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SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

# SHSS COLLOQUIA

2025

UNDERGRADUATE • GRADUATE • ALUMNI

**NSU SHSS**  
School of Humanities & Social Sciences





## SHSS COLLOQUIA

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) at North South University (NSU) eagerly arranges Undergraduate, Graduate, and Alumni Colloquia each semester, maintaining a strong commitment to scholarly inquiry and fostering intellectual exchange. These colloquia serve as a shared academic space where students and alumni can showcase their research and share in-depth knowledge across disciplines within the humanities and social sciences.

Through the colloquium series, new researchers and experienced scholars can engage in critical discussions, explore key developments, and form interactive collaborations that aim to deepen their understanding. The sessions create an enriching academic platform and present a valuable opportunity to exchange thoughtful, analytical discussions that span interdisciplinary areas of study.

This booklet contains the compilation of the abstracts presented at the colloquia and highlights the range of research interests within SHSS. These abstracts encompass historical research, the study of present-day socio-political phenomena, as well as literary, linguistic, and cultural analyses. They aptly establish the research acuity, talent, and hard work of the SHSS community.

The abstracts presented here are intended to document the promising, vibrant work shared during the colloquia and aim to reflect the current dynamic research environment among the students and alumni of the School.





**Lubaba Sadat**

Department of English and Modern Languages

### **Emily Bronte's Byronic Hero: Heathcliff**

#### *Abstract:*

The poets and authors of the nineteenth century catapulted literature in various new directions, breaking out of that shell of traditions. Lord Byron, one of the most influential Romantic writers created an anti-hero that we have come to know as the Byronic hero. These are leads who are melancholic and rebellious young men, haunted by the guilt of a sin that they have committed in their past. While there is a plethora of writers who have captured the essence of these tortured young men, searching and failing to find redemption for most of the story, none has showcased the Byronic traits in a hero quite as well as Emily Bronte has in her Gothic novel, "Wuthering Heights". In this paper, I would like to explore not just Heathcliff as an anti-hero, but the setting and the themes of the novel. Heathcliff is a nobody, fostered by a wealthy family and in love with a woman so very out of his reach, and yet, his story is one that is of rags to riches. It shows the heart of Emily Bronte's writing and that of nineteenth-century literature.



**Sharmin Jahan**

Department of Political Science & Sociology

### **How Bangladeshi Women Are Being Affected by the Rise of Religious Dogmatism**

#### *Abstract:*

This research examines the socio-cultural impacts of rising religious dogmatism on Bangladeshi women, with a particular focus on how it has disrupted their rights, freedoms, and access to basic resources. After the July revolution, the increased influence of religious dogmatism has led to direct challenges to women's autonomy, evident in notable incidents such as the ban on sanitary napkins at the *Ekushey Boi Mela 2025* and the vandalization of women's football fields. These events represent broader attempts to control women's bodies, limit their participation in public life, and restrict their agency in areas like education and sports. This paper explores these incidents in the context of Bangladesh's evolving political and religious landscape, arguing that the rise of religious dogmatism significantly undermines the progress made towards gender equality, placing women's health, freedom, and rights at risk. The research also offers insights into the broader implications of these challenges for the future of women's societal roles in Bangladesh.



**Tanya Shakur**  
Department of Law

## **The Department of Environment's Weak Enforcement and Regulatory Gaps In The Management of Bangladesh's Rivers**

### *Abstract:*

This paper examines the challenges and legal implications of river conservation in Bangladesh, a country deeply reliant on its river systems. It explores multifaceted issues such as pollution, encroachment, illegal activities, and climate change, highlighting the fragmented water governance and overlapping policies. The paper analyzes key legal frameworks, including the Bangladesh Water Act (2013), Environment Conservation Act (1995), and National River Conservation Commission Act (2013), and evaluates the Department of Environment's (DoE) role in enforcement. Despite the DoE's authority, institutional fragmentation, lack of coordination, and limited judicial powers hinder effective management of river resources. The paper also assesses the role of Bangladesh's Supreme Court in shaping environmental jurisprudence through landmark cases like Dr. Mohiuddin Farooque v. Bangladesh and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association v. Government of Bangladesh, which call for more cohesive legal accountability and enforcement. In conclusion, it argues that river conservation in Bangladesh requires legal reform and improved institutional cooperation for more effective governance.



