

BIO-PROFILE OF MANAS RAY

Currently, Manas Ray is a Professor of the School of Liberal Studies, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), Dehradun. He retired as Professor of Cultural Studies in 2018 at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC), one of the most prestigious social science and humanities research and higher learning institutes of India. He works at the interface of contemporary political theory and cultural studies. He has published on a wide spectrum of areas including biopolitics, continental European philosophy, critical legal theory, Foucault and governmentality, visual culture, diaspora and Bollywood, disaster migration, and memory and locality in post-partition Kolkata. He has held visiting fellowships and teaching positions in leading institutions of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Australia and South Africa. His essay, 'Growing Up Refugee' (*History Workshop Journal*, 2002) is widely regarded as a classic (see, for instance, <https://academic.oup.com/hwj/pages/introduction>). A sequel to this piece is forthcoming in *History Workshop Journal* (e-version: December 2022; print version: May 2023).

Curriculum Vitae of Manas Ray

General

Full name: MANAS RAY

Residential Address:

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Age: 68 + (Date of birth: 4 January, 1954)

Nationality: Indian

Employment

- (1) Joined the School of Liberal Studies, UPES, as Professor of Cultural Studies in September, 2022.
- (2) Retired as a Professor of Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC) in March 2018. Joined the CSSSC in April 1993 as Fellow in Sociology and Cultural Studies.
Prior to joining the CSSSC in 1993, I was a UGC Research Scientist (a Reader grade appointment) with Educational Media Research Centre, Calcutta.
- (2) A two-year postdoctoral assignment between 1996 and 1998 with the Australian Key Centre For Cultural And Media Policy, Queensland University of Technology (Brisbane).
- (3) Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla for one year (July 2008 – June 2009).

Educational Qualification:

- (1) PhD (Cultural and Social Theory Strand, Division of Humanities)
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Brisbane, Australia 1992

[Thesis topic: “Towards Re-writing Postmodernism: Marxism and the Challenge of Postmodern Theories”; Thesis supervisor: Prof Colin Mercer]

(2) M.Phil. (Sociology)

Centre for the Study of Social Systems

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, New Delhi

1984; First Class

[Thesis Topic: “Culture, the Media and Marxism: Debates, Perspective and Problems”; Thesis Supervisor: Prof Ravindra Jain]

(3) M.A. (Sociology)

Centre for the Study of Social Systems

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, New Delhi

[1981; First Class]

(4) B.A. (Honours in English)

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE

University of Calcutta

1975; Second Class

Fellowships

(1) Awarded “Erudite Scholar, 2017” by the Higher Education Council, Government of Kerala.

(2) Visiting Professor, Centre for Studies in Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University
(October, 2015)

(3) SEPHIS Visiting Fellow, Department of History, University of Cape Town
(October – November, 2009)

(4) Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla (July 2008 – June 2009)

(5) Visiting Fellow, Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of
Edinburgh (May – June, 2004)

(6) Visiting Fellow

International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (August – September, 2003)

(7) Postdoctoral Fellow

Australian Key Centre For Cultural And Media Policy

Queensland University of Technology

Brisbane (A two year postdoctoral appointment between June 1996 & May 1998)

(8) Visiting Fellow

Maison des Sciences de l'homme, Paris (May – June, 1995)

(9) Visiting PhD Scholar

Arbeitsstelle für Semiotik

Technische Universität Berlin, Berlin (Western), Germany (March – September, 1989)

Select List of Publications

Edited Volumes

1. Editor, *Crisis of Liberal Deliberation: Facets of Indian Democracy*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2021, p. 591.

The book is divided into the following parts: Introduction; Historical Legacies; Indian Democracy: Disturbing Trends, Political Economy; Population and the Processes of Living; Regional Contestations. The following is a list of contributors: Soumyabrata Choudhury, A.R. Venkatachalapathy, Benjamin Zachariah, Pradip Kumar Dutta; Tridip Suhrud; T.S. Krishnamurthy, Anup Dhar; Pradip Kumar Bose, Arun Kumar, Sanjoy Chakravorty, Priya Sangameswaran, Sejuti Dasgupta, Leela Visaria, Jean Drèze, Ravichandran Bathran, Prathama Banerjee, Samir Kumar Das, Anjan Chakrabarty, Kumar Rana.

