

List of Annual International Conferences

FORUM ON CONTEMPORARY THEORY

	Year	Theme	No. of participants	Convener(s) Keynote Speaker(s)	Collaborating Institute	Venue
1	18-19 December, 1998	<p>Postcolonialism and the Discourse of Marginality Besides engaging with the ambiguities and ambivalence of the notion of postcolonialism, the conference probed the modes of oppression generated by colonialism and its aftermath by analyzing the lifeworlds of people marginalized by processes of cultural displacement: the migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities and the like.</p>	40	Convener: Sura P. Rath University of Texas	Berhampur University, Odisha	Berhampur, Odisha
2	16-18 December, 1999	<p>Theory at the End of the Millennium The conference focused on the emergence, circulation and transformation of theory over time and across cultures to see how it resists easy classifications and trajectories. The papers and panels discussed how theory is more of a socio-political and cultural phenomenon rather than an interdisciplinary epistemic domain.</p>	70	Keynote: Fred Dallmayr, Dee Professor of Government, University of Notre Dame, USA	Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute, Udaipur	Udaipur, Rajasthan

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3	15-18 December 2000	The Future of Tradition Tradition is to be understood with a sense of history and in the light of insights from the lives of the present, without letting a linear monolithic view colouring the vision. Neither a celebratory nor a desultory approach would help us in interpreting tradition and its complex organicity. That was the key idea emerged from the conference.	84	Keynote: Fred Dallmayr; Plenary Speakers: Satya P. Mohanty and Chandra Talpade Mohanty from Cornell; Paut St-Pierre from Montreal	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad; Partially supported by Kendra Sahitya Akademy	Aurangabad, Maharashtra
4	14-18 December 2001	The Ethical Turn in Literary and Cultural Studies The conference investigated how ethical concerns inform and transform the scholarship in humanities, social sciences and cultural studies. With the coming of the poststructuralist way of thinking, ethics is not anymore about the narrow binary of 'right' and 'wrong' or 'just' and 'unjust'. Such a major change in the understanding of ethics itself has influenced the reconceptualization of disciplines.	105	Inauguration and keynote by Sitakant Mahapatra, the Oriya Poet; Keynote Speaker: J. N. Mohanty, Professor of Philosophy, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA	Louisiana State University, Shreveport & Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar	Konark, Odisha
5	15-18 December 2002	Constructing Identities: Local and Global While there is temptation to view the local and the global as polar opposites in a war for supremacy, identities become stereotypes and rigid. Local and global can create endless scenarios of dialogue, compromise, conflict and resistance and	100	Keynote Speaker: Fred Dallmayr	Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Shillong	Shillong, Meghalaya

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		the identities constructed by and evolving out of such scenarios are fluid, nuanced and multidimensional. The conference explored the spaces and histories of identity construction in the globalized world.				
6	14-17 December 2003	Rethinking Modernity The conference tried to look at the many complex continuities and ruptures that have escaped our notice in our perspectives on modernity. Modernity in a narrow uncritical Eurocentric sense would mark the end of an old world and beginning of something new and exciting: the dawn of rationality, scientific thinking, democracy, rule of law and the like. The conference focused on the possible interpretations of modernity when we think of it with a more critical insight from spaces other than Europe, especially the erstwhile colonies of Europe.	125	Keynote Speaker: R. Radhakrishnan, Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA	Rajasthan University, Jaipur	Jaipur, Rajasthan
7	13-16 December 2004	Dialogics of Cultural Encounters Cultural encounters create occasions for dialogue, comparison, domination, negotiation, resistance, dissent and silence in a world of unequal power. The conference took the participants through such occasions and possibilities of cultures coming together.	115	Keynote Speaker: Gaurav Desai, Associate Professor of English, Tulane University, New Orleans	Andhra University, Visakhapatnam	Visakhapatnam Andhrapradesh
8	14-17	The Art and Politics of Subversion:	111	Inaugural Address:	Mangalore	Mangalore,

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	December 2005	Theory in a Counter Mode The conference inquired how the proliferation of theory and its vibrant articulation through praxis freed theory from a state of lofty isolation to evolve into more accessible and even popular modes. The cultural, aesthetic and political relevance of such phenomena is quite intriguing and promising.		Girish Karnad; Keynote: Martin Jay, Professor of History, University of California at Berkeley & Catherine Gallagher, Professor of English, University of California at Berkeley	University, Mangalore	Karnataka
9	17-20 December 2006	Knowledge-Systems in a Climate of Creativity: Indian Perspectives The conference interrogated how the cultural histories of India are marked by debates, contestations and processes of exclusion and inclusion as far as knowledge systems are concerned. Interactive and polysemic were the schools of thought that competed and coexisted in a complex relationship of exchange and isolation. There had been scope for creation and subversion in this multidimensional realm of knowledge.	95	Keynote Speaker: Sheldon Pollock, The William B. Ransford Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Columbia University, New York City	Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute, Udaipur	Udaipur, Rajasthan
10	16-19 December 2007	Thinking Territory: Affect and Attachment towards Land in South Asia In South Asia, in the light of the composite histories of colonialism, anticolonial struggles, nation formation, conflict for domination within nation states and globalization, the idea of	145	Convener: Sumathi Ramaswamy, Professor of History at Duke University, North Carolina, USA; Keynote Speaker: Dipesh Chakrabarty, Professor of History, Department of	Goa University, Goa	Goa

