

Passages to India: Literary Investigations from the 1920s to Independence

Time: Thu 16-18 // Room: Philosophy building, Ü 10

Course description:

The seminar investigates the representation of India in the decades leading up to independence in 1947. After an introductory phase that will deal with the history of the 'British Raj', the discourses of colonialism, and the potentials of narrative fiction, the focus will be on three outstanding novels – one written by a British and two written by Indian authors. We will explore how these texts use the novel form, modern(ist) conceptual frameworks and the English language to explore India and represent it to a transnational readership. Consequently, our discussions will address the sociocultural contexts of the novels as well as their intellectual work and literary technique. In particular, we will be interested in how issues of human contact, cultural hierarchy and social stigmatization – both within and across communities – come to be addressed.

Preparation for the seminar:

Before the beginning of the lecture period, prospective participants need to obtain copies of the following novels:

- AHMED ALI, *Twilight in Delhi* (1940; Kolkata: Rupa, 2007).
[ISBN: 978-8129112514 / c. € 18,- / Please note that this text might need some time to arrive and should be ordered in time.]
- MULK RAJ ANAND, *Untouchable* (1935; London: Penguin, 1940ff.).
[ISBN: 978-0141393605 / c. € 10,-]
- E. M. FORSTER, *A Passage to India* (1924), ed. and introd. Pankaj Mishra (London: Penguin, 2005).
[ISBN: 978-0241540428 / c. € 10,-].

(These editions are recommended; it is also OK to get a different edition, as long as it is reliable.)

Please use the semester break for appropriate preparatory reading.

In particular, participants are expected to determinedly brush up their knowledge on India – especially on India under British rule and on India's way towards independence. The texts assigned for the first and second meetings of the seminar (please see below) provide a good starting point for doing so.

Moreover, it is urgently recommended that participants use the semester break to read as many of the assigned literary texts as possible. (I would suggest the following sequence: Forster, Anand, Ali.)

Please make sure to always have your personal annotated version of assigned texts available in class.

PROGRAMME:**I. Contexts and Approaches****16/10 Introduction**

Opening the seminar / Approaching India / Why and how to study anglophone literature on/from India?

- "India", *Wikipedia*, web: [LINK](#).
 ➔ Use the article as a jumping board to get a first broad 'picture' of India; put the focus on aspects that are pertinent to the concerns of the seminar.

23/10 Late 19th- and early 20th-century India, the British Raj, and the struggle for independence

- YASMIN KHAN, "Gandhi's World", *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*, ed. Judith M. Brown and Anthony Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011) 11-29. [Accessible online through the university library (UBW): [LINK](#).¹]
- [ETHAN TEEKAH,] "Indian Independence Movement", *Encyclopaedia Britannica / Britannica Academic*, web: [LINK](#).
- TIMOTHY MITCHELL, "The Stage of Modernity", *Questions of Modernity*, ed. Mitchell (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000) 1-34. [Accessible online through UBW.] ➔ Only the introductory section of the text, i.e. pages 1-7, are assigned for thorough preparation.

30/10 Literature and Narrative Fiction – Concepts, Functions, Approaches

- [From:] JONATHAN CULLER, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997):
 - Ch. 2: "What Is Literature and Does It Matter?" (18-41);
 - Ch. 6: "Narrative" (82-93). [Files provided on WueCampus.]

06/11 Colonial discourse & literature

- RUDYARD KIPLING, "Beyond the Pale" (1888). Text provided by *Kipling Society*: [LINK](#).
 ➔ Questions for preparation: How do you read the story as an exemplary instance of colonial literature? What strictures and what insecurities of colonialist discourse become apparent in the text? How do notions of culture, ethnicity and gender operate in this context? Select two passages from the text for closer discussion!
- ELLEKE BOEHMER, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995 / 2nd ed.: 2005).
 ➔ Please, follow your own instincts and interests to seriously familiarize yourself with the book, its main approach, and its take on Kipling's writing. Ample passages from the book can be found online, e.g. at *Internet Archive* or *Google Books*.

¹ The university library (UBW) is making more and more books available online. To access the e-books from home, one often needs to be hooked up to the university's intranet through a VPN tunnel; see website of the Information Technology Centre (Rechenzentrum) on the procedure).

II. British liberal humanism confronting colonialism / India / the human predicament

13/11 E. M. Forster and *A Passage to India*

- [From:] *The Cambridge Companion to E. M. Forster*, ed. DAVID BRADSHAW (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) [accessible online through UBW]:
 - DAVID BRADSHAW, introduction (1-7);
 - PETER CHILDS, "*A Passage to India*" (188-208).

20/11 *A Passage to India* (1924), part I – "Mosque" (chs 1-11)

27/11 *A Passage to India*, part II – "Caves" (chs 12-32)

04/12 *A Passage to India*, part III – "Temple" (chs 33-37)

III. Anglophone Indian literature, the caste system, and the question of modernity

11/12 Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (1935) I

- Please also prepare RAMACHANDRA GUHA's short introduction to the novel and E. M. FORSTER's afterword.
- S[UBRAMANIAN] SHANKAR, "Teaching Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*: Colonial Context, Nationalism, Caste," *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 4.2 (2017): 332-341. [Accessible online through UBW.]

18/12 *Untouchable* II

[Christmas break]

IV. Resistant sorrow? – Memory and mourning on the threshold to independence

08/01 Ahmed Ali, *Twilight in Delhi* (1940), parts I & II

- NISHAT ZAIDI, "City Sensoriums as Metaphors of Memory: The Synaesthetic Mapping of the Changing City in *Twilight in Delhi* (1940)", *Terrains of Consciousness: Multilogical Perspectives on Globalization*, by Zeno Ackermann, Isabel Karremann, Simi Malhotra, and Nishat Zaidi (Würzburg: Würzburg UP, 2021) 65-68. [Open access: [LINK](#).]

15/01 *Twilight in Delhi*, parts III & IV

22/01 Concluding discussion

29/01 Final test (for students of the BA and teaching training programmes)

Organization of the seminar / Successful participation:

Besides continuous active participation and preparation, the following contributions are expected for earning credit points:

- All participants will write at least two reading responses (see information below).
- On top of this, students of the teacher training and BA programmes will sit the final test, while master's students (if any should participate in the seminar) will conclude with a longer academic essay (wissenschaftliche Hausarbeit).

READING RESPONSES are short (c. 1,5–3 pp.) essay-like *academic* text that respond to the material to be discussed in a specific meeting. They need to consider both the 'primary' text/s to be analysed in the meeting *and* the 'secondary' texts set up as assigned reading. Important questions/perspectives to be addressed are:

- How can the topic and material for the meeting be contextualized?
- How does it tie in with the seminar discussion so far?
- What questions should be posed in relation to the topic/material?
- What can (probably) be shown or established by posing these questions?

Reading responses should always try to concretely tackle selected passages from the primary and/or secondary texts assigned. They are due two days before the respective meeting. Please upload your reading response to the appropriate tool/file in WueCampus.