

Unseen City: Travelling Psychoanalysis and the Urban Poor

Humanities Research Centre Seminar

Monday 7 April 2014, 4.00 – 5.30pm

Speaker

Professor Ankhi Mukherjee, Oxford University

Conference Room, Level 2, A.D. Hope Building #14, ANU



"Unseen City: Travelling Psychoanalysis and the Urban Poor," which is drawn from a multi-disciplinary and collaborative project of the same title, examines the institution of psychoanalysis and its vexed relationship with race and urban poverty, as seen in the specific context of global cities. Focusing on Mumbai, this paper considers the history of psychoanalytic practice in India and its wider psychoanalytic (and psychiatric) culture as it manifests in attitudes toward the psychic life of the poor. I draw on Edward Said's idea of "travelling theory," which refers to the circulation and commerce of ideas across time and space, to chart the afterlife of Freudian psychoanalysis in an international frame. The paper draws on fiction and narrative non-fiction, cinema, art, and investigative journalism to explore the role of these multimedia representations in rendering visible the environments and inner worlds of the city's outcast poor. It also briefly examines the role of the infrastructure of cities in creating its areas of underdevelopment, in this case the Mumbai slum.

Ankhi Mukherjee is an Associate Professor in the English Faculty at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Wadham College. She teaches Victorian and Modern literature, postcolonial studies, critical theory and intellectual history. Mukherjee's first book is *Aesthetic Hysteria: The Great Neurosis in Victorian Melodrama and Contemporary Fiction* (Routledge, 2007). Her second monograph, *What Is a Classic? Postcolonial Rewriting and Invention of the Canon*, published in 2013 by Stanford University Press, examines the residual influence of the Eurocentric canon on postcolonial and world literatures and emergent formations of canons and classics. Mukherjee has published in international peer-reviewed journals such as *PMLA*, *MLQ*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Paragraph*, *Parallax*, and others, and has co-edited *A Concise Companion to Psychoanalysis, Literature, and Culture*, to be published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2014.

Presented by

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