**Ahamed Musa**  
Department of Law

## **Bicameralism in Bangladesh: An Effective Framework**

### *Abstract:*

This paper discusses the need for a bicameral legislature in Bangladesh to improve the country's political system. Bangladesh currently follows a unicameral system with only one legislative chamber. As a result, it faces issues such as a lack of checks and balances, limited oversight of the executive branch, and inadequate representation of minorities. Bicameralism, which involves two chambers, could help solve these issues by providing more scrutiny of laws and ensuring better representation of diverse groups. The paper suggests creating an upper house known as the Legislative Assembly. This house would include members elected proportionally and representatives from various societal groups, such as minorities, experts, and retired officials. This new structure would help make laws more considerate. It would reduce the influence of populism. It would strengthen democracy by enhancing checks and balances.



**Nafis Md. Rafsan**

Department of English and Modern Languages

### **Experienced Indeterminacy: Theory and Commentary**

#### *Abstract:*

In this essay, I critically engage with methodology conceived during the Enlightenment era. Methods of interacting with and inspecting reality which are concerned with rigid, taxonomic methods of understanding, as shown in this essay, share connection with the colonial project. Gayatri Spivak's writing on the codification of Sanskrit is one example of such phenomena. It becomes clear that the colonial attempt at understanding the world was deeply linked to inquisition and control. I suggest that this motive can also be seen as a need to widely establish "determinacy" or to "determine" what the nature of entities in reality, human and non-human, is. Following this section, I will introduce a theory of "indeterminacy" as part of the experience of entities in reality with aid from theories and writings from Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Jacques Lacan. I cite the works of Novera Ahmed as an illustration of inherent indeterminacy. Finally, I will apply this theory to comment on the works of Nathan Snaza and C.T. Mohanty to point out the relationship between them and the concept of indeterminacy as part of human experience of reality.



**Tawkir Rahman**

Media, Communication, and Journalism Program (MCJ)

### **The Deception of Understanding: Reviving the Classical Art of Reading in the Age of Simulated Knowledge**

#### *Abstract:*

We are living in an epoch which is dominated by the unprecedented availability of information, where we are paradoxically withdrawn from a crisis of understanding. This captures through the decline of deep reading and its consequences in making informed, morally conscious individuals in our academia. In spite of the flood of passive reading, most students—even educators—fail to go beyond inspectional levels. Absorbing from Mortimer J. Adler's conception of reading as a layered art which involves elementary and analytical assimilation, we understand that his work argues that our inability to relate core texts to contemporary realities is not a failure of comprehension, but more methodical. When we cannot connect Plato with Marcus Aurelius, or Marx with modern societal phenomena, it vividly portrays the gap from the traditional modes of knowledge and a decrease in reading into the shallow action of data consumption. These occurrences are observed not only in our classrooms, but broadly in society, where ethical inertia prevails through academic excellence. Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra, where representations of reality are itself replacing reality. Our reading becomes a simulation, acquiring symbolic knowledge completely lacking of its substances. In this simulation, we are equipped with the picture of learning, but are separated from what Adler calls the voice of the dead—The Authentic and primitive sources of knowledge that shaped our very existing civilization. To restore our epistemological paradigms, we must return to reading as something sacred, active and actionable, one which will elevate us in our understanding, as well as creation of knowledge.



**Bashirul Islam Bihango**

Department of Law

## **Immunity or Impunity: Emerging Customary International Law Framework on State Official Immunity**

### *Abstract:*

This article addresses the tension between the foreign official immunity and their accountability. The principle of *par in parem non habet imperium*, lays the framework for immunity of the state and its officials. National Court must address the matter of immunity of a state official before establishing jurisdiction. However, the proliferation of grave international crimes, such as crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, etc., has exposed the flaws of granting absolute immunity to state officials. This paper examines the international and national jurisprudence and argues that an emerging customary international law limits the immunity *ratione materiae* for crimes under international law. It shows the existence of both *opinio juris* and state practice. It made an analysis of the legislative enactment of multiple nations. It addresses the judicial decisions from national courts such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, etc. It also addresses international courts like the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court. It examines the practice of international treaties, such as the Geneva Convention, the Torture Convention, and the Genocide Convention. Through the in-depth analysis, the article finds a shift from absolute immunity to a limited form of immunity.



