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## Department of English & IQAC Surya Sen Mahavidyalaya

in collaboration with

## Department of English University of North Bengal

organises

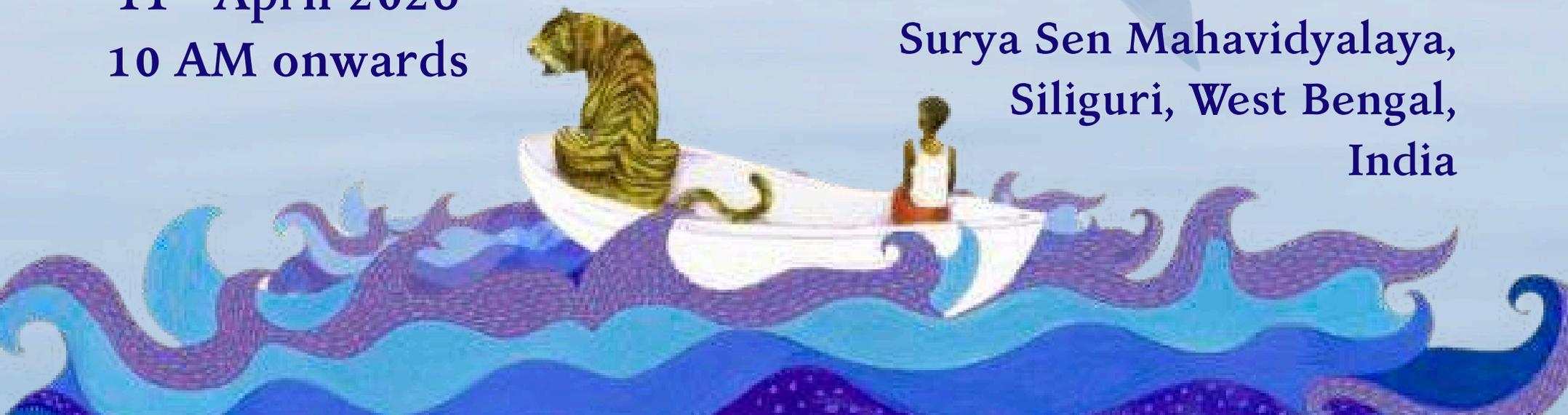
A One-Day International Seminar

(in hybrid mode)

# Literary Contiguities Between Human and Nonhuman Animals

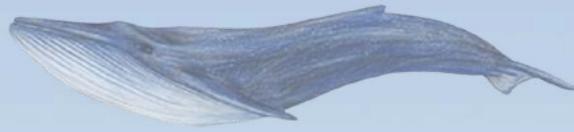
11<sup>th</sup> April 2026  
10 AM onwards

Venue: KCPMS Hall,  
Surya Sen Mahavidyalaya,  
Siliguri, West Bengal,  
India





## Concept Note



In a world ravaged by various environmental crises, the discourse of animal studies emerges as a distinctly relevant field at this specific historical juncture. Lior Greenspoon and his colleagues found in a study that human dominance is clear, as humans and livestock together account for nearly 95% of the world's mammal biomass (*Our World in Data* 2025). Accelerating human dominance in the new geological epoch of the Anthropocene (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000) has resulted in the extinction of a vast number of nonhuman species. They include a wide variety of animals, including the passenger pigeon (1914), the thylacine, or Tasmanian wolf (1936), and the Caribbean monk seal (1952), which is often referred to as the Sixth Mass Extinction (Cowie et al. 2022). In fact, the hubris of humans as a species makes us forget that the history of human civilisation is only a fraction of the history of homo sapiens living as a species on the planet. Dipesh Chakrabarty also reminds us that we humans “never experience ourselves as a species” but rather as participants of smaller communities (2009, 220). The supremacy attributed to humans in the speciesist hierarchy thereby emerges as deeply flawed. However, the cruelty and violence directed towards animals have a much longer history. Eminent animal studies thinker Peter Singer connects animal cruelty with the tyranny of European selfhood on non-white slaves and makes a strong plea for what he terms ‘animal liberation’ (1975). Nonhuman animals present a distinct challenge to humans as they are “both similar to and different from us” (Fudge 2002, 7). The perspective of the nonhuman animal is completely

different from the anthropocentric perspective, where animals are merely anthropomorphised. The discourse on animals predominantly hinges on speciesism, which is intimately connected to a certain mindset responsible for ecological crimes. In response, numerous literary genres and texts have started to engage with the representations of the human-nonhuman relationship. The constantly growing field of literary animal studies presents an interdisciplinary field which probes into the ways in which nonhuman animals and animality are represented, projected and theorised in literary texts and cultures. Extending beyond animals as mere metaphoric constituents, it investigates the cultural and ethical parameters as well as political and philosophical considerations of human-nonhuman entanglement, a necessary condition for challenging anthropocentrism.

