.
106	Sulakshana
107	SARVESH KUMAR PANDEY
108	Sapna Kumari

109	Linda P Joseph
110	Dr. Krishna Chaitanya E.
111	Pawan Kumar
112	V.Sakthi priya
113	Sujayita Bhattacharjee
114	Selishma Mohandas
115	SOMNATH DAS
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123	MR.M.SARAVANAN
124	Diwakar kumar
125	Elwin Susan John
126	Davaleswari Madhu
127	S.KANNADHASAN
128	M.S.Siddharth Prabhu
129	MEENAKSHI S
130	Rohini K Potti
131	Dr.Nageswari. R
132	pujari raghusa
133	Aruna Devi K
134	Juwairiya Ali
135	Rashmi
136	S.Puja
137	Santosh kumar
138	Remya Kannothe
139	Ms Meghna Shinde
140	Niranjana Marian George
141	Manjula Gaur
142	Tapas kumar sahu
143	Saikat Chakraborty
144	Aparupa Das





REPORT

International Virtual Conference Contagion Narratives: Society, Culture and Ecology of the Global South 25 and 26 August 2020

Department of English
School of Social Sciences and Languages
VIT, Vellore

The Department of English in the School of Social Sciences and Languages at VIT University, Vellore, organised a two-day international virtual conference on 25 and 26 August 2020. Dr Sreejith Varma R. and Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat were the organising secretaries. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr G. Velmurugan, the Dean of SSL, and Dr Sarika Gupta, HOD of English, delivered the welcome address. Then Dr Sreejith Varma R. and Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat gave an introduction to the conference. This was followed by a keynote address delivered by Prof Karen Laura Thornber, Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. The other plenary lectures on the first day (25 August) were delivered by Dr Kalpita Bhar (Krea University) and Prof Dilip Menon (University of Witwatersrand, South Africa). On the second day (26 August), there was a panel discussion followed by a conversation with a poet. The discussants in the panel were Dr Satyajit Rath (IISER Pune), Dr J. Devika (Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram), Dr Bindhulakshmi Pattadath (TISS Mumbai) and Dr Feroz Hassan (IIT Kanpur). The poet who agreed to interact was Arundhathi Subramaniam. Both these sessions were moderated by Dr Jobin M. Kanjirakkat. Dr Andrew Fenton (Dalhousie University) delivered the concluding plenary lecture on 26 August, which was followed by a valedictory speech presented by Prof Ajanta Sircar. The vote of thanks was given by Dr Sreejith Varma R.

There were four parallel sessions of paper presentations in addition to the general sessions, which included the keynote lecture, the plenary talks, the panel discussion and the conversation with the poet. The general sessions were held using the Zoom platform and the parallel sessions made use of Microsoft Teams. The general sessions were also live streamed on YouTube. The links are provided in the attached documents.

The conference webpage contains all the relevant information about the event. Here is the link to the conference webpage: <https://vit.ac.in/Contagion-Narratives/>