



# T-LitCon

Istanbul Topkapı University  
1st Annual International Conference on Literature  
“Human Rights and Literature”

May 12–13, 2023

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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**Editor**

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**May 2023**

**T-LitCon**  
**İstanbul Topkapı University**  
**1st Annual International Conference on Literature**  
**“Human Rights and Literature”**  
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## CALL FOR PAPERS



As a medium that conveys our acute sensitivities, longings, and struggles for justice, literature has always been responsive to human rights, namely, our political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental entitlements as rights-bearing subjects. The idea of human rights is simultaneously a political aim, a legal discourse, and a set of social, political, and legal practices. It figures in literary texts in the more recognizable form of access to justice. Writers and poets have always critically responded to injustices and violations of rights in their time and offered their reflections on the idea of justice and rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations defines five ethical principles in relation with human rights: 1. Universality, 2. Equality, 3. Participation, 4. Interdependence, 5. The rule of law. Despite showing slight variations in different political structures and cultural contexts, these principles have a common resonance in literatures of the globe, especially in the literary representations of marginalized populations and the peripheric social groups whose lives are threatened by suppressive political powers.

This conference invites studies that interrogate the complexities of representing human rights vis-a-vis hegemonic political and economic powers in literature. The contributors are encouraged to draw on the most current political theories as well as trauma studies, postcolonial theory, subaltern studies, Marxism, feminist politics, and eco-critical studies. The significance of contributions come from the way they elucidate textual imaginations of human rights and the role of literary texts in imagining human rights as well as the way they navigate a range of fields while exploring the complexities of the relationship between literature and human rights.

Prof. Dr. Fermâ Lekesizalın

Conference Organizing Committee, Chair



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CALL FOR PAPERS</b> .....	i
Prof. Dr. Fermâ Lekesizalın .....	i
<b>Plenary Address</b> .....	1
by James DAWES.....	1
<b>Plenary Address</b> .....	2
by Pema Eden SAMDUP .....	2
<b>Self, Soliloquy, and the Form of the Sentimental Novel</b> .....	3
Selena ÖZBAŞ.....	3
<b>Trauma and Healing as Performance in Sonja Linden’s “I Have Before Me...”</b> .....	4
İpek KOTAN YİĞİT.....	4
<b>Interpretations of Human Rights, Law and Justice in Literary Works Written by Female Aboriginal Authors</b> .....	5
Vesna SULJIĆ.....	5
<b>Poems for Human Rights: Contemporary Dalit Poetry in English</b> .....	6
PRATIBHA.....	6
<b>The (Ex)Termination of Native Americans in Louise Erdrich’s <i>The Night Watchman</i>....</b>	7
Gillian M. E. ALBAN.....	7
<b>Colorblind or Racialized? Reflections in North American Memoirs</b> .....	8
Rachael FRANKE .....	8
<b>Hybridity and Mimicry in Hanif Kureishi’s “My Son the Fanatic”</b> .....	9
Srebrenka MAČKOVIĆ.....	9
<b>Traumatic Diasporic Lives: Women’s Rights (Rites) of Passage in Chitra Divakaruni’s Fiction</b> .....	10
Hitesh RAVIYA, Kanika KAPIL.....	10
<b>To Remember or not to Remember: Trauma of Slavery in Fred D’Aguiar’s <i>The Longest Memory</i></b> .....	11
Hilal ŞENGENÇ.....	11
<b>From Inmates to Storytellers: Prison Narratives as Human Rights Literature</b> .....	12
Afnan Hussain KOTTATHODIKA.....	12
<b>Translation as a Human Right</b> .....	13
Ezgi GAGA.....	13
<b>Verbatim Theatre across Transposable Spaces: David Hare’s <i>The Permanent Way</i> (2003)</b> .....	14
Rıza ÇİMEN .....	14

<b>Interrogating the Paradox of Human ‘Rights’: The Questions of Precarity and ‘Wrongs’ in Vipareetham / Opposite.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Sruthi B. GUPTHA, Sandhya V. ....	15
<b>Women on the Margins of Legal Discourse: Nina Raine’s <i>Consent</i> (2017).....</b>	<b>16</b>
Esra ÜNLÜ ÇİMEN.....	16
<b>Visual Representations of Children with Disabilities in Contemporary Picturebooks for Children.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Artemis PAPAILIA.....	17
<b>The Resilience of the Untouchables: Dalit Literature and the Struggle for Human Rights .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Siva V. ....	18
<b>The Individual and Totalitarian State Power: The Literary Representation of the Artistic Intellectual in Dictatorship.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Arvi SEPP.....	19
<b>Human Suffering, Class Oppression and the Necessity of Working-Class Scottish Dialect in James Kelman’s <i>How Late It Was, How Late</i> .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Lejla MULALIĆ.....	20
<b>Like a Feather Falling from the Wing of a Bird: An Exploration of Climate Insecurity and Women’s Reproductive Rights in Louise Erdrich’s <i>Future Home of the Living God</i> .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Raluca ANDREESCU .....	21
<b>Forced to a State Geographically and Psychologically In-Between: Lack of Sense of Belonging in Ali Smith’s “The Go-Between”.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Erel MEZ.....	22
<b>A Search for Identity: The Subaltern in Buchi Emecheta’s <i>The Slave Girl</i>.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Yakut AKBAY.....	23
<b>Violation of Hu/Woman Rights and Resistance in Lucy Kirkwood’s <i>it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now</i>.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Elvan KARAMAN MEZ.....	24
<b>Heritage Laws of Guatemala: Protecting the National Cultural Heritage or Their Profit? Essentialism, Othering, and Colonialism.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Irene Martí GIL .....	25
<b>Gilbert Imlay’s <i>The Emigrants</i> (1793): Women Rights in Post-Revolutionary America...26</b>	<b>26</b>
Kerem AK.....	26
<b>The Analysis of Political Plays of Pinter “Party Time”, “New World Order” and His Poem “Death” within the Framework of Infringement of Human Rights .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Gülten SİLİNDİR KERETLİ .....	27
<b>Is Posthumanism a Necessity to Justify Human Rights? .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Selin ŞENCAN.....	28



**PLENARY ADDRESSES, ABSTRACTS,  
AUTHOR INFORMATION, AND  
STREAMING QR CODES**



# Plenary Address

by James DAWES<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dr., Macalester College, the USA.