An emotional history of the relationship between humans and non-humans has never been written, but literature has often addressed the question. In front of historical contradictions, literature from different countries offers a non-ideological way of reflecting on the relationship between human and nonhuman animals. Literature may be the agorà that brings together different subjectivities and helps humans to create a healthier relationship with nonhumans. Poetry and fiction may provide the sentimental education that global modernity has not yet developed to confront the animal alterity in the Anthropocene. Numerous fairy tales and fables from around the world, such as the Brothers Grimm's *Tales* and Aesop's *Fables* (from the West), and *Panchatantra* (from the East), have historically underscored the preoccupying concern and emerging necessity of human-nonhuman entanglements. Novels such as *White Fang*, *Moby Dick*, *Gun Island* and *Flight Behaviour*, or the poetic



traditions of Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and the English Romantics, reveal a world enmeshed and entangled in the episteme and agency of nonhuman otherness. This seminar will also pay attention to non-Western engagement and interaction with nonhuman animals, especially from indigenous, marginalised communities, as are often found in South Asian filmic representations exemplified by *Pariyerum Perumal* and *Jalikattu*. Studio Ghibli films produced in Japan, such as *Princess Mononoke* and *Ponyo*, have often been noted for their commentary on the human-nonhuman bond.

In this seminar, we specifically look for papers which deal with human-nonhuman entanglement from diverse perspectives and disciplinary expertise. Proposals for a 12-minute presentation are invited from teachers, research scholars, and students. Abstracts may include, but are not limited to, the following sub-themes:

Animal Studies in the Anthropocene

Literary Animal Studies

Human-Nonhuman Entanglements

Fable and Anthropomorphism

Folklore, Oral Traditions and Animal Representation

Animals in Translation and Comparative Literature

Animal Liberation and Justice

Human-nonhuman encounter in Films

Animals and Human Society and History

Scientific Experimentation and Animal Cruelty

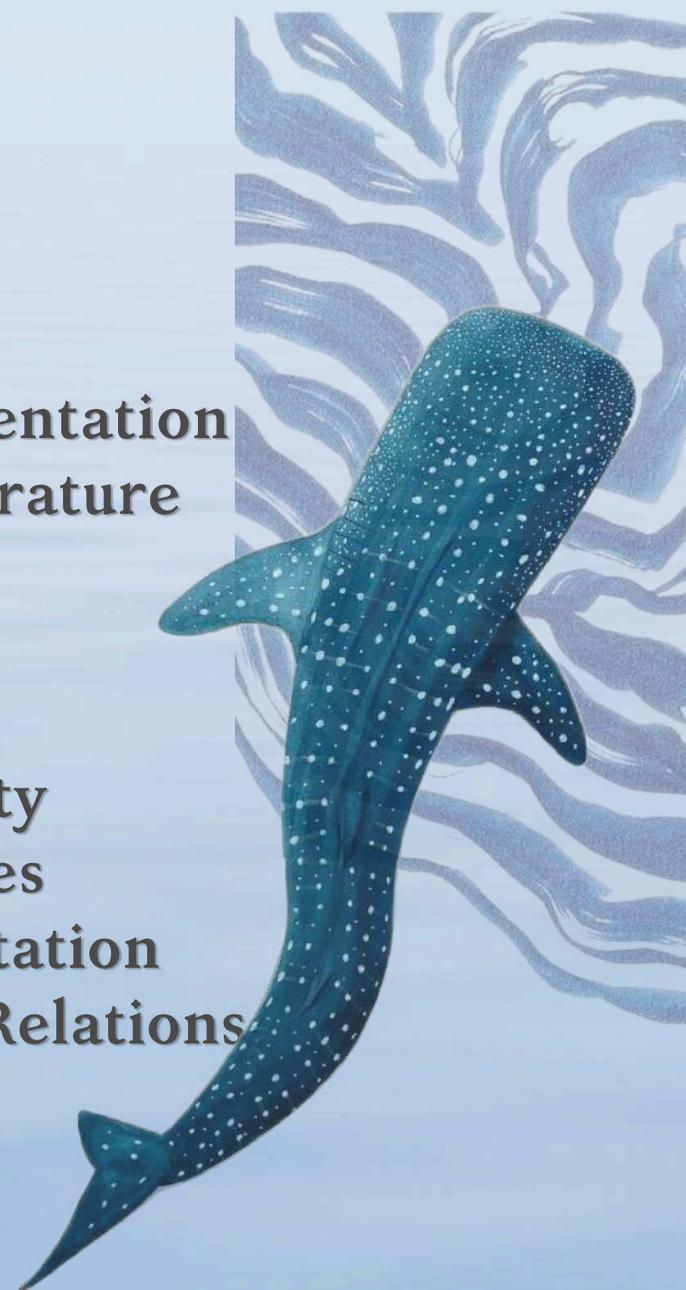
Animal Studies and Environmental Humanities