Synoptic Account of the Book:

The precarity of democratic order in contemporary times needs no underlining. Crisis of Liberal Deliberation addresses this issue from a novel perspective. Through what magic, queries this volume, the Indian democratic state is even surviving as a political formation. For how long will democratic order remain durable despite its myriad loopholes, glaring fault-lines, and thousand histories of disappointment? Curiously, as more democratic states come under the sway of violence, the demand for democracy has become more intense among people. Unveiling this apparent paradox from their respective fields of

specialization, the contributors of this volume analyse a vast range of facets of contemporary Indian democracy. The result is a glasnost of ideas, views and debates relating to the urgency of this deliberation. Forging these threads in the Introduction, Manas Ray engages with the theoretical underpinnings of the crisis of democratic deliberation. A large spread of topics follows, clubbed under several rubrics including historical legacy, disturbing trends, economic development since liberalization, biopolitical dimensions such as demography and processes of living, and finally, the contesting visions of democracy in the regions.

Endorsements

‘Nearly seventy-five years after India’s independence, this volume takes a comprehensive and critical look at India’s deeply unequal economic structure and its troubled but still hopeful democratic politics. The contributors, who span several disciplines and generations, are superbly knowledgeable, analytical and passionate. An important collection for our times.’

—PARTHA CHATTERJEE, Emeritus Professor, Columbia University

‘Crisis of Liberal Deliberation makes a much-needed contribution for two important reasons. First, it enriches our understanding on the theme of liberal democracy which, in the Indian context, has received inadequate scholarly attention. Second, it is different from other works in as much as it succeeds in its ethical sensitivity and scholarly vigour as it includes different critical impulses that seek to interrogate the very idea of Liberal Democracy. The volume, in my estimation, is worthy of scholarly attention.’

—GOPAL GURU, Editor, Economic and Political Weekly and retired Professor of Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University

‘Anyone wondering about the depth, scope and sheer verve of political thought in contemporary India will find abundant evidence of all these qualities in the Crisis of Liberal Deliberation. A sparkling Introduction by Manas Ray admits the reader to a wealth of reflections on a rich array of issues, problems and possibilities for Indian

democracy. Ranging from historical reflections on the intellectual roots of Indian political thought, through powerful considerations of political economy and demographics, to urgent discussions of current political crises, these essays provide an indispensable resource for all those concerned about the largest democracy on earth.’
—IAN HUNTER, Emeritus Professor, University of Queensland

2. Editor, *State of Democracy in India: Essays on Life and Politics in Contemporary Times*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2021, p. 681.

The book is divided into the following parts: Introduction; Populism; Neoliberalism, Migration, Climate, and Biological Feasibility; Caste, Historical Injustice and the Fight for Inclusion; Gender, Development and Sexual Politics; Politics of Language; Claiming the City; The Act of Culture; Coda. The following is a list of contributors: Alf Gunvald Nilsen, Aditya Nigam, Thomas Blom Hansen, Tapati Guha-Thakurta, Manas Ray, Rajan Kurai Krishnan, Satish Chennur, Santhosh S., Anup Dhar, Enakshi Ray Mitra, Bhavya Chitranshi, Swarnima Kriti, Madhava Prasad, Gyanendra Pandey, Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, Laura R. Brueck, Kiran Keshavamurthy, Arka Chattopadhyay, and Rohan Sengupta. The book was published in October, 2021.

Synoptic account of the book:

Collections on Indian democracy are plentiful. Yet rarely do they question the impact of the ongoing democratic mobilizations on the mundane, everyday lives of ordinary citizens and the world they see around them. Borrowing insights from new research in cultural studies, contemporary literary theory, visual politics, biopolitics, meteorology, to cite a few, *State of Democracy in India* covers the ground cast aside by existing narratives and analyses of Indian democracy. Pivoted on the experiences of the people and not necessarily the institutions of governance, this collection examines a vast array of markers of democracy under the rubrics of populism, disaster migration, caste contestations, new developments in feminism, and the act of culture. Towards the end of the volume, a meditation on the meaning of writing in COVID-19 induced precarity reflects on the individual and social experiences of living through the pandemic.

The guiding principle of the contributions in this volume is that democracy is not merely a psephological number game of vote sharing and swings but encompasses worldviews, touching every department of life, collective and individual. This innovative collection reconfigures our vision of democracy as a force-field of interests and new imaginations, full of possibilities and yet fraught with deep fissures and contestations of views and practices.

Endorsements

‘This is a book of essays, not just about political democracy in India but also regarding India’s democratic culture. They are written under the shadow of its current precarity, reflecting an attractively humane anxiety, even as they are carefully and creatively analytical. The essays are unconventional and engaging throughout and will be of great interest to readers seeking to get past the routines of political punditry to more diverse and unusual perspectives on our times.’

—AKEEL BILGRAMI, Sidney Morgenbesser Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

‘The volume offers a collection of seminal essays on the different faces of contemporary politics in India. Exploring its manifestations in our times, they track the intersection between broad global processes and the Indian-quotidian. Their thematic sprawl is large and unusual: they address significant aspects of recent cultural, political and material experiences, and they explore problems of gender, forced migration and climate. Together, they articulate possibilities and problems that otherwise function as hidden but important subtexts in our national and everyday lives. The Introduction deftly clarifies their theoretical and political contexts, adding much to the richness of the volume.’