## Plenary Address

by Pema Eden SAMDUP<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Assoc. Prof. Dr., Indira Gandhi National Open University, India.

## Self, Soliloquy, and the Form of the Sentimental Novel

Selena ÖZBAŞ<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

This paper focuses on the construction of self in eighteenth-century English novel. Focusing on Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury's moral philosophy and his discussion related to the construction of personal identity through soliloquies, it discusses the progression of the novelistic self through portrayals of internal monologues in three sentimental novels of eighteenth-century English literature. In this respect, I will look into the soliloquies or soliloquy-like instances in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality*, and Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* and try to discuss the literary quality of these internal monologues in relation to Shaftesbury's moral philosophy. The argument here is that the soliloquies in these sentimental novels become literary commentaries on the already emergent figure of the progressive and self-meditating Enlightenment individual since the power or the ability to soliloquise is considered a central power in Shaftesbury's moral philosophy, aiding the individual in attaining happiness, or better put, a happy human life. In addition, since the self-meditating powers of soliloquies allow individuals to form a coherent self and form healthy intersubjective dialogues, and contributes to human flourishing and individual as well as communal good, the function of soliloquies in these sentimental texts will be argued to form the moral and the so-called 'emotional' backbone of the sentimental novel. The importance of this point, it will be concluded, lies in the very fact that it provides us with a new and fresh vision with regards to the sentimental novel which, it will be purported, contrary to popular belief or the common practices in literary criticism, the moral background of the sentimental novel does not make a primary claim to emotionalism as opposed to rationalism but instead contains a preliminary argument with regards to human functionality and flourishing. Hence, the anticipated conclusion draws on the point that the form of sentimentality in the eighteenth-century novel catches the end of a forerunning discussion of human rights in a Nussbaumian sense.

**Keywords:** Sentimental novel, soliloquy, self, human flourishing, human rights.



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<sup>3</sup> Asst. Prof. Dr., İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, English Language and Literature, Turkey.

# Trauma and Healing as Performance in Sonja Linden’s “I Have Before Me...”

İpek KOTAN YİĞİT<sup>4</sup>

## Abstract

In human rights literature, a belief in the therapeutic power of writing, especially against trauma, prevails, occasioning a “literature of trauma [which] at once compels and sustains the contemporary practice of trauma therapy specific to the West,” claim Smith and Schaffer in *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition* (20). The claim is significant as it exposes a construction that has become so self-evident for certain demographics (“English speaking and European”) that it is now perceived as the default. This construction is the discourse on trauma and the talking cure, increasingly popular since the second half of the twentieth century (19). Smith and Schaffer argue that this particular understanding of trauma and healing is dispersed through the globe in its appropriation by human rights narratives as the given method for understanding and expressing suffering (20). Sonja Linden’s play “I Have Before Me A Remarkable Document Given to Me By a Young Lady From Rwanda” challenges this particular understanding and practice of trauma through encounters between Juliette, a Rwandan refugee in London and Simon, her British writing mentor. I maintain that although the play posits a challenge to the abovementioned centrality of the trauma discourse, its resolution nonetheless restores the *status quo* by having Juliette read out from her memoir to the audience, and positing this as a crucial moment in her healing process. However, moments of tension and communication failures throughout the play rise out of the two characters’ different understandings of what writing and healing should be like, and these exemplify the possibility that the currently popular understanding of trauma is the result of cultural conditioning rather than an inherent feature of trauma itself. My paper and presentation focus on the elements of this critique in Linden’s play in the context of relevant human rights literature.

**Keywords:** Drama, healing, human rights literature, trauma, postcolonialism.



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<sup>4</sup> Lect. Dr., İstanbul Kültür University, English Language and Literature, Turkey.

# Interpretations of Human Rights, Law and Justice in Literary Works Written by Female Aboriginal Authors

Vesna SULJIĆ<sup>5</sup>

## Abstract

This article focuses on issues of human rights, law and justice as presented in literary works written by Australian Aboriginal female authors such as Sally Morgan, Ros Moriarty, Kath Walker – Oodgeroo and Rhonda Collar-Spratt. Interpretations of their works are based on the feminist standpoint theory of the outsider within. Postcolonial or feminist theories often pose it that marginalized groups – female, colonized, oppressed or socially disadvantaged ones - are viewed as “the Other”, or the outsiders, trying to reach out to be heard and making themselves visible to gain equal rights and opportunities like their counterparts - mainstream or privileged groups. The selected literary works that this paper focuses on, however, are written from the perspective which acknowledges that “the outsider” is in fact “within” and that it values the sense of belonging to the world’s oldest continuing culture. Starting from “within”, the texts address “the Other” – not marginalized minorities, but anyone who may not be familiar with Australian Aboriginal culture and their traditional understanding of human rights or justice. There are several converging points in the selected literary works – they are all written by female authors of Aboriginal descent; they address the role of female in the Aboriginal tradition and the impact of colonization, cultural misunderstanding and ignorance during contacts with different races in the same geographical environment; and all authors emphasize what it means to be different and how understanding the differences can make people closer.