Contemporary Cinema and Animal Representation

Indigenous Knowledges and Human-Animal Relations

Vegetarianism and Veganism

Meat Consumption and Food Politics



## Keynote Speaker

**Prof. Alessandro Vescovi, Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy**

## Plenary Speaker

**Dr Binayak Roy, University of North Bengal, India**

## Timeline of the Seminar

**Last date for submission of Abstracts: 30th March 2026**

**Notification of the acceptance of the abstract: 1st April 2026**

**Seminar Date: 11 April 2026**

## Submission Guidelines

**Upload the document file (.doc/.docx) of the abstract with title and keywords in Times New Roman, 12 Font, 1.15 line spacing.**

**Word Limit: 250 words.**

**Add four to five keywords and a short bio-note of 50 words.**

**Please follow the MLA 9th edition for formatting and citation.**

**Submission Link: <https://forms.gle/wH3NoSScqqCjMDsPA>**

## Registration Fee

**PG Students: ₹ 200**

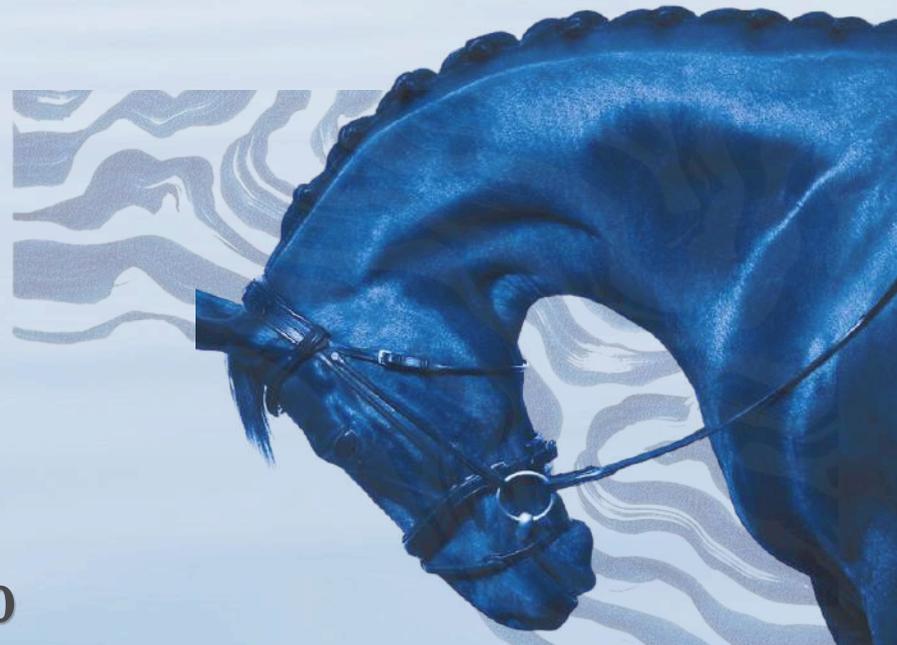
**Research Scholars: ₹ 500**

**Independent Researchers: ₹ 500**

**Faculty Members: ₹ 600**

**Online Presenters: ₹ 300**

**International Presenters: \$10 / €10**



## About Surya Sen Mahavidyalaya

Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, Surya Sen Mahavidyalaya was established on September 15, 1998, and is affiliated with the University of North Bengal. Over the