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		territory becomes intriguing and significant. The conference analyzed historically and experientially how lives and identities are entangled with territories and land as more than a geographical entity.		History and South Asian Studies, University of Chicago		
11	18-21 December 2008	Democracy in Our Time: The Past and Future of the Enlightenment The conference critically evaluated the limitations of standard democratic theory in the orthodox tradition of the Enlightenment in coping with the developments in politics and culture across the world. The conference further questioned whether liberal democracy has failed miserably in facing the challenges of identity politics, neo-imperialism, nexus between religion and politics and the increasing inequalities within and among nations.	76	Inauguration: Fred Dallmayr; Convener: Akeel Bilgrami, Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy, and Director, Heyman Centre for the Humanities at Columbia University; Keynote Speaker: David Bromwich, Sterling Professor in English at Yale University, USA	Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi	Varanasi, Uttarpradesh
12	14-17 December 2009	The Political Economy of Social Division: Race, Gender, Class, and Caste as Fetishized/Fetishizing Borders The modes of social and political division are narrowly viewed as identificatory containers that structure antagonisms and hierarchies. The	91	Convener: Abdul R. JanMohamed, Department of English, University of California at Berkeley; Keynote Speaker: Hortense Spillers, The Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in	<i>Samyukta: A Journal of Women's Studies</i> and the Centre for Women's Studies, University of Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram Kerala

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		conference explored ways to reformulate divisions to arrive at possibilities of overlapping, exchange and permeability.		English at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA		
13	15-18 December 2010	<p>The Virtual Transformation of the Public Sphere</p> <p>The conference elaborated on the Habermasian notion of the public sphere as a marker of a more egalitarian and democratic public culture and re-examined its transformations in the era of digital technology and human communication.</p>	112	Convener: Gaurav Desai, Department of English and the Program of African Diaspora Studies at Tulane University, New Orleans, USA; Keynote Speaker: Nicholas D. Mirzoeff, Professor in the Department of Media, Culture and Communication, New York University	Panjab University, Chandigarh	Chandigarh
14	18-21 December 2011	<p>Transcending Disciplinary Decadence: Exploring Challenges of Teaching, Scholarship, and Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences</p> <p>The conference examined the disciplinary decadence currently plaguing academia and the colonization of knowledge. One of the examples of the decline is that of the university brought upon both by academia's compartmentalizing nature and by narrow conceptions of who can produce</p>	138	Convener: Lewis R. Gordon, the Laura H. Carnell Professor of Philosophy, Religion, and Jewish Studies at Temple University, USA; Keynote Speaker: Arjun Appadurai, the Goddard Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University	IIS University, Jaipur	Jaipur, Rajasthan

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		and obtain knowledge.				
15	16-19 December 2012	<p>Media and Utopia: Imagination, History, Technology</p> <p>The conference projected 'utopia' and 'media' as the essential determinants in exploring the new possibilities and different readings in global futures and the undercurrents that largely define them. A variety of subjects like the politics of representation, the female body in Cyber Pop culture, simulation social games which usher the players into heterotopic, and hyperreal space were discussed.</p>	110	<p>Convener: Arvind Rajagopal, Department of Media, Culture and Communication, New York University; Keynote Speakers: Matthew Connelly, Professor in the Department of History at Columbia University, Arjun Appadurai, the Goddard Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, Christopher Pinney, Professor of Anthropology and Visual Culture at University College London</p>	University of Allahabad	Allahabad, UP
16	15-18 December 2013	<p>Translation, Comparatism and the Global South</p> <p>The conference, while questioning the hierarchies and imperialistic attitudes still prevalent in translation and comparative studies, sought for methods and strategies for breaking free from confining Eurocentric origins of these domains. Many speakers proposed that</p>	135	<p>Convener: S. Shankar from the University of Hawaii at Manoa; Keynote Speaker: Simon Gikandi, Robert Schirmer Professor of English, Princeton University</p>	University of Mysore, Mysore	Mysore, Karnataka

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		embracing the multiplicity of world languages and literature with a more open and unprejudiced mind could yield abundant results.				
17	21-24 December 2014 (Silver Jubilee conference)	Re-Imagining Theory: Towards New Horizons in the Humanities and the Social Sciences The conference focused on how new creative and critical imaginings reshape theory as an interdisciplinary academic field, a mode of social intervention, a way of looking at life worlds and history and cultural phenomenon. Papers explored how the humanities and social sciences have benefitted from their forays into new domains and methods of inquiry and open-ended dialogue among disciplines.	189	Convener: R. Radhakrishnan, Professor of English, University of California at Irvine Keynote Speakers: Arjun Appadurai, Goddard Professor of Media, Culture and Communication, New York University Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, University Professor in Humanities, Columbia University, New York	International Lincoln Centre for American Studies, Louisiana State University, Shreveport, USA	Goa
18	20-23 December 2015	The Wider Significance of Nature The conference was an attempt to make sense of human interventions in and interactions with Nature in terms of environmental issues and larger metaphysical, aesthetic, historical, political and economic concerns.	110	Convener and Keynote Speaker: Akeel Bilgrami, Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy, and Director, Heyman Centre for the Humanities at Columbia University	The Departments of English and History, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha	Cuttack, Odisha
19	18-21 December 2016	Materialities: Objects, Matters, Things The conference focused extensively on a renewal of theorizing things and objects and looked for ways of explaining the	134	Convener and Keynote Speaker: Bill Brown, Karla Scherer Distinguished Service Professor in American Culture at the	Doon University, Dehradun	Dehradun, Uttarakhand

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		relationship between the subject and the object in more complex dimensions. The papers dealt with material objects and thingness, drawing insights from a plethora of disciplines and contexts.		University of Chicago Keynote address: Sara Guyer, Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison		
20	17-20 December 2017	The Humanities Across Cultures	--	Conveners: Simon Gikandi, Robert Schirmer Professor of English, Princeton University Bishnu Mohapatra, Senior Academic Fellow, Forum on Contemporary Theory	Louisiana State University, Shreveport, USA & Princeton African Humanities Colloquium, Princeton University, USA	Gopalpur on Sea, Odisha