**Keywords:** Australian Aboriginal, feminist standpoint theory, outsider within.



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## Poems for Human Rights: Contemporary Dalit Poetry in English

PRATIBHA<sup>6</sup>

### Abstract

Contemporary Dalit Poetry in English challenges the stronghold of elitist, brahminical cultural values in mainstream Postcolonial Indian Poetry in English. By decrying the systemic denial of human rights and dignity that the former untouchables suffer under the hegemonic caste system, these poems testify their marginalisation and subjugation. The English language, which in the postcolonial context has been considered a bastion of caste, class, and colonial hegemony, is now being weaponised by Dalit poets for activism, not only to expose the inherent violence of casteism in the contemporary Indian socio-cultural milieu, but also as a springboard to attain global recognition and forge transnational alliances with other marginalised communities in the world. This paper will explicate these arguments through a critique of select poems in English by Contemporary Dalit poets such as Chandramohan S., Meena Kandasamy, Yogesh Maitreya and Shivani Waldekar. The analysis will tease out how anti-caste poetry is being used to create and sustain imaginative spaces for articulation of values such as equality, liberty, justice, and fraternity. Some themes and tropes around which the arguments and discussions will evolve are myths, legends and histories, Dalit identity and community, contemporary forms of casteism, caste violence and discrimination, caste and gender intersectionality, English in the Dalit context and the politics of language.

**Keywords:** Caste discrimination, Human Rights in/and Literature, Dalit poetry in English, caste and gender intersectionality.



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<sup>6</sup> Asst. Prof. Dr., Bennett University, English and Communication, India.



# The (Ex)Termination of Native Americans in Louise Erdrich's *The Night Watchman*

Gillian M. E. ALBAN<sup>7</sup>

## Abstract

Louise Erdrich's novel, *The Night Watchman*, relates the Turtle tribe's attempt to survive challenging life conditions, as well as maintaining any tribal identity. After European settlers arrived to the American continent from 1492, disease and warfare decimated fifty percent of the native population. In 1852 the Treaty of Fort Laramie requested the native tribes to sell their lands to supply the immigrants' insatiable need of land. Chief Seattle asked: "how can you buy or sell the sky? The land? ... If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them" (qtd. in Campbell 34), indicating the epistemological contradiction between these Indians and the hegemonic American forces for whom land was a purchasable commodity. In 1953, the US government notoriously produced an 'Emancipation Bill' or the House Concurrent Resolution 108 bill intending to permanently solve the American Indian issue, effectively a 'Final Solution' to their existence, abrogating nation-to-nation treaties that had been made with tribes for "as long as the grass grows and the rivers flow" (epigraph, Erdrich), proposing to (ex)terminate five and eventually all native tribes. Erdrich's novel *The Night Watchman* relates her maternal grandfather's struggle to activate the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa against termination, growing up after years when older people starved themselves in order to enable the younger ones to survive; they could often scarcely walk by spring. Thomas 'muskrat' Wazhashk relates that they had "survived smallpox, the Winchester repeating rifle, the Hotchkiss gun, and tuberculosis ... the flu epidemic of 1918, and fought in four or five deadly United States wars" (93). This novel relates Thomas' struggle to survive yet another onslaught against the tribal existence of the Turtle Mountain Band, also illustrating the predatory nature of life for Indians outside their settlement.

**Keywords:** Identity, Native American tribes, survive, terminate.



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## Colorblind or Racialized? Reflections in North American Memoirs

Rachael FRANKE<sup>8</sup>

### Abstract

In an age where celebrities claim “I don’t see color!” when commenting on their interracial children; where US states are banning courses on racialized history; and Black American men are imprisoned for an average of two years longer than their white American peers; discourse on the meaning of ‘equality’ is rampant. Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars such as Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw advocate for the recognition of racialized history and the rejection of “color-blindness.” Racial colorblindness is championed as a truly racially neutral and equalizing perspective which treats people of all racial demographics the same way, yet proponents of CRT claim that the proclamation of ‘color-blindness’ is a method to overlook the purposeful oppression of people of color by the North American justice system and that it is an avoidance technique to coming face to face with the racism that continues to flourish in the United States and Canada. In this presentation, I will use Gayatri Spivak’s concepts of strategic essentialism and Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality to analyze the role of purposeful racial awareness in Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me* (2015) and David Chariandy’s *I’ve Been Meaning to Tell You* (2018). Both of these short memoirs reflect on living in countries where they are constantly racialized in political, social, and legal spheres by sharing poignant anecdotes with their children and wider readership.

**Keywords:** Black Studies, Critical Race Theory, intersectionality, memoir, strategic essentialism.



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## Hybridity and Mimicry in Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic"

Srebrenka MAČKOVIĆ<sup>9</sup>

### Abstract

Hanif Kureishi's short story "My Son the Fanatic" (first published in 1994 in the *New Yorker* magazine and republished in his collection of short stories *Love in a Blue Time* in 1997) is a powerful exploration of the impact of immigration on the cultural identity of first and second-generation immigrants. Central figures in this narrative are Parvez and his son Ali, and the story highlights the challenges they face in their attempt(s) to overcome the cultural, religious, and ideological conflict between their Pakistani origins and the Western values of the society they happen to live in. It is the aim of this paper to use Kureishi's short story as a backdrop for examining the (im)possibility of preserving many aspects of a traditional Muslim heritage while being exposed to the process of assimilation into a liberal and secular foreign culture. The paper will also try to provide an in-depth analysis of hybridity and mimicry from the position of the subaltern and the Other in Britain at the end of the 20th century, relying on some key concepts from Postcolonial theory proposed by Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha.