—TANIKA SARKAR, Emeritus Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

‘Heterogeneous in the wide spectrum of its concerns including populism, migration, caste, gender, and sexual politics, this vibrant study of contemporary India examines the

emergent practices and contestations of democracy at ground levels. Lending itself to contrapuntal readings of diverse locations and discourses, the book is surprising at every turn in its embrace of diverse modes of living and thinking. Empirically grounded, these essays have been mapped with care and passion by Manas Ray, who enables us to see how the struggle for democracy in India continues to be seethingly alive in these dark times.’

—RUSTOM BHARUCHA, retired Professor, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University

“Every time I touch something,” writes Manas Ray in his beautiful, nuanced text, *Trace the Touch: Writing in the Time of Covid-19*, “it seems I am exploring...” – Well, so it seems to this writer, every time Manas Ray writes something he is taking the reader along with him on that exploration – as we travel deep into the vaulted arcades of his poetic intelligence, a place of memory and dream, of philosophical understanding and sensitivity of thought.’

—KIRSTY GUNN, Novelist and Professor of Writing Practice and Study, University of Dundee, UK

Together the two books make for the most extensive discussion on democracy to be published anywhere as yet.

3. Editor, *Seminar* (journal), March, 2017 issue of *Seminar* entitled, *Containing Violence: a symposium on why strategies of pacification are failing* (March, 2017).
4. Editor, *Seminar* (journal), October 2015 issue on *State of Democracy: Life and Politics in Contemporary India*
5. Editor, *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, the journal of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla 2011, 303 pages.
6. Editor, *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2013, p. 236
7. Editor, *Space, Sexuality and Postcolonial Space* (A joint publication of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta and ENRECA, Denmark, 2004)
8. Editor, *History, Memory and Nostalgia* (*Margins*, Calcutta, 2001)

Articles and Book Chapters (in English)

1. “The Volatile 70s: Memory Matters” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 95, 2023 (e-version: December 2022 & print version: May 2023).
2. “Border Thoughts: Citizenship, Postcolonial Neoliberalism and Disaster Migration in Contemporary India” in Manas Ray edited, *State of Democracy in India: Essays on the Life and Politics in Contemporary Times*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2021, pp. 179 – 240
3. “Trace the Touch: Writing in the Times of COVID-19” in Manas Ray edited, *State of Democracy in India: Essays on the Life and Politics in Contemporary Times*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2021, pp. 589 – 640
4. “Rethinking the Refugee”, *Partition Studies Quarterly*, 2020
5. “Goddess in the City: Durga Pujas of Contemporary Kolkata” (a review article of Tapati Guha-Thakurta’s book, *In the name of the Goddess: Durga Pujas of Contemporary Kolkata*), *Modern Asian Studies*, 5:4, July-August, 2017, pp. 1126-1164.
6. “The Orality of Silence” in *Looking Back: The 1947 Partition of India 70 years on* edited by Rakhshanda Jalil, Tarun K. Saint and Debjani Sengupta, Orient Blackswan, Delhi, 2017. (A shorter version was previously published as “Out of Silence” in Kirsty Gunn and Gail Low edited, *The Voyage Out, An international anthology of Writing, Art and Science*, University of Dundee, 2016. (A piece on how a family secret builds a community around it in times of distress and displacement).
7. “ ‘being-outside and yet belonging’: The Political Philosophy of Agamben”, Franson Manjali and Marc Crepon edited, *Language, Philosophy and the Political*, Aakar Publishers, New Delhi, 2017
8. “The Challenge of Violence”, *Seminar* issue on *Containing Violence* (curated by Manas Ray), March, 2017, pp. 81—91
9. “Who is ‘the People’?”, *Seminar* issue on *State of Democracy*, October 2015 (curated by Manas Ray), pp. 68 – 76

