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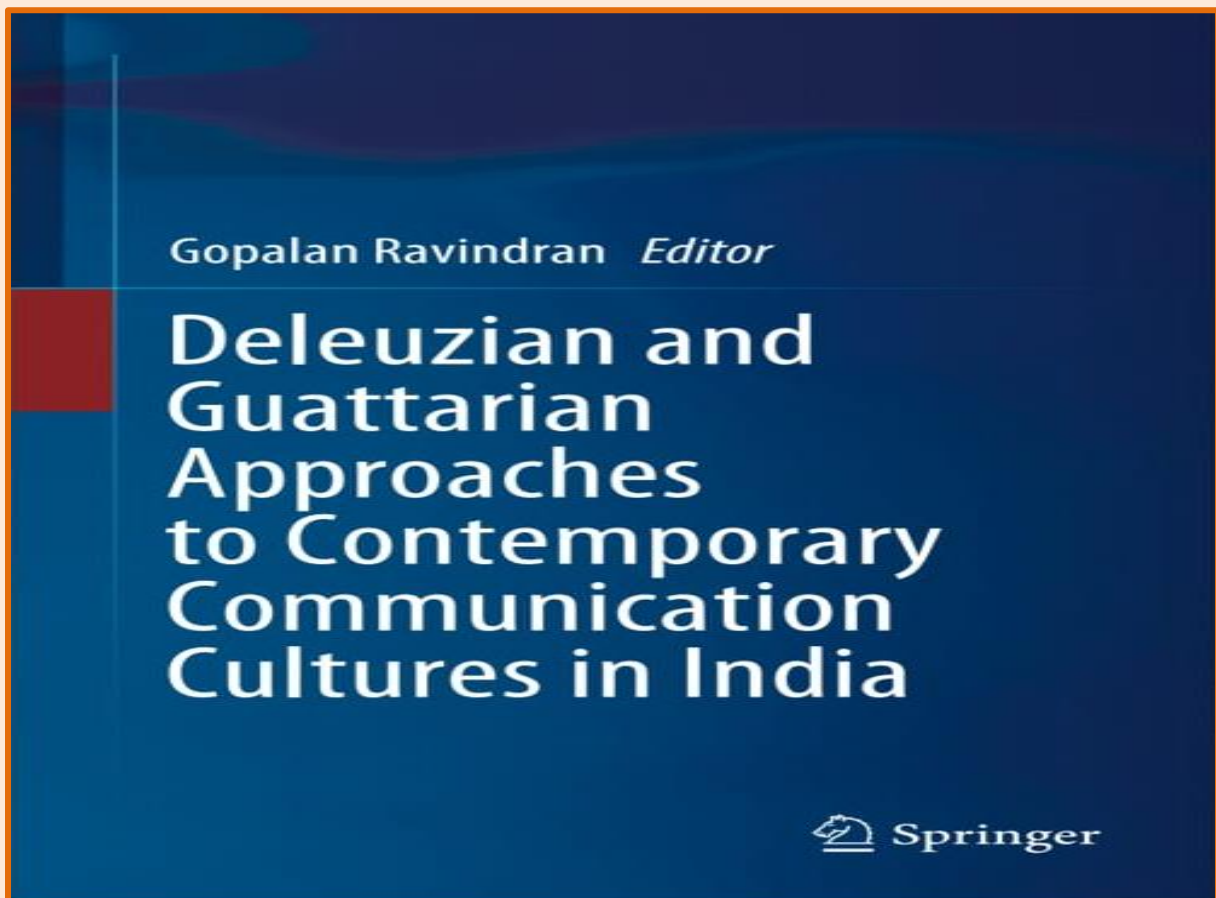
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Faculty Name – Swatee Sinha

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Editor
Gopalan Ravindran
Department of Journalism
and Communication
University of Madras
Chennai, India

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THE NATION AND ITS PERIPHERIES

Borderland narratives and theories of liminality

Swatee Sinha and Anjali Gera Roy

Introduction

The complex texture of today's modern cultures exists in a state of mutual imbrication and interconnectivity in which various ways of living with expressive modalities interpenetrate, transcending all forms of containment, including national borders. One of the reasons for the formation of such newer though complex cultural constellations beyond national borders is the migratory undulation and its resultant increasing hybridisation. In his essay 'Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,' Wolfgang Welsch hints at transculturality as being the emerging process of cultural 'inner differentiation' (1999: 197). Transculturality, therefore, becomes a celebration of the untranslatable residue of differentiation, the element of foreignness that inheres in a 'culture's internal relations – among its different ways of life' (1999: 198).