**Keywords:** Cultural identity, first and second-generation immigrants, hybridity, mimicry, assimilation.



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# Traumatic Diasporic Lives: Women's Rights (Rites) of Passage in Chitra Divakaruni's Fiction

Hitesh RAVIYA<sup>10</sup>, Kanika KAPIL<sup>11</sup>

## Abstract

In the mosaic of diasporic literary landscape, Chitra Divakaruni's works stand out as spectacular chroniclers of the varied experiences of Asian American immigrant women. Most of her characters have to move away from their sheltered homes and homeland to face foreign shores of the adopted land. Bound by patriarchal expectations, these women strive to create a balance between adapting to the modern, liberated worldview on the one hand and retaining the traditional roots of the home culture on the other. Brought up with social restrictions from girlhood on, they are familiar with the underlying forces of male dominance and privilege. Yet, the challenges multiply manifold in the alien country where they are devoid of their familial support system and rooting. This paper seeks to delve into the traumatic rites(rights) of passage faced by these Indian-born women as they trapeze through the cataclysmic changes in their inner and outer lives. Through the lens of archetypal and traumatic theory, an attempt has been made to unravel the incongruous, intricate layers accompanying their tumultuous diasporic journey and to reveal the manner in which even while living in the midst of an emancipated and unrepressed society, their rights are trampled upon as they continue to remain passive spectators.

**Keywords:** Trauma, rights, archetype, journey, diaspora, patriarchy.



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# To Remember or not to Remember: Trauma of Slavery in Fred D'Aguiar's *The Longest Memory*

Hilal ŞENGENÇ<sup>12</sup>

*“Forget. Memory is pain trying to resurrect itself.” Fred D’Aguiar*

## Abstract

As a traumatic Black experience, the aftermath of the triangular Middle Passage, slavery, has been dismissed from the historical archive of the White European-American culture. The injustice regarding the subjugation of the Blacks is challenged, and their silence is compensated by Transatlantic authors whose works function as the “site(s) of memory” where imagination and fact come together so that “the blanks” within “the slave narratives” can be filled in (Toni Morrison). Guyanese-British novelist Fred D’Aguiar’s *The Longest Memory* revisits African-American enslavement and retells it as an unjust experience through the witnessing of Black protagonists. They are the survivors yet traumatized, and their lives are stamped by the racist institution. Thus, they fluctuate between two conflicting responses, remembering and forgetting, that might enable them to overcome their trauma. This paper reads *The Longest Memory* as a testimony to the trauma of slavery whose ghost lingers around, even after the abolition, and stills ruins the lives of many Black people; therefore, it foregrounds the significance of literature in fighting back violations of human rights.

**Keywords:** Black, racism, slavery, survivor, trauma.



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## From Inmates to Storytellers: Prison Narratives as Human Rights Literature

Afnan Hussain KOTTATHODIKA<sup>13</sup>

### Abstract

The testimonial literature is one of the most persuasive types of literature in the context of human rights discourse. Telling and listening to stories of suffering, which also constitutes the larger discourse around incarceration and human rights violations, is an effective method of inviting ethical response and empathy from the reader. While James Dawes argues that, “human rights work is, at its heart, a matter of storytelling,” Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith write that “stories invite an ethical response from listeners and readers” This paper looks into two autobiographical prison narratives from India, “Innocent Prisoners” by Wahid Sheikh and “Framed as a Terrorist” by Aamir Khan, to understand how ‘terror’ cases are framed against Muslim minorities in India, after the emergence of hardcore Hindutva nationalism. Both authors were kidnapped by police, fabricated in terror cases in their twenties, and were acquitted after spending more than ten years in prison. The police files were filled with fictitious narratives borrowed from the stereotypical discourse about the “Muslim Other” in a Hindu majoritarian country. Hence, the analysis of these carceral stories enables us to see how legal institutions and media produce a regime of truth, which leads to the imprisonment of innocent youths and subsequent human rights violations. However, both narratives also go beyond the repetitive trope of trauma literature, and offer a new way of talking/ writing about suffering. In this paper, I also look at how these authors do not see legal language just as a repressive apparatus, instead reformulate it as a field that can be mastered by constant engagement, thus offering hope to other undertrial prisoners and human rights discourse.

**Keywords:** Hindutva nationalism, human rights literature, prison narratives, storytelling.



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## Translation as a Human Right

Ezgi GAGA<sup>14</sup>

### Abstract

The importance of communication and the exchange of ideas across linguistic and cultural barriers cannot be overstated. However, for many individuals and communities around the world, language barriers can pose significant challenges to their ability to participate fully in society, access information, and exercise their human rights. Translation has emerged as an essential human right due to the crucial role it plays in facilitating communication and promoting access to information and ideas across linguistic and cultural barriers. The recognition of translation as a human right has its roots in the right to freedom of expression, which is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights frameworks. The right to freedom of expression includes the right to seek, receive, and transmit information through any medium, and the right to use one's own language. As a result, the right to translation has emerged as an essential human right, recognized by both international human rights law and discourse. This study aims to explore the legal, ethical, economic and social dimensions of translation as a human right, examining the ways in which translation is necessary for the protection of linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as for the promotion of social, economic, and political rights. Despite the recognition of the right to translation, significant challenges remain in ensuring that all individuals have access to high-quality translation services. The study also argues that the right to translation should be seen as an essential element of human rights discourse, and that efforts should be made to ensure that all individuals have access to high-quality translation services in order to fully exercise their human rights.

