



Name: Dr. Chaiti Mitra

Qualification:

MA (Calcutta University, 1991)

Ph D (Department of English, Jadavpur University, 2013)

Designation: Associate Professor, English.

Date of joining service: 11.10.1996

Date of joining this college: 09.03. 1999

Courses Taught:

UG Honours:

17th and 18th centuries: Socio-cultural Background and Poetry; Pre-Elizabethan and Romantic Drama; Shakespeare (*Macbeth*); Milton (*Paradise Lost I*); Matthew Arnold (*On the Modern Element in Literature*); Modern Poetry; Introduction to Modern European Drama; Indian Writings in English, Rhetoric and Prosody; Literary Terms

UG General:

Victorian and Modern Poetry; Shakespeare (*The Tempest*); Indian English Poetry; Literary Terms

Specialization:

Victorian Studies; 19th Century Women's Writing

Research:

PhD Title: Boudoir to Bibighar: The Image of the Memsahibs in Mutiny Narratives (Jadavpur University, 2013).

PhD Abstract:

This thesis examines the representation of the memsahib—the nineteenth century colonial Englishwoman in India—in the 1857 Indian Mutiny narratives, fictional and non-fictional. It begins by focusing on the complex position which the memsahib occupies in the entire body of colonial discourse, and then goes on to locate her in the discourse of the Mutiny. It considers the four major narrative forms where the memsahib figure features prominently, and that are largely responsible for the image that posterity has about the Mutiny memsahib, namely political, journalistic, fictional, and personal. It examines the representative strategies of the memsahib figure from two perspectives—in the first she is

represented, as in the debates, reports and novels, and in the second, she represents herself, as in her private writings. It also enters the complicated domain of experience, its construction, and representation in its analysis of the memsahibs' self-writings during the period of unprecedented crisis. The study which looks *at* the memsahib as well as looks *into* her, reveals a very interesting process of manipulation.

With an eye to the complementary relationship between ideology and representation, and the complex bond that these two share with experience and its narration, this study examines the 'construction' of the memsahib in the diverse Mutiny discourses, and argues that the memsahib figure in Mutiny narratives is a highly complex, multilayered, skillfully constructed and manipulated representation.

UGC Minor Research Project

Title: Speaking for Herself: The Reworking of the Image of the Memsahib in the Mutiny Journals (2006-08).

MRP Abstract:

My research project focusses on a traditionally trivialized (and hence neglected) section of Mutiny narratives, namely the colonial Englishwoman's (popularly known as the 'memsahib') personal accounts of the Mutiny, either in the form of unpublished letters, journals and diaries, or as privately printed or published reminiscences, as an important source of challenging the dominant Victorian memsahib stereotype as the passive, innocent, sacrificial victim of anti-colonial rebellion whose violation at the hands of the mutineers became a metaphor for the violation of the Empire, as well as of charting the domestic implications of a large scale imperial crisis,. The research explores the domestic geographies of these narratives in several, connected ways: the conditions under which theses were written, the reasons for their privacy and publication, and their content, which juxtaposed the dangers of life during the Mutiny with domestic concerns of everyday life.

Focus on the personal writings of the memsahib also subsequently examines the limits of life for the white colonial woman during the imperial conflict, as also the gendered spatiality of private and personal narratives as letters, journals and diaries. This the study ultimately goes on to explore the fissures and contradictions embodied by white women in the empire.

Current Research

Partition Literature; 19th century Women Missionaries

Papers presented:

- i) “‘Truths’ About Mees Dolly and Miss Wheeler: Representation of the Memsahib in 1857 Mutiny Narratives” - 45th Annual Convention of the North East Modern Language Association (NEMLA), April 3-6, 2014. University of Susquehanna, Harrisburg, USA
- ii) “Miss Wheeler’s Multiple Deaths and the Well of Cawnpore: Imagining the 1857 Indian Mutiny Memsahib” - Annual Conference of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association, *Victorian Violence*, April 11-13, 2014. University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, USA
- iii) “Unfinished Dreams: *Nun Cha* and the Gorkhaland Movement” - National Conference on Literature and Human Rights, August 7-8, 2013. Pondicherry University.
- iv) “The ‘Other’ Story: An Alternative Narrative of the 1857 Lucknow Siege” - Annual Conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, *Victorian Networks and the Periodical Press*, 21-22 August, 2009. University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
- v) “Writing Her Own Story: The Memsahib and the Siege of Lucknow” - 4th Biennial International Conference of the Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies, 22-24 August, 2008. Visva bharti, Shantiniketan
- vi) “Writing Herself: The Memsahib and the 1857 Mutiny Journals” - Asia Pacific Regional Conference of SHARP, *New Word Order: Emerging Histories of the Book*, Jan 30-Feb1, 2006. Jadavpur University

Publications:

- i) Chapter titled ‘Fractured Identity, Unfinished Dreams: *Nun Cha* and the Gorkhaland Movement’ in *Writings on Rights: Critical Essays on Literature & Human Rights*, ed. T. Marx, Murugunandan K. Harrows Publications, 2015. ISBN 978-93-83581-19-1
- ii) “Indir Thakrunera”, *Hindol*, Issue 29, April 2016. ISSN 0976-0989
- iii) “An Unfinished Dream Called Gorkhaland: *Nun Cha*” *Northeast Review*, Issue 8, Jan-Feb 2014 <http://northeastreview.com/>
- iv) “Anglo Indian Heshley Curry’r Karikuri” *Hindol*, Issue 19, January 2014. ISSN 0976-0989
- v) “Rituporno Ghosh: Ekti Asamapto Jattrar Golpo”, *Hindol*, Issue 17, July 2013. ISSN 0976-0989
- vi) Chapter titled “The Changing Kantha” in *Embroidering Futures: Repurposing the Kantha*, ed. RituSethi, India Foundation for the Arts, 2012.

Papers/Book Chapters accepted for publication/In press:

- i) Working on a volume on Bengal Patachitra and Patuas for the India Foundation for the Arts
- ii) Edited *Eating Kolkata*, due for publication by Starmark and Emami Foundation

College posts (last three years):

IQAC Coordinator (2014-16)

NAAC Coordinator (2014-16)

Member, Managing Committee (2014-16)

TCS (1999-2000, 2005-06)

HoD (1999-2008; 2012-2013)

College committees/sub-committees (last three years):

2015:

Member, Academic Sub-committee

Member, UGC Sub-committee

2014:

Member, UGC Sub-committee

2013:

Convenor, Cultural Subcommittee.

Member, UGC Subcommittee

Member, Examination Subcommittee

Other engagements

Visiting Faculty, Post Graduate Department of English, West Bengal State University, 2015-16

Visiting Faculty and External Examiner, Post Graduate Department of English, Sri Shikshayatan College, Calcutta University, 2013-14

External Expert, PG Diploma Course "Translation and Transcultural Studies", School of Languages and Culture, Rabindra Bharati University, 2014

Awards/Fellowships/Grants:

Minor Research Project from U.G.C for researching the 19th century colonial Englishwomen's personal writings of the 1857 Mutiny (2006-08).

Partially funded research grant from the Charles Wallace India Trust for accessing archival materials for doctoral research at the British Library, U.K (2007).

Teachers' Fellowship for pursuing doctoral research under UGC's Faculty Improvement Programme (2008-2011).

Honorary Posts held

Referee for *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, an interdisciplinary academic journal published by Scottish Church College, Calcutta University.

University Nominee, PG Board of Studies, Department of English, Rishi Bankim Chandra Mahavidyalay, West Bengal State University

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