



FORUM ON CONTEMPORARY THEORY, BARODA, INDIA

(A Member of the Humanities Centers and Institutes)

In collaboration with

The Department of Political Science, Berhampur University,
Odisha

International Lincoln Center for American Studies, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, USA

Organize a National Seminar

Dates: 24- 26 March 2023

Seminar Venue: St. Vincent Retreat, Gopalpur-on-Sea,
Odisha, India

Seminar Theme: *“The Politics of Compassion: Lincoln,
Marti, Gandhi, King, Mandela”*

CALL FOR PAPERS

Twentieth century intellectuals pondered what motivated political leaders following the post-WWI and the Great Depression turmoil. Pioneering political scientist Harold D. Lasswell addressed the issue in *Psychopathology and Politics* (1930), the first work to use Freudian theory to explain the rise of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin. Lasswell argued that because these dictators failed to have their psychological needs met during their youth, they turned to acquisition of power to compensate. Ironically, one-time socialist Benito Mussolini also turned to fascism. His extremist nationalism, maltreatment of individuals and fate was best captured in German novelist Thomas Mann’s prescient novella “Mario and the Magician” (1929), which may be the best political allegory in the West since Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.” Mann’s work depicts the intense interaction between leaders and those led.

The pioneering theoretical work of James Madison in “Federalist Paper No.10” anticipated the work of both Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud and led to the creation of the most democratic constitution in the world up to that time. Yet, Madison warned that even first-rate constitutions are unable to prevent the dangers inherent in demagogues.

Two decades after Lasswell’s pioneering work on political leaders, psychologist Abraham Maslow challenged Lasswell’s pessimistic theory, suggesting instead a hierarchy of individual’s need satisfactions, which offered the hope that politicians could become benevolent and promote everyone’s needs. Maslow admitted that only about ten percent of any society reaches the level which allows them to self-actualize in whatever activity that they enjoy the most, including politics. The other ninety percent are more likely to stagnate at lower levels of the postulated hierarchy when their needs are not met. Those who self-actualize in the political arena are individuals who move beyond selfishness and want to create conditions for others to self-actualize also.

Abraham Lincoln’s political life serves as an example of this model. Even during his single term in Congress, Lincoln took time to contribute to the relief of the Irish in the potato famine from the 1840s. It was a hint of what he might do later as president to help others.

Political scientist James C. Davies built on these earlier works in his comparative study of revolutions in 1960 and again in his classic *Human Nature in Politics* (1963).

This was followed by political scientist James MacGregor Burns, who had become well-known for his first volume of *Franklin Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (1956), which tried to explain FDR in Machiavellian terms. Burns would later reject this approach in his 1978 book, *Leadership*, in which he argued that most politicians engage in “transactional leadership” making deals while a few engage in “transforming leadership” or moral leadership. The latter group works to improve the lives of others, the topic of this conference.

Such leaders tend to build on previous moral leaders. For example, Lincoln served as an inspirational model for Jose Marti and Gandhi in their respective opposition to Spanish and British colonialism. Martin Luther King Jr. was also inspired by Lincoln as well as by Gandhi’s moral leadership. Nelson Mandela became the Abraham Lincoln of Africa despite serving 27 years in prison in South Africa.

An insight into Lincoln’s “with malice toward none” approach is echoed in the Hollywood film “Invictus.” The film was based on a book by Spanish journalist John Carlin, who later wrote *Knowing Mandela* (2013) which captures how Mandela literally turned his former enemies into sincere friends.

Keynote Speaker

A native Oregonian, Dr **William Pederson** was born and reared in Eugene, home of the University of Oregon, where he earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned to the University of Oregon to complete his graduate work in political science. He accepted his first university faculty position in 1977, and became the holder of the first endowed chair at LSU.

In late 1982, Dr Pederson became the founding director of the International Lincoln Center at Louisiana State University Shreveport. Today the multidisciplinary program includes an annual Abraham Lincoln Lecture (which in 1999 became the first LSU event televised by C-SPAN); an annual Constitutional Democracy Lecture; the South’s oldest presidential conference series; and the annual Washington, D.C. semester (the first independent one established at a public university in the South). Widely published, Dr Pederson’s works include numerous books and articles with an emphasis on the presidency; the first cross-national study of prison camp revolts; and comparative politics.



Abstract Submission Deadline

An abstract or proposal not exceeding 300 words is due by **January 5, 2023**. The abstract should have a title along with the name and institutional affiliation of the presenter. Please send the abstract as an email attachment to Prafulla Kar (prafullakar@gmail.com).

Registration Deadline

The last date for receiving the registration fee is **February 5, 2023**. However, we encourage earlier registrations for assuring accommodation at the conference venue. All participants need to register online directly with our bank, the details of which will be provided on request. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Registration Fee

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| (1) Outstation Participant from India with accommodation: | ₹ 2500 (Two thousand five hundred Indian rupees) |
| (2) Participant from India without accommodation: | ₹ 1500 (One thousand five hundred Indian rupees) |

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