**Keywords:** Translation, human rights, freedom of expression.



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## Verbatim Theatre across Transposable Spaces: David Hare's *The Permanent Way* (2003)

Rıza ÇİMEN<sup>15</sup>

### Abstract

Verbatim theatre refers to a type of drama which takes its cue from real-life accounts of real people. Interviews constitute a large portion of the source materials that the playwrights use to voice a real historical situation and to generate a politically-oriented dramatic content. In this vein, authentic quotations from real people are employed by playwrights to weave a dramatic world where facts and fiction are amalgamated through a political dramaturgy in order to raise awareness against the perils of capitalist ideologies. Following this plane of thought, it could be argued that verbatim theatre incorporates a series of what Rosi Braidotti calls “transpositions”, in-between spaces that are “nonlinear, but not chaotic; nomadic, yet accountable and committed; creative but also cognitively valid; discursive and also materially embedded.” In other words, transpositions bear the potential to address the co-existence of multiplicities in terms of form, content, and subjectivities, and verbatim theatre offers a dramatic space where the “mobility and cross-referencing between disciplines and discursive levels” can find a creative medium for a materially instantiated theatrical imagination. David Hare's *The Permanent Way* (2003) is a representative example of verbatim theatre in which transposable spaces – dramatic form, authentic testimonies, and theatrical imagination – co-exist in a symbiotic interdependence and pose a radical challenge to the self-interests of Tory neoliberalism in Britain. Written in response to the privatization of railways, the play voices the concerns of those directly involved in the process and bears witness to how the public rights for transportation are violated for the interests of the ruling ideology.

**Keywords:** Verbatim theatre, David Hare, *The Permanent Way*, transpositions, public rights.



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## Interrogating the Paradox of Human ‘Rights’: The Questions of Precarity and ‘Wrongs’ in Vipareetham / Opposite

Sruthi B. GUPTHA<sup>16</sup>, Sandhya V.<sup>17</sup>

### Abstract

Life-writing attending to marginality in India has always engaged explicitly with the question of Human rights. This paper deals with the questions of precarity and human rights through a close reading of the Malayalam memoir ‘Vipareetham / Opposite’ (2012), which narrates the life of Raju, an intersex person belonging to Aranadan tribal community in Kerala (a state in South India). Vipareetham accounts for Raju’s encounter with failed sex reassignment surgery which worsened his misery and forcefully pushed him to take up begging for a livelihood. Its manifestation of structural and epistemic violence through institutions like gender, caste, state, medical institutions can be considered as a ruptured testimonial documentation of human rights violation at multiple levels. The manifestation of multiple dimensions of precarity in the memoir illustrates Raju’s unaffordable access to universal human rights based on cosmopolitan values. His lived experiences are shaped by interlocking and precarious intersections of tribal caste, intersex gender identity, corporeal pain, poverty, illiteracy, trauma and deprivation of secure spaces and amenities such as housing to safeguard himself from sexual exploitation and wild animal attack. This makes Vipareetham an apt text to be read in resonance with Upendra Baxi’s conceptualization of “critical human rights realism” situated in the sites of ‘resistance and struggle’ of subjects like Raju who are considered as “unworthy of being bearers of human rights.” (Baxi, Future of Human Rights). The paper argues for a ‘Politics for human rights’ by contextualizing Vipareetham in its immediate socio-cultural-economic location that hinders Raju from owning human rights as a resource to interpret his situatedness.

**Keywords:** Gender, human rights, intersex, Kerala, tribal caste.



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## Women on the Margins of Legal Discourse: Nina Raine's *Consent* (2017)

Esra ÜNLÜ ÇİMEN<sup>18</sup>

### Abstract

Nina Raine's *Consent* (2017) explores the complicated relations of a group of middle-class friends, who, except Kitty, work as lawyers. In their private lives, too, these characters find themselves as parts of different legal processes. Whereas Rachel and Kitty want to divorce their husbands for problems such as betrayal and marital rape, a working-class woman, Gayle, is a victim of rape but is unable to defend herself properly without a lawyer for herself. The lawyer appointed for Gayle's case, who represents the crown, is not eager to advocate her strongly. These women from different social classes all suffer from problems whose influence over their lives extends beyond their "consent" in the patriarchal society. In the end, Rachel and Kitty have to handle their issues in their own ways while Gayle loses the case due to a lack of proper defence, which displays women's disadvantageous relationship with the legal discourse operative in the masculine world of justice. This paper argues that the difficulties these women face in their legal engagements complicate the notion of "consent" beyond the limited scope of sexuality and opens up a critically oriented dramatic space where, within the context of feminist politics, the Gramscian concepts of "hegemony" and "consent" are explored with an aim to draw attention to the mechanisms behind the forcefully manufactured web of compliance among women. In doing so, the play calls for a rethinking of the unequal access to legal rights and questions the so-called equality between genders in the face of legal matters even in the contemporary times.

