



PSAGS Annual Conference and Meeting 2019  
on  
**POSTCOLONIAL UNREASON: NATION,  
CALIBANISATION, SILENCES**

Organized Jointly in Collaboration with  
CLTCS, NSOU Kolkata, West Bengal

December 21, 2019  
Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), Salt Lake, Kolkata Campus



Postcolonial Studies Association of the Global South (PSAGS)  
Annual Conference and Meeting

on

Postcolonial Unreason: Nation, Calibanization and Silences

*To be organized jointly*

*In collaboration with*

Centre for Language, Translation & Cultural Studies (CLTCS)  
Netaji Subhas Open University, West Bengal

December 21, 2019

At Netaji Subhas Open University, Salt Lake, Kolkata Campus

Invited Keynote Speakers:

**Johan Hoglund**, Linnaeus University, Sweden

**Irfan Ahmad**, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany

**Ajay Gudavarthy**, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

**Sourit Bhattacharya**, University of Glasgow, Scotland

For many social and political observers, an eco-system based on majoritarian public sentiment is determining state policies and national orientations in many postcolonial nations of South Asia. While speaking on the current events in Myanmar, one of the speakers in the last PSAGS Annual conference coined the term, 'Subalternation' to argue how authoritarian postcolonial regimes gloating with majoritarian support are subalternizing large number of minorities, rendering them homeless in some cases, becoming complicit directly or indirectly in acts of programmatic persecution of the minorities, etc. The 'history of the vanishing present' of such postcolonial transmutation into colonizing re-graphing of its own minorities demands a critical evaluation of the very premises of postcolonial nationalism. If nationalism in the postcolony emerged through its encounter with colonial modernity, majoritarian nationalism is a replication of that very colonial axiom, a calculus of the dominant-dominated, in which Caliban (the 'native-informant'/colonized/subaltern) is muted to assert what is being described as "majority public opinion". Peace is said to prevail under this condition of silencing, a procedure which is a direct corollary of Western colonialism. Sympathisers of traditional majoritarianism are sworn enemies of Western liberalism and yet they prescribe the same Western colonising model of a strong authoritarian state with neat national boundaries secured with sabre rattling and national might. Our current project of a critique of 'postcolonial reason' should be routed through this unreasonable reasoning of minority persecution. Postcolonial unreason is the new traditional Reason, claimed to be a rejoinder to colonizing liberal Enlightenment Reason but equipped with all the features that it claims to oppose. In this traditional reason, there is a total erasure of the 'native informant' or of the minor. Postcolonial Nation is fast becoming the Prospero-nation that thrives on the muted cry of Caliban. Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: History of the Vanishing Present* (1999) does not just expose the conceptual bankruptcy of a US-based postcolonial theory, but encourages us, the readers to engage in an 'ethical reading practice' that is germane to articulate the contingent and non-systematic social agencies of disenfranchised groups. Any such ethical response to the trace of the Other is instrumental to new templates of contemporary materialist thinking. Spivak's critique posed its avowed objective as the tracking of "the native informant of academia and the ethnographers of the field". She develops an ethics of reading that affirms the erasure of the native informant in European cultural texts that suspended the possibility of postcolonial critique from a secure position outside of colonial histories. Spivak took to task the grand trio of our critical theoretic universe, namely Kant, Hegel and Marx for their alleged 'disavowal of the native informant' or the "raw man", the inhabitant of the 'bottomed non-place'(non-West). Colonial discourse theory critiques this foundational Euro-centric "geo-graphing" of the world that en-graphs vast territories as non-places or lands inhabited by the Kantian "raw-man"/the colonised native informant, ineligible to match up to the standards of the western civilising mission. The reverse paradigm of provincializing Europe has already been inaugurated as part of postcolonial theory, but Spivak's primary contention of deconstructing established postcolonial epistemic practices by arguing for an ethics of alterity and ethics of reading needs to be revisited today as the native informant is "a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of man - a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation". Spivak argues that '[to] me, literature and the archives seem complicit in that they are both a crosshatching of condensations, a traffic in telescoped symbols'. The 'traffic in telescoped symbols' also evokes the beyond that exists outside the 'traffic' or exchange, that is, the beyond the outside of any given system, and the beyond that exists within it as an open secret. The 2019 PSAGS Annual conference seeks to address this 'ethics of alterity' through renewed modes of 'ethics of reading' in the current brutalisation of reason by unreason (majority reason) in the name of Nation.

[The full programme will be available soon, we have very limited seats and for participation contact at [anindyasp@gmail.com](mailto:anindyasp@gmail.com) or at [mkmnsou@gmail.com](mailto:mkmnsou@gmail.com)]

**PSAGS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEETING 2019 PROGRAMME SCHEDULE**  
**21.12.2019**

10.45 AM Welcoming all participants at Netaji Subhas Open University, Salt Lake, Kolkata  
Campus  
11 - 11. 15

Welcoming all and beginning the session by Manas Dutta  
Subhendra Bhowmick and A S Purakayastha briefly speaking on the objectives and activities  
of PSAGS

11.15- 11.35

Speech by Prof. Manan Kumar Mandal, Director, Netaji Subhash Open University  
Speech by Prof. Himadri Lahiri, Professor, Netaji Subhash Open University

11.35-11.55

Keynote Address

**The Subaltern in Stockholm: Nationalism, the Climate Crisis, Migration and the  
Emergence of the Precariat**

Johan Hoglund, Linnaeus University, Web Talk, introduced by Mursed Alam

11.55-12. 15

Keynote Address

**Critique and Islam**

Dr. Irfan Ahmad, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,  
Gottingen  
Web Talk

Introduced by Dhritiman Chakrabarty

12.15-12.40

Keynote Address

**Fraternity and Postcolony**

Dr. Ajay Gudavarthy, Jawaharlal Nehru University  
introduced by Manas Dutta

12.40 - 12.55 : Tea Break

12.55-1.20

Keynote Address

**Hunger and the 'Postcolonial Unreason': Some Conjectures from Literature**

Dr. Sourit Bhattacharya, University of Glasgow  
introduced by Debarati Dutta

1.20: Lunch Break

2-3.15: Round table on the newly published book ***Secular Sectarianism: Limits of  
Subaltern Politics*** Edited by Ajay Gudavarthy (Sage, 2019),

This Round Table session would be coordinated by **Dr. Himadri Chatterjee, Kazi Nazrul  
University**

Discussants: Subhendra Bhowmick, Manas Dutta, Mursed Aalam, Dhritiman Chakrabarty,  
Debarati Dutta, A S Purakayastha

3.15: Tea Break

3.25-4.30 : PSAGS Annual Meet to be addressed through skype by *Kairos* co-editor **Dr. Pavan  
Kumar Malreddy, Frankfurt University**

**Vote of Thanks: Dr. Intaj Ali of NSOU**