years, it has developed into a premier institution in North Bengal, offering undergraduate programs in Arts, Science, and Commerce, as well as MA, BBA, and certificate courses, catering to a thriving student body of over 8,000. With state-of-the-art smart classrooms and well-equipped laboratories, the college provides a dynamic learning environment. Its commitment to community welfare has earned its NSS unit recognition at both state and national levels.

## About the Department of English, SSM

The Department of English is dedicated to nurturing over 3,000 students and offering diverse and comprehensive academic pathways, including the English Major (FYUGP, old & new) and M.A. programs. The department's lively community thrives on student initiatives, including the "Oracle" wall magazine, "Between the Lines" book club, "Prologue" newsletter, "Aesthetica" magazine, "LitFlicks" film club, and the "Masterminds" lecture series. Since 2019, the Departmental Language Training Programme has successfully delivered the "ICT-Enabled English Language Certificate Course," seamlessly blending traditional literary studies with essential digital competencies necessary for thriving in today's world.

## Organising Committee

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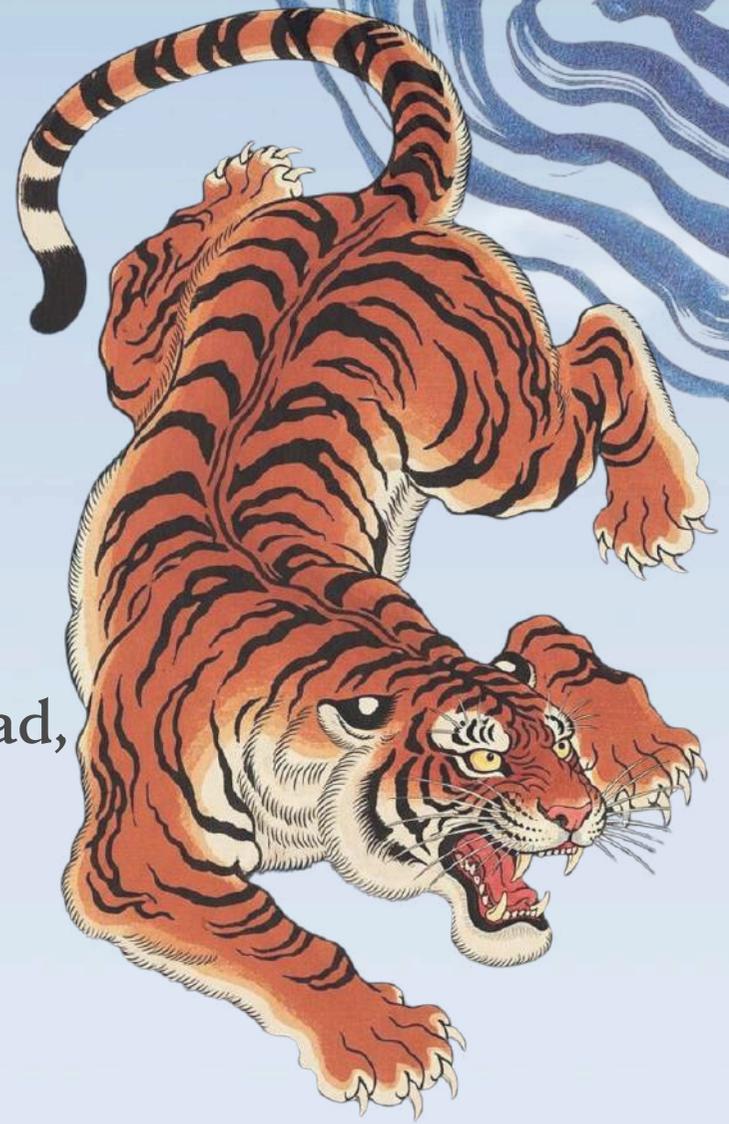
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