10. "Against Negation: Suicide, Self-consciousness and Jibanananda Das' poem, *One Day Eight Years Ago*", *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, vol 2, no. 2, September 2015 – February 2016, pp. 151 – 170
11. "The Cartoon Controversy: Crafty Politicos, Impatient Pedagogues" in Rina Ramdev and Sandhya Devesan Nambiar edited, *The State of Hurt: Sentiment, Politics, Censorship* (Sage: New Delhi, 2015). This article was originally published in *Seminar* (journal), July 2012 as a special essay.
12. "Fractured City Votes for Civic State", *Seminar* (journal), April 2015
13. "The Many Bodies of History: the Cinema of Alexander Kluge", *Journal of the Moving Image*; special issue: *Luminous Celluloid*, January – June 2015, pp. 76 – 96.
14. "The Unruly Spiral: Dialectics in the light of contemporary debates" in *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2014, pp. 143 – 171
15. "Identity in Diaspora" in Renuka Singh and K K Sharma edited, *Indian Diaspora and Other Essays*, Orient Blackswan, 2013
16. "Between Determination and Responsiveness: A Third Space in Foucault?", *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2011, pp. 269 – 280 (Review Article)
17. "Life of the Past: Indian Bengali Diaspora and the politics of nostalgia" in Amit Sewal edited *Bridging Imaginations: South Asian Diaspora in Australia*. Readworthy Publication, New Delhi, 2012
18. "To the Land of Silica", *Indian Literature* (the journal of Sahitya Akademi, Delhi), August-September issue, 2010, pp. 62 – 83
19. "*Chalo Jahaji*: Bollywood in Diaspora – in the tracks of indenture to globalization" in *City Flicks*, edited by Preben Kaarsholm, Seagull, Calcutta, 2004 and London, 2006, pp.140 – 182 [For a longer and earlier version, see "Bollywood Down Under: Fiji Indian Cultural History and Popular Assertion" in *Floating Lives: the Media and Asian Diasporas*, edited by Stuart Cunningham and John Sinclair, Rowman and Littlefield, USA, 2001, pp. 136 – 184]
20. "Nation, nostalgia and Bollywood" in Karim H Karim edited, *The Media of Diaspora*, Transnationalism Series, Routledge, London and New York, 2003 pp. 21 – 39. (The collection opens with this essay.)

21. “Growing Up Refugee: on memory and locality” *History Workshop Journal*, Number 53, 2002, pp. 149 – 179
[Reprinted in 7 publications, including *Memory’s Gold: Writings on Calcutta* (edited by Amit Chaudhuri, Penguin Viking, 2008)]
22. “From Holocaust to Partition: on History and Memory” in *Margins*, Calcutta, January – June, 2001
23. “India: 50 years on” in *Fifty Years of Indian Development* edited by P. K. Basu and C. A. Tisdell, University of Queensland Press, Queensland 1998, pp. 123 - 146
24. "Indian Television: an emerging regional power" (co-author: Liz Jacka) in *New Patterns in Global Television* , edited by John Sinclair, Stuart Cunningham and Liz Jacka; Oxford University Press, London, 1995, pp. 83—102
25. “Marxism: The Dilemma of Critique” *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 12, 1993. Pp. 1248 – 1258
26. "Ethics and Government: setting limits to critique" *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 26, 1992, pp. 2119 – 2124 (This is the first full-length article on “governmentality” to come out in India)

Articles and Book Chapters (in Bengali)

1. “Cinema o Pratyahikatak: Mrinal Sen-er Ekdin Pratidin O Ekdin Achanak” (Cinema and the Everyday: Mrinal Sen’s Ekdin Protidin and Ekdin Achanak), *Chitrabhash*, Mrinal Sen Special Issue, November, 2017.
2. “Paschimi Rajnoitik Adhunikata: ekti twattik khasra” (Western Political Modernity: a theoretical approach), *Charcha*, January-June issue, 2013, pp. 59-77.
3. Aponkatha: Mithya-Satyir Kaboya [Life Story: the poetics of falsehood and truth] in Anirban Mukhopadhyay edited, *Nibondher Teen Dashak* (Essays from three decades), Charchapad Publication, Calcutta
4. *Uttam Kumar Saloon: Bastuchyuta Sanglap* (“Uttam Kumar Saloon: Displaced Narrative”) [A life-story of approximately 27000 words], *Abobhash*, May – August, 2007.
[This is the result of a series of ethnographic interviews taken over 4 months early in 2007. It details an amazingly variegated life of a local barber: beginning from picking cow dung as a

small boy for livelihood in a remote village in the South 24 Parganas to supplying drinking water to bus drivers to transporting sacks of salt from the boat to the nearby warehouse (always wary of the timings of tide, which would inevitably increase the weight of the sacks), to carrying twenty bricks at a time to the top of a construction site and finally settling down to his ancestral profession, i.e., a barber. All through, what marks the narrative is the respondent's native anxieties about the erotic which, he presumed, might go against his vigor and thus reduce his laboring abilities. The interviews also capture the influence of Bengali popular cinema on his ideas of what constitutes the right mode of conduct for a male.