**Keywords:** Antonio Gramsci, consent, Consent, hegemony, Nina Raine.



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# Visual Representations of Children with Disabilities in Contemporary Picturebooks for Children

Artemis PAPAILIA<sup>19</sup>

## Abstract

The visual representation of children with disabilities in picturebooks can have a significant impact on how children understand and relate to people with disabilities. Historically, children with disabilities have been underrepresented and often depicted in stereotypical ways in children's literature. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the representation of children with disabilities in picturebooks, and the way they are depicted has evolved. This presentation will explore the visual portrayal of children with disabilities in picturebooks using the Iconotext Theory by Nikolajeva and Scott (2001). Here are our conclusions of how children with disabilities are visual depicted in picturebooks: a. Stereotypical representation: In the past, some picturebooks have depicted people with disabilities as pitiable or heroic, and often portrayed them as being in need of pity or rescue. These books often perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions about people with disabilities, and they fail to accurately represent the diversity and complexity of the disability experience. b. Inclusive representation: There are also many picturebooks that aim to promote acceptance and understanding of people with disabilities. These books often feature characters with disabilities as main characters, and they focus on the similarities and common experiences of all people, rather than emphasizing differences. c. Positive representation: Some picture books aim to provide positive representations of children with disabilities, highlighting their strengths, abilities and talents. These books can be empowering for children with disabilities and can help to promote acceptance and understanding among their peers. Overall, picturebooks can play an important role in shaping children's understanding and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Books that are inclusive, empowering and educate about disabilities can be particularly valuable in helping children to understand and accept the diversity of the world around them.

**Keywords:** Children's literature, disabilities, Iconotext Theory, picturebooks, visual grammar.



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# The Resilience of the Untouchables: Dalit Literature and the Struggle for Human Rights

Siva V.<sup>20</sup>

## Abstract

This article explores the intersection of Dalit literature and human rights, focusing on the ways in which Dalit writers have used literature to express and advocate for their rights as marginalized individuals. Dalit literature is a genre of writing produced by members of the Dalit community in India, who are historically regarded as “untouchable” and subjected to systemic discrimination and violence. Through a close examination of select works of Dalit literature, this article highlights how the genre has become a platform for promoting human rights discourse and challenging caste-based oppression. The article also discusses the challenges faced by Dalit writers, including censorship and limited access to mainstream publishing platforms. Ultimately, the article argues that the voice of Dalit literature has been instrumental in advancing the cause of human rights and social justice in India and beyond.

**Keywords:** Dalit literature, human rights, resilience, resistance, self-assertion.



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# The Individual and Totalitarian State Power: The Literary Representation of the Artistic Intellectual in Dictatorship

Arvi SEPP<sup>21</sup>

## Abstract

This paper explores the question of how totalitarianism as a system of rule is represented in three important German- and Russian-language novels: Christian Kracht's *Ich werde hier sein im Sonnenschein und im Schatten* (2008) [I'll be here in sunshine and in shadow], Arno Schmidt's *Gelehrtenrepublik* (1957) [The Egghead Republic] and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *Мы* (1921) [We]. In these novels, spanning different geopolitical eras, the significance of the artistic intellectual in his dealings with power will be specifically explored. Artists and intellectuals are portrayed as the most individual and critical of all people. It is precisely this individuality that is to be completely eradicated in a totalitarian regime, so that the state subjugates individuals collectively and with relentless violence, as expressed in Zamyatin's *We*. In Schmidt's *The Egghead Republic*, however, this is not so, for the totalitarian state is established for the celebration and promotion of learned individuals. Accordingly, the rule of scholars and artists is to produce the ideal society. The old artists have been given monuments in various forms, but the new artists are constantly being criticised. Thus Winer, the reporter in the novel, learns in the empty library that it is rarely used by the artists, despite the excellent facilities. The artists are "physically flabby" and are "alcoholics" (p. 93). Concretely, the task of the intelligentsia in the scholars' republic is information manipulation and encryption, (self-)censorship and collectivisation of knowledge. In Kracht's *I'll be here in sunshine and in shadow*, it emerges, on the contrary, that literature had an important function in the past, but is now completely absent (cf. p. 43). Literature represents a void, it reminds the population of a time of peace, whereas the lack of literature corresponds to the lack of freedom in the present. In this paper, special attention is paid to the feature of ideological language in the three works. In the analysis, the historical background of Stalinism and National Socialism will be discussed, showing how literary works advocate human rights.

**Keywords:** Totalitarianism, dystopia, national socialism, Stalinism, intellectuals.



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## Human Suffering, Class Oppression and the Necessity of Working-Class Scottish Dialect in James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late*

Lejla MULALIĆ<sup>22</sup>

### Abstract

The Scottish novel made an unprecedented advance on the Booker Prize in 1994, thus making James Kelman the first Scottish writer to have won this prestigious literary award. His novel *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994) introduces us to a chaotic interior monologue of a man who has been blinded in a pub fight after a weekend of heavy drinking. Rendered in broad Glaswegian, his rambling thoughts literally transport the reader into the administrative labyrinth of hospitals, employment bureaus and police stations that are particularly patronizing and insensitive to social outcasts like the novel's protagonist Sammy Samuels. Although some Booker Prize judges considered the novel was unreadable and could hardly be classified as literature, Kelman claimed that dialect as a linguistic form should be allowed to transcend the realm of comedy, where it was typically relegated, while also demanding that his language and culture have the right to exist. This paper will look at the representation of working-class experience in Kelman's novel from the vantage point of David B. Morris's concept of human suffering ('About Suffering: Voice, Genre and Moral Community', 1996). It will also explore the necessity of Scottish dialect as a way of celebrating Glasgow's working-class culture.