Welsch's perception also echoes what Afef Benessaïeh connects to the complex procedures of identity formulation, which, in today's world, do not necessarily hem into national boundaries but stay plural and highly mobile, enabling the cross-cultural continuums (2010: 21). Under a cultural ecology like ours, the centre often relocates itself to characterise fresher zones of functionality and discover the margins anew, beyond which the centric codes of operation lose validity. In this context, the margins become a site of alienation where resonances of the majoritarian culture grow progressively weaker and signal presence in traces by allowing other cultural influences to inundate the liminal zones. The margins and their interstitial spaces lodged in between the dominant cultural articulation may thus turn away to situate tangentially the several centres or non-concentric domains of discourse whose edges they simultaneously inhabit. The cultural composition of such open yet interstitial zones or spheres 'are characterized by' what Welsch perceives as multiple 'mixing and permeations' (2009: 6) that cohere the majoritarian cultural intersections and their altered chemistries to defy the essentialist understandings about culture.

Through a close investigation of three of Salman Rushdie's fictional works – *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *Shalimar the Clown* (mentioned from here on as *MC*, *MLS* and *SC*, respectively) – this chapter explores the notion of transculturality both at the macro level of territorial dislocations and at the micro level of individual states of consciousness to engage the migrant and the exile as residual identities, existing as remnants of the political

2. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-15-2140-9_13

Subjectless Subjectivities in Nayeema Mahjoor's *Lost in Terror*



Swatee Sinha and Anjali Gera Roy

Abstract This chapter, through a close reading of Nayeema Mahjoor's novel, *Lost in Terror*, seeks to plot the entanglement of molar and molecular dimensions of power, the co-option of micro-regimes of desire in molar operations. The novel which engages with the fissures and traumatic rifts in the individual psyche lodged in a fractured political landscape wells up a host of affects which under the influence of ideological distortions ossifies into a congealed mass of violent sentiments. Under such circumstances, reengineering of the psyche in alignment with an inclusive social imaginary becomes integral in the liberation of the subjective consciousness from such inimical sentiments.

Keywords Subjectless subjectivities · Subjects of trauma · Nayeema Mahjoor · *Lost in Terror* · Deleuze and Guattari

Introduction: Desire and the Social Unconscious

The present chapter engages with defunct subjective spaces produced by regimes of societal control. The organic consistency of desire,¹ which in Deleuzian theory sustains a liberatory ethics of being, is threatened by a host of predatory forces which deploy violence to appropriate subjective spaces. Molar structures of power seep

¹Desire in the philosophical works of Deleuze and Guattari is not restricted to a psycho-sexual register and translates into a self-propelling concept capable of renewal and regeneration. It is no longer conditioned by a Lacanian void, which can only fall back to the symbolic resources of an oedipalized linguistic domain. It escapes the loop of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis where the law of the Father prevails. Such a breakthrough from the circuit of the normative order of patriarchy has close parallels with the free circulation of capital beyond the boundaries of the nation state in the post-global era. Capital, which is neutral in itself and acts as an exchange value, becomes a potent metaphor of desire. Capital, on the one hand, is liberatory and empowering; a conduit of desire unhinged from all power dynamics, but at the same time it is susceptible to an exclusionary politics, hatched by the inhibitive designs of a corporate game plan which subtly manipulates and regulates flows of desire.

S. Sinha (✉) · A. G. Roy
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India
e-mail: sinhaswatee@gmail.com