An English version of this life-story (shortened to 19000 words) is coming in my forthcoming collection of essays: *Displaced: Lives on the Move*]

5. "Chalo Jahaji: Chukti Sharom theke Golokayan – Jatisatta Nirmane Bollywood" ("Chalo Jahaji: from indenture to llobalization – Bollywood in the making of national identity") *Anustup*, October-December, 2003
6. "Uttaradhunikatar phatal theke: Alexander Kluge-r cinema" ("In the cracks of postmodernism: the cinema of Alexander Kluge") *Alochana Chakra*, July-December, 2002, pp. 16 – 25.
7. "Kata Deshe Gharer Khonj" ("In search of a severed land") *Baromash*, 2001
8. "Vivan Sunderam-er Installation" ("Vivan Sundaram's Installation") *Nandimuk*, January, 1999
9. "Aakash Kusumer Rajniti: Cultural Studies proshanghe du char katha" (on the history of a local pond, how it ceased to exit), *Jogsutra*, September, 1995
10. "Adhipatya: Gramsci theke Foucault" ("Hegemony: from Gramsci to Foucault") *Samaj Bikshan*, January – April, 1994

Select Book Reviews

- "Law as Resistance" (review), *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, vol 6, number 2, 2010, pp. 311 - 315
- "Foucault's Law" (review), *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, vol 6, number 3, 2010, pp. 465-469
- "Middle of the road is a very dead end: Review of Ranabir Samaddar's book, *The Marginal Nation: transborder migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal*" *Refugee Watch*, September 1999.

Translation

“The Heterotopia of Calcutta’s Durga Puja” (essay by Pradip Bose in Amit Chaudhuri edited, *Memory’s Gold: Writings on Calcutta*, Penguin Viking, 2008)

Op-edits

I write columns for the *Indian Express*, the *Telegraph* (Kolkata) and Ananda Bazar Patrika. Altogether, I have contributed around 60s articles/features. Following is a list of columns published in 2020—2021

- “Kinds of Refugees Today”, *The Telegraph*, Kolkata, January 6, 2020 (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/kinds-of-refugees-today/cid/1733507>)
- “Growing Toxic Chasm: Has Populism Become a Permanent Fixture of Democracy?” *The Telegraph*, 2 April 2020 (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/a-growing-toxic-chasm/cid/1761526>)
- “Rethinking Democracy”, *The Telegraph*, 30 September 2020 (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/rethinking-democracy/cid/1791296>)
- “Partition of India: Memories for the Future”, *The Telegraph*, 6 January 2021 (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/partition-of-india-memories-for-the-future/cid/1802775>)
- “A Year of Being Afraid: Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated a profusion of shadowy, indeterminate fears” *Indian Express*, 13 November 2020 (<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/a-year-of-being-afraid-covid-19-7049704/>)
- “The Reinvention of Solitude” *Indian Express*, 1 January 2021(<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/if-the-pandemic-has-curtailed-movements-it-has-opened-up-new-spaces-too-7128098/>)
- “The Ecological is the Political: the Anthropocene has placed an ethical challenge before the human race”, *Indian Express*, 28 January 2021 (<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-anthropocene-era-has-placed-an-ethical-challenge-before-the-human-race-7164534/>)

Research Supervision

MPhil Supervision:

The following students have completed their MPhil dissertations under my supervision:

Sourit Bhattacharya: *The Animal in Kafka and Coetzee: A Note on the Threshold* (completed, 2012)

Sreenanti Banerjee: *Rethinking 'Universal Sisterhood': Towards a Theorization of the Post-Globalization Construction of the 'New Indian Woman', Sexual Violence and Feminist Ethico-Politics* (completed, 2013)

Senjuti Chakraborti: *Racism, Law, and Literature: Observations on Liberal Law and 20th century African American Fiction* (completed, 2013)

Karma Sherap Bhutia: *Political Transition of Sikkim, Change in History and its Effects in the Everyday Life* (completed, 2016)

Bijuri Dutta: *Naxalbari Memoirs* (completed, 2018)

Sanchari Naskar: *Netaji Nagar: A study of a post-colony* Piya Srinivasan: *Rites of Passage: Law, agency and struggles for space in the lives of 'street children' in Central Delhi* (completed, 2012)

PhD Supervision:

1. Debajyoti Mondal: *Singularity and Modern Bengali Literature with special reference to the writings of Syed Waliullah* (2020)
2. Kaustub Roy: *Animation and Indian Cinema: analysis of a changing trajectory* (2021)

3. Senjuti Chakraborty: *On the Normalisation of Racism in Law and Literature: A Study of Liberal Law and Toni Morrison's African American slave narratives* (2022)
4. Richa Gupta: *Heterotopia and the Novel: A Study of the novels of W J Sebald* (2022)

Critical Appreciation:

