

*Researchers' Colloquium*

Department of Liberal Arts

IIT Bhilai

**Book of Abstracts**

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2 to 4 pm

B 205

**Does Sporting Heroism Essentially Entail Masculinity? Unravelling Sporting Heroism  
in Moti Nandi's *Koni***

Rhitabrata Das

This paper aims to explore the portrayal of a sporting hero through an analysis of Moti Nandi's sports novel *Koni* (1975). Critiquing the established representations of sporting heroism marked by masculine gender practices, this paper undertakes a historical analysis of the attributes of a sporting hero, juxtaposing them with the trajectories of a teenage Bengali girl's life from her early days of amateur swimming to winning the national championship. This paper extends its exploration to Nandi's portrayal of Koni, championing an alternative imagination of femininity marked by her athletic feat and challenges the existing gender-based stereotype of a fearless man and a domesticated woman in sporting arena. Through its analysis, this paper also recognizes sport's function as a political tool to understand the socio-cultural fabric without decentring it as an exclusive entity outside the socio-political and cultural matrix of the twentieth century.

**Keywords:** sport; sporting heroism; masculinity; gender.

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**Idea of Place in Ecocriticism**

Barsha Santra

The discourse of living in 'place' in ecocriticism includes key terms such as bioregion, sustainability, community, dwelling, and re-inhabitation. In this paper, I will evaluate the implication of place in the evolutionary history of ecocriticism as well as in the new trajectories emerging in the field. While doing so, I will reflect on the idea of bioregionalism or place attachment and its apparent scalar difference in the focus on the global as we find in Ursula Heise's notion of 'eco-cosmopolitanism', claiming that local, cultural, and ecological systems are imbricated in global ones. Though it is undeniable that in our globalised world eco-cosmopolitanism as a mode of thinking enables an ecological consciousness which reveals how cultural practices are embedded in larger networks, I will argue that authentic rootedness in the ecology and ritual of a place as forwarded by the bioregional ethics of care enables the appreciation of other life-places and consideration of responsibilities we owe to the nonhuman

others. The paper will not be an analysis of literary or cultural texts as such, rather it will engage in the theoretical frameworks and methods associated with place in ecocriticism.



## **Nurses and Death Anxiety**

Monika Srivastava

Nurses make up the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and have the closest and most sustained proximity to patients. There is a shortage of approximately 2 million nurses in India. Such a paucity of nurses exerts tremendous pressure on their mental health and subsequently on the health care delivery system of the country. This is due to the additional work that a limited number of nurses have to shoulder. This study aims to review the current state of the literature on death anxiety with a focus on nurses in India, who are mostly neglected in the literature. Upon investigation, it was found that previous studies on mental health utilized a deficit-based model to study constructs like stress, anxiety, burnout, and pathologies among nurses. Therefore, a need was felt to move from this medical model to a strengths-based model of positive psychology which study human strengths as opposed to weaknesses. An extensive review of literature from the databases of PubMed, Science direct, PsycInfo, and *Journal of Death Studies* was conducted. It was found that in death anxiety studies the most commonly studied sample was the geriatric population. Among nurses, the most studied variables are their age and experience. The most widely used tool for measurement of death anxiety is by Templer (1970). Death anxiety has evolved over time and now includes death acceptance as a new perspective. Importantly, it was found that nurses are excluded from mental health education during their training. Summarily, the review found that nurses' mental health through the examination of death anxiety from a positive psychological perspective deserves investigation. It is concluded that policies about mental health education among nurses should be formulated to help them effectively deal with death anxiety, thus including them in maintaining their own mental health.

**Keywords:** death anxiety; positive psychology; mental health; Indian nurses; well-being



## **Madness and the Politics of (Un)belonging in Jerry Pinto's *Em and the Big Hoom***

Deepanwita Dey

Jerry Pinto's *Em and the Big Hoom* (2012) portrays the unusual relationships of the Mendes family living in a 1-BHK flat in Bombay. The text is primarily concerned with the conflictual relationship of the narrator with his "mad mother", alternating between increasing intimacy and subsequent distancing from each other. The text explores how the experience of madness is relayed within familial structures, and how madness gets embedded and articulated in different spaces, such as the domestic setting of the home, the institutional spaces of hospitals and asylums, as well as metaphorical spaces of the unknown and unfamiliar inhabited by madness itself. This paper seeks to explore how madness alters these spatial structures and how these spatial structures inhabit and alter madness in turn. It will explore how madness and identity gets mapped onto various spaces and examine the questions of intrusion and invasion of space, accessibility, and inaccessibility of spaces and the politics of (un)belonging. While the narrator is engaged in a relentless quest of unravelling the mystery behind his mother's madness, it is through these interactions between madness and various spaces like home, hospitals, asylum, and the invisible spaces occupied by madness itself which facilitates the narrator's change of perception of madness, as he attempts to escape, confront, negotiate, and finally reconcile with his mad mother.

**Keywords:** identity; madness narratives; spaces in literature