**Keywords:** Glasgow, James Kelman, Scottish dialect, suffering, working class.



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# Like a Feather Falling from the Wing of a Bird: An Exploration of Climate Insecurity and Women's Reproductive Rights in Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God*

Raluca ANDREESCU<sup>23</sup>

## Abstract

The intersection of climate change and women's reproductive health and rights has become an unassailable fact of the world today. Against this background, my paper examines the manner in which American writer Louise Erdrich's reproductive dystopia *Future Home of the Living God* (2017) constructs a future where the climate crisis has led to a reproductive crisis doubled by ungraspable manifestations of reverse evolution and genetic mutations across the animal world. The collapse of the natural world is compounded by a subsequent institutional breakdown and takeover by a (religious) totalitarian regime which turns former correctional facilities into maternity wards and enslaves women in their reproductive years. All these, I argue, point not only to the vulnerability of (pregnant) women in the face of (global) environmental disaster and to the precariousness of the human species in general, but also to the fact that when the world is confronted with an environmental and biological catastrophe of epic proportions, women's rights (to safety and security, to reproductive self-determination and care) are the first to be violated, especially when the fate of humankind as we know it seems to hang in the balance.

**Keywords:** Climate insecurity, feminist dystopia, women's (reproductive) rights.



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## Forced to a State Geographically and Psychologically In-Between: Lack of Sense of Belonging in Ali Smith’s “The Go-Between”

Erel MEZ<sup>24</sup>

### Abstract

In 2009, the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations’ adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, being the first international proclamation of the inherent dignity and equal rights of all people, the Amnesty International, to celebrate the anniversary, published a collection of short stories, each referring to a specific article of the *Declaration*. One of the contributors, Ali Smith, who has a great capacity for using the individual to suggest universal truths, wrote a story called “The Go-Between” for the collection as an attribution to the *Declaration*’s Article 13, which basically focuses on the “freedom of movement”, with some references also to Article 14, “the right to asylum”, with characters forced by certain factors to leave their home behind in a desperate search of a new place to settle down. Smith, in this collection which essentially intends to emphasize that human rights represent what people need to live with freedom and dignity, tried to reflect on the reader the feeling that through empathy we overcome prejudice and develop tolerance. In this story, our own feeling for their inner truth and our capacity to empathize with others are reflected through a realistic, chaotic, but humoristic experiences of the African protagonist who is denied the right to pass to Europe. With many refugees like him, they are trying to flee to Europe in search of freedom, as their conditions are dramatically unfair. In this study, the denial of basic human rights and the characters’ fighting for them with the expense of losing sense of belonging and staying in-between both physically and psychologically is analysed and it is demonstrated that, away from a celebration, the story is actually an ironic observation of the lacks in executing the basic human rights, even sixty years after they were implemented.

**Keywords:** Human rights, freedom of movement, sense of belonging, Ali Smith, short story.



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## A Search for Identity: The Subaltern in Buchi Emecheta's *The Slave Girl*

Yakut AKBAY<sup>25</sup>

### Abstract

As a literary discipline, apart from addressing the consequences of decolonisation, postcolonial studies also paved the way for the study of the issues and challenges that women in postcolonial countries face today. Starting from the early 1980s, women's issues began to be explored systematically under the umbrella of postcolonial feminism. Postcolonial feminism, which emerged as a response to its western counterpart, argues that in the male-dominated world, women of colour are subjected to triple oppression: race, class and gender. However, apart from releasing themselves from the shackles of repressive structures, the major objective of this trend is to build a society based on the principles of solidarity, equality and human rights. Remarkably, their determined stance is not anti-male; rather, they demonstrate a constructive approach by promoting complementarity between men and women based on mutual support and tolerance. Based on Buchi Emecheta's *The Slave Girl* (1977), this paper focuses on the major complexities of being a woman in colonial Nigeria given the historical and socio-political milieu of the time. The study adopts Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern in terms of the Nigerian female subject silenced by the dialogue between the male-dominated West and the male-dominated East. Emecheta's *The Slave Girl* takes place in the early 1900s when Nigeria was still ruled by the British Empire. It is a coming-of-age novel based on the story of the main character, Ogbanje, who, orphaned as a child, is sold into slavery. As she grows into a mature woman, she comes to understand that to break free from slavery and gain the freedom she has to decide for herself. It is argued that despite the enslaved position of the female subaltern, she carves out her own place from which she can speak for herself in society.

**Keywords:** African feminism, colony, identity, Nigeria, subaltern.



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## Violation of Hu/Woman Rights and Resistance in Lucy Kirkwood's *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now*

Elvan KARAMAN MEZ<sup>26</sup>

### Abstract

One of the outstanding contemporary playwrights of English theatre, Lucy Kirkwood explores a variety of topics in her plays such as the atrocities of war, power relations in media and climate change. In her play *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now*, which was written in 2009, Kirkwood examines the condition of women immigrating to England from various underdeveloped countries, but finding themselves in the middle of the sex industry, whereas they have dreamt about having better living circumstances and a promising future. Thus, trapping women in sex traffic is a violation of hu/woman rights by commodifying their bodies and captivating them. However, our protagonist Dijana, losing her heart after losing her baby and her lover, does not yield to this violation. Although her rights as a hu/woman and her body are abused, she does not turn into a victim by means of her resistance. This study aims to explore the abuse of Dijana's not only woman rights but also human rights by her ex-lover, making her a part of the sex trade, with regard to hu/woman rights and her opposition in her mind and memory as well as her struggle to escape from this vicious circle.