I quote below some of the responses I received to my essay: "Growing Up Refugee" (HWJ, 2002)

- One of the most appealing aspects of the *Journal* is the space for others forms of writing. You will find here the daring, the personal, the subjective, the emotive, as the journal has nourished ways of writing outside the requirements of the formal academy. Manas Ray's piece 'Growing up Refugee' about his childhood and youth in Bengal (2002) is an exemplar of this. (*History Workshop Journal* on twenty five years of publishing on South Asia. Incidentally, *History Workshop Journal* is a premier history journal in English, particularly in social history. <https://academic.oup.com/hwj/pages/introduction>)
- I read your "Growing Up Refugee." It strikes me that, across the world, there is a growing convergence between history-writing and the kinds of narrative we associate with fiction. On the basis of considerably less evidence (but I would include your essay among such evidence), it also occurs to me that India may be leading the world in this respect. (John Coetzee, Nobel Laureate, email, June 14, 2004)
- In the arena of history-writing, talk about theoretic awareness is very common today. But what is central to all theorizing – the question of habitation or belonging in the world ('samsara') one lives, the moot issue of facticity of existence – is rarely addressed. Your essay is an exception. The trajectory of childhood to youth that you delineate is fundamental to any discussion of historicity. The way you have gone about doing it – blending memory with social insights and philosophy – has enlightened me and offered me food for thought.

Another aspect that comes out very clearly from your writing is that the history of partition does not end with partition, the course of rehabilitation is very much an integral part of that history. This is a well known fact. But you haven't stated this in dry theoretical mode but narrated as autobiography which reaches much closer to the complex and painful experience of this truth than what professional historical writings can do. I have honestly gained a lot from your writing. (Ranajit Guha, email sent on 11 June, 2002. Ranajit Guha is an eminent historian and the founder of *Subaltern Studies*. Prof Guha wrote this email in Bengali; my translation)

Comments on my chapter, "Bollywood Down Under: Fiji Indian Cultural History and Popular Assertion" in *Floating Lives: the Media and Asian Diasporas* (edited by Stuart Cunningham and John Sinclair):

- "Manas Ray's discussion of contemporary Bollywood's diasporic spectatorship, the new troping of the home and the world in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, the re-working of the traditional patriarchal moral scheme in *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, is most insightful and will definitely open up new avenues of understanding the post-Zee Bombay cinema. Ray's piece is a must read for all those interested in Bollywood and also in the question of formation of Indian cultural identity outside the shores of India." *Biblio* September – October 2000, pp. 30-31
- "Dr Ray's work has been regarded as the best contribution in the volume." Stuart Cunningham on *Floating Lives: the Media and Asian Diasporas* (edited by Stuart Cunningham and John Sinclair) , *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 131-147 (2001). [Stuart Cunningham is one of the two editors of the volume]

Cultural Studies Workshop

Except between 2005 and 2009, I have functioned as the coordinator of the Cultural Studies Workshop (CSW) right from its inception in the mid-1990s and continue to do so. I am responsible for generating the topic for the year, writing the text for flyers and EPW advertisement, selection of venue, selection of participants, deciding on morning readings and

virtually every other thing related to the workshop. All this I do in active consultation with the Cultural Studies Workshop Committee.

Over the years, CSW has emerged as one of the most prominent and productive annual meetings for doctoral students in the social sciences and humanities in India. It is the most high profile activity of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC). Framed as an annual pedagogic event spreading, it has been running uninterrupted for nineteen years – since 1995, save in 1996 and 2012. The objective of the workshop has been to provide young scholars with an opportunity to discuss their research topics with a group of senior researchers in the field of Cultural Studies as well as the broader issues of social sciences and humanities today as viewed from a Cultural Studies perspective. In the course of its by now long career, the workshop has played a key institutional role in the emergence of Cultural Studies as a discipline and a specialized area of scholarship in India. The last workshop was held at the CSSSC, in March 2016. The theme is Cultures of Violence.

Inherited Memories Project

I was the coordinator of a joint project between Max Mueller Bhavan (Calcutta) and the CSSSC. The project also involved MMB (Dhaka) and University of Heidelberg. The project title is: *Inherited Memories*. It aimed at an investigation of how the third generation remembers the partition in West Bengal as well as in Bangladesh. (2016-2017)

Teaching

Between 2010 and 2018, I gave two MPhil/ PhD students. These are:

- *Modernity and the Making of the Social*

How social experience is shaped by the material world and made meaningful through cultural practices. This marks the whole journey from social history to the history of the social. Not that happened and then this happened, but how each happening or development brought with it a new configuration of power and knowledge. From exemplary corporeal punishment that

leaves its mark on the body for others to see to the penitentiary system which operates through the power of the gaze. And through all of these how the subject gets constructed, the whole question of citizen-formation. Thus one can make the social seem a chronological tale or one can examine how it becomes a conceptual and theoretical field. This course opts for the latter.

- *Biopolitics, Ethics and Subjectivation*

For Aristotle, man is a living animal like other such but with an additional capacity. This is the capacity of reason with which he is able to use language and can differentiate the good from the bad, the just from the foul. According to Aristotle, this issue of fairness and justice made man a political animal. For millennia this is also the standard understanding of politics—the ability to differentiate the just from the unjust. Michel Foucault works out a paradigm shift in the understanding of politics: from reason and justice to statistical and biological control of population through practices of public health, nutrition, regulation of heredity, demography, and risk management (including risks posed by terrorists). This involves the very existence of human kind as a living being, engendering the subjection of bodies. The liberal state has three axes: security, utility, ethics. While utility axis is geared by profit maximization (“maximum happiness for maximum number” Bentham), the axis of ethics promotes a self-monitoring, ethical citizenry and the security axis attributes a mode of permanent governmental intervention to produce, multiply and guarantee the security of the social body. The crisis of the post-9/11 world as well as the rising tides of populism may be taken as signs of crisis of the traditional understanding of deliberative, liberal democracy. The course seeks to understand the dynamics of governmental logic in the relation between liberty and security, or between liberty and equality, or for that matter an ethical and moral concern that builds upon the notion of danger, or the shift from the people to population.

In 2013-2014, I convened and taught another course: *Contemporary Sociological Theory*.

I regularly participated in teaching of two courses at the Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University between 1993 and 1996 & again from 1998 to 2002. These were: *New European Cinema & Film and Television Theory*.

Select list of talks, public lectures, seminars and conference presentations

- As part of Erudite Scholar scheme, I gave 9 lectures on democracy to the students and faculty of Department of Political Science and Department of English, and one lecture at the Department of Politics and International Relations, Mahatma Gandhi University (December 2017 – January 2018).
- Gave the keynote address at a conference organized by the Indian Institute of Space Science, Trivandrum on *Theorizing Space* (14 December 2017).
- Gave the keynote address on “Partition: the cultural turn” at a conference on *Displacements in South Asia Workshop* organized by Society for Cultural Anthropology (USA) on 21 April 2018.
- Delivered the M Bhaskaran Nair Memorial Lecture entitled, “Democracy Contra Democracy: Reflections on Values, Violence and the People”, on 29th March, 2017 at a UGC National Conference on *State, Development and Citizenship: Perspectives on Contemporary India* organized by the Department of Political Science, University of Kerala, Trivandrum.
- Seminar entitled, *Enlightenment, Crisis and the Making of the Self: Reading Kant beyond Koselleck* at the JNU Philosophy Colloquium, 2016.
- Conducted a three day workshop on the cinema of Alexander Kluge at the India Habitat Centre, Delhi & organized by the Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe Institute), Delhi, 2016.
- A paper on “Bengal Partition: how the third generation remembers it” at a conference organized by University of Heidelberg, 2016.
- Keynote lecture on Gandhi at an international colloquium (*Inner Ecology*) organized by the Tarab Ling Foundation, Dehradun, 26th March, 2017.
- “Gandhi: A departure within liberalism?” Sociology Colloquium, JNU, October, 2015.
- “Democracy, Values and the People”, Philosophy Colloquium, JNU, October, 2015

- “Partition as History of the Present: on the politics of memory”, talk given at Goethe Institute, Dhaka on 27 August, 2015
- Paper: “Gandhi: Liberal or a Departure within Liberalism? (Reflections of Self-Making as Political Technology)” at the Colloquium on *Philosophy, Language and the Political: Reevaluating Poststructuralism* at Jawaharlal Nehru University, December, 2014.
- 5th Kalpanirjhar annual public lecture at Max Muller Bhavan (Goethe Institute), Calcutta on “Countering Violence? Towards an ethics of belonging” (April, 2013).
- “Securing the State, Monitoring the Self: Kant and the Modern Concept of the Border” paper presented at the international conference, *Prisms of Displacement: Across the Indian Subcontinent and US – Mexico Borders*, Organized by the Centre for Studies in Latin American Literatures and Cultures (CSLALC), Dept. of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Calcutta (February, 2013).
- Inaugural talk at the conference on “Singularities” organized by the School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (January, 2012).
- Presented a paper on “The Caring, Terminating State: A Biopolitical Perspective” at a conference entitled, “The Biopolitics of Development: Life, Welfare and Unruly Populations” organized by the Mahanirbhan Calcutta Research Group in collaboration with University of Lapland and the Finnish Academy, Calcutta (September, 2010).
- As a SEPHIS fellow of the Department of History, University of Cape Town, I gave five seminars and three class lectures at different universities of South Africa. These universities are: University of Cape Town (one seminar in History department and one in English department), University of Western Cape, University of Witwatersrand (WITTS) and one at the University of Stellenbosch. This was in November, 2009.
- “Talal Asad and the critique of liberal secularism”, seminar at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. June 2009.
- “‘My Life To Tell’: life-stories and the poetics of secrecy, falsehood and truth” seminar at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla (June, 2009)
- Spoke on “Spaces of Habitation” as part of a panel in the conference on *Migration, Diaspora and the City: mobility and dwelling in Calcutta* organized jointly by The City