**Keywords:** Human rights, Lucy Kirkwood, resistance, violation, woman rights.



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# Heritage Laws of Guatemala: Protecting the National Cultural Heritage or Their Profit? Essentialism, Othering, and Colonialism

Irene Martí GIL<sup>27</sup>

## Abstract

The critical linguistic study of the laws of Guatemala shows that the legal framework meant to protect the cultural heritage of the country is at the service of the State to fulfill political and economic agendas. The results indicate that the Guatemalan Authorized Heritage Discourse is built upon Western parameters and Eurocentric approaches to the ontology of heritage and the deontology of heritage law. The lingering colonialist and paternalistic mindset in the political spheres of the country, the desire to fit into the prevailing global heritage discourse, and the willingness to commodify their cultural past and present -by “freezing” heritage in time and performing the Maya traditionalist ideal for touristic audiences- are manifested in the language and Discourse adopted in the laws. The lack of ethnic awareness, cultural sensitivity, and respect toward the living Maya prevents the full recognition, safeguarding, and appreciation of the vast spectrum of cultural assets, both material and immaterial, constituting the heritage of Guatemala. Furthermore, the heritage plan designed and implemented by the government of Guatemala carries detrimental consequences affecting indigenous societies. The national heritage managerial plan strips local communities of control over their cultural resources by delegitimizing indigenous values, interests, and worldviews. As a result, those heritage laws that should cherish cultural diversity perpetuate colonial stereotypes and disempower the Maya people instead. The system guilts local communities over carrying on with their traditional lifestyles and criminalizes any non-State-approved, although traditional and culturally worthy, heritage-related experiences. This keeps most Guatemalans from exercising their fundamental and inalienable Human Right to access and enjoy culture. It also becomes a new form of social oppression used by the State to disenfranchise, belittle, and censure local communities, which have been regularly abused by the national government of Guatemala before, during, and after the Civil War (1960-1996). Ultimately, the laws of Guatemala turn heritage into another instrument for aggrandizing the social gaps based on class, race, and ethnicity, and for targeting the most vulnerable sector in the country—the indigenous peoples.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, colonialism, Guatemala, heritage law, living Maya.



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## Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants* (1793): Women Rights in Post-Revolutionary America

Kerem AK<sup>28</sup>

### Abstract

There is a recent scholarly tendency that recognizes sentimental novel as both the document and agent of the transatlantic revolutionary movement. In this context, as one of the earliest American epistolary novels, Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants* (1793) contains yielding opportunities in terms of revealing Post-Revolutionary America's politics of gender. Throughout the book, Imlay attacks the notion of tradition that privileges men over women with the use of a libertarian rhetoric. In parallel with the works of Mary Wollstonecraft, he adopts a feminist standpoint by making the issue of women rights visible in his fictional work. First published in Britain where women were still legally dependent upon their husbands, the novel ushered the resentful part of the British public to immigrate to the New World's Kentucky region surrounded by the Ohio River on the north, and the Mississippi River on the west. The region's geographical aspects such as the richness of the soil, the navigability of the rivers, and the wholesomeness of the climate enabled Imlay to present a tempting place for living. Additionally, only one year before Imlay's book was published, the region gained the status of an independent county by being separated from Virginia and became the member of the Union. However, Imlay imagines the region with the radical ideas of Jacobin premises in his fictional book; in other words, he tries to implement the ideas of the French Revolution in an American land. Even though *The Emigrants* offers the reader a unique picture of post-Revolutionary America, it remains as a mere utopia that reproduces the dominant gender roles of its time by portraying the woman body as an erotic spectacle and associating the feminine virtue with the concepts such as beauty, softness, and tenderness.

**Keywords:** Secessionists, utopia, male infidelity, women rights, divorce.



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# The Analysis of Political Plays of Pinter “Party Time”, “New World Order” and His Poem “Death” within the Framework of Infringement of Human Rights

Glten SİLİNDİR KERETLİ<sup>29</sup>

## Abstract

The British playwright Harold Pinter, who gave his Nobel-prize speech in 2005, made a refined speech about the violations of human rights that truth is elusive. Pinter harshly condemned the actions which testify a presumptive attack on human rights of the so-called countries in power. Those who are exercising power and the authority are concealing the truth, but “the search for truth is compulsive” says Pinter. However, in dramatic art, there are many truths and these truths challenge each other. On the other hand, Pinter propounds that political language used by politicians does not seek the truth as the majority of politicians are concerned with power and the maintenance of that power, but not truth. To maintain this power, it is essential that people remain in ignorance. They live without knowing the truth, even the truth of their own lives. When it comes to speaking the truth, the brutal atrocities that took place in Soviet Russia in the post-war period were documented and recorded, and all that happened was displayed in all its reality, but the US invasion of Iraq was not portrayed in all its reality. Pinter says they recounted their own truths. “US crimes in the same period have only been superficially recorded” Pinter criticised harshly the US foreign policy and denounced with hypocrisy. He was a playwright fending for the minorities, the rights of oppressed groups. When considered from the Nobel-prize speech point of view, his political plays “Party Time” and “New World Order” and his poem “Death” will be analysed within the framework of violation of human rights and suppression of minority groups.

**Keywords:** Human rights, infringement, minority rights, political drama, truth.



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## Is Posthumanism a Necessity to Justify Human Rights?

Selin ŞENCAN<sup>30</sup>

### Abstract

Human history is imbricated with the emergence and evolution of human rights in many fascinating ways. However, as a school of thought, humanism proves to be blind to the rights of marginalized others and the non-human assemblages of life. At present, posthumanism attempts to challenge the normative universality of humanism by exploring the alternative modes of defining human rights in the context of post humanistic ethic. In other words, the posthuman ethic takes into account the rights of other entities that are different from the renaissance human. Thus, posthumanism hints at a potential to become a voice for the ignored groups. Indeed, demanding equal rights for both humans and non-humans is one of the basic tenants of posthumanism. Drawing on posthumanist theories in dialogue with nonhuman rights, this article aims to explore the ways through which posthumanism promotes an awareness of ethics necessary to re-imagine the human and the entangled world co-existing with them.

**Keywords:** Posthumanism, human and non-human rights, marginalized others, difference.



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