Centre, Queen Mary, University of London & CSSSC and held at the CSSSC on 12 – 13 December, 2008.

- “May 68: crisscrossed cartographies”, a talk at Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata, May 2008.
- Talk: “Partition as History of the Present” at a symposium on *Partition and Displacement: Construction of Memory and the Shaping of History* at the Max Mueller Bhavan, Calcutta (November, 2008).
- Four Seminars at the University of Hyderabad, November, 2007 (organized by the Dept of Sociology and the Centre for Comparative Literature).

Topics:

1. Biopolitical Sovereignty: Agamben and the politics of exception
 2. Reading Foucault, post-September 11
 3. The Language of *Crisis*: Kant beyond Koselleck
 4. On Reconciliation: critique of liberal secularism and the religious political
- Kamal Kumar Majumdar Memorial Lecture. Topic: “Rajnitir Byakaron: Khamatar Adhunik Kritkaushal Proshonghe” (“The Grammar of Politics”) at Jadunath Sarkar Bhavan, CSSSC (November, 2006).
 - Chaired and spoke at “via Mumbai: Multiple Cultures in a Globalizing World” organized by Mehile Parikh Centre for the Visual Arts, National Performing Arts Gallery (NCPA), Mumbai (February, 2006).
 - “On the ambulatory spaces of the postcolonial: three scenarios”, plenary talk at the National Seminar on *Theorizing ‘Region’: Configurations, Alliances, Contestations*, organized by the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, (February, 2006).
 - Paper: “The New Media: A Post-9/11 Study” at a conference on *The New Media and ‘Cultural Exception’ in an Era of Globalization* organized by Maison des Sciences de l’homme, Paris and Indian Council of Social Science Research and held in New Delhi (September 2005).
 - Paper: “Reading Foucault’s Discipline and Punish after Abu Gharib” in a discussion organized by the Alliance Francaise, Kolkata at Oxford Book Store as part of Kolkata Book Fair, January 2005.

- Presented a paper entitled “Studying Partition of India: on the cultural turn” in a workshop on “After the Theoretical Revolution: teaching and research in literature now”, organized by La Trobe University and Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. (September, 2004).
- “On memory and locality: writing the history of post-partition Calcutta”, seminar at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh (June, 2004)
- “On the Cosmopolitan Persona and European Enlightenment,” First National Lecture organized by the Centre for Excellence, Indian Institute of Management, Kerala (February, 2004).
- Keynote lecture on “Cultures of Globalization” at the Centre for Excellence, Indian Institute of Management, Kerala (February, 2004).
- “Kant and the making of the European *secular*”, Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe Institute), New Delhi (April, 2003).
- “Indian Diasporas: two journeys”, ‘Metropolitan Modernities’ seminar series, Ralph Samuel Centre for Metropolitan Studies, University of East London, UK (April, 2002).
- “Racism and Asian Diasporas”, Annual conference of the American Association for Asian Studies (AAAS), Washington DC (April, 2002).
- Lectured in the Cultural Studies Workshop organized by the Centre of Basic Research in Kampala, Uganda on August 20 – 24, 2002.
- Visiting Faculty, Researcher Training Course, theme: “Beyond Home and Exile”, Copenhagen. Organizer: Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen and Roskilde University, Denmark (December 1 – 5, 2001).
- “An approach to history of space: new ways of looking at icons” at Icons Instead of Ideas, organized by the Max Mueller Bhavan, Calcutta in February 1999.
- “Peace as a value: Reflections on the New German Cinema” seminar organized by Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Darjeeling, May, 1999.
- I have conducted Workshops on the cinema of Alexander Kluge at Calcutta, Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore centres of Max Mueller Bhavan. The workshop in Bangalore lasted for three days.
- Script Advisor of a Training Program for young directors of EU-India Film Co-Production Project. 1999.

- I have lectured at different Refresher Courses organized by Departments of Film Studies, Comparative Literature and Bengali at Jadavpur University and Departments of English and Political Science at Calcutta University.