**Tanzim Binta Pervaz**

Media, Communication, and Journalism program (MCJ)

## **Gen Z's Political Renaissance: How Social Media Drives Ideas**

### *Abstract:*

This study highlights Gen Z's new approach to social justice and politics, demonstrating how they are taking back power and dismantling fascist governments. It's not uncommon for the youth to take a stand against authoritarian regimes and be the lightning rods of change. The question remains: what is driving this sudden change? Is it the fear of being on the precipice of a recession, or is it social media that is leading the change? When we take all the recent mass protests against the government, we see one thing in common: people's political perceptions are coming from social media. Gen Z has seen their parents struggle through the 2008 financial crisis, has already gone through a global pandemic, and is currently going through multiple unnecessary wars. This could be seen as Gen Z growing tired of government taking full advantage of their citizens; Gen Z is turning their fears into weapons to bring forward change. Social media is the most convenient medium to spread awareness and the message of liberty.



**Miftahul Jannat Sachi**

Department of English and Modern Languages

### **Rebellion, Masks and Madness in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina***

#### *Abstract:*

Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, published in installments between 1875 and 1877, portrays the extent to which a patriarchal society is willing to condemn a woman for her actions. Some actions are morally wrong regardless of who performs them; yet men's transgressions often go unnoticed while women's are subject to constant surveillance. In this paper, through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, I shall examine Anna Arkadyevna's rebellious spirit and eventual catastrophic end. She was caught in a tassel between her repressed desire and pre-conditioned social obligations, which culminated in her self-destruction and willingness to take her own life. Even though *Anna Karenina* predates Gilbert and Gubar's feminist theory "The Madwoman in the Attic", it heavily resonates with the "angel" and the "monster" dichotomy. We will see how her "madness" was a result of not any deformity within herself, but rather it was a product of constant rejection and ridicule by people who took delight in her fall from grace, while subjecting her to humiliation and dehumanization. They, with their elaborate lies and hypocrisy, labelled Anna as a 'fallen woman'. Moreover, I will attempt to show how Vronsky's treatment of the racehorse Frou-Frou mirrors his treatment of Anna. His desire to control both and situate himself as the winner, coupled with pride and sheer negligence, led to the destruction of Frou Frou and Anna. Finally, I will show how the train, which was a symbol of new beginnings and freedom, ultimately symbolized Anna's desire to continue living as she saw death speeding towards her, at the same time, her powerlessness to stop herself from meeting such a cruel fate.





**Suriya Akhter Sristi**

Department of English and Modern Languages

### **Feminist Resistance in Aeschylus' Agamemnon**

#### *Abstract:*

Aeschylus' Agamemnon provides a captivating scope for feminist critique, disclosing the profound embedment of patriarchal authority and the subversive spirit of female defiance within classical tragedy. The study investigates gendered power structures, particularly through the character of Clytemnestra, who resists the expected traditional female roles in order to disrupt the existing oppressive system of gender hierarchy. Her intended and strategic retribution against Agamemnon is clearly a symbolic act of feminist agency rather than merely a manifestation of personal vengeance. Throughout the tragedy, she challenges boldly the moral and political legitimacy of male dominance. Implementing Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Bell Hook's interpretation of patriarchy as an institutionalized hierarchy, the study portrays Clytemnestra as a rebel and a subversive force, who dismantles the shackles of violent social codes. In contrast, Cassandra's silencing and marginalization highlight the gendered modalities of domination and control that invalidate female knowledge and prophetic speech. Agamemnon is an encounter between the public performance of patriarchal authority and the insurgent female agency, rather than strictly a mythic narrative of fate and justice.



**Md. Fazlul Karim**

South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)

### **Smart Pre-Payment Electrical Metering System: Chaos & Challenges**

#### *Abstract:*

This presentation explores the multifaceted challenges and misconceptions surrounding prepaid electricity connections in Bangladesh. A lack of accurate information dissemination by distribution authorities, compounded by deliberate misinformation from vested interest groups, has led to public confusion and mistrust. Technical issues such as meter installation and commissioning glitches have further complicated the transition from postpaid to prepaid systems. An inadequate expert workforce for cutover from postpaid to prepaid systems introduces organizational complications and tensions. Addressing these concerns requires targeted training for supply-side personnel and consumers, especially on billing systems, meter recharging, and usage procedures. Additionally, budgetary constraints in government departments hinder the effective meter deployment. However, a smooth internet connection and a sustainable, secure smart metering network infrastructure are essential. The presentation concludes by outlining guideline recommendations, managerial skills, technical solutions, and stakeholder engagement strategies to resolve current issues and facilitate a smoother, more transparent implementation process.



**Taslima Tariq**

Department of History & Philosophy (DHP)

### **Jawaharlal Nehru University's 2016 Azadi Movement: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of The Times Now, India Today And The Zee News**

#### *Abstract:*

In 2016 at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), the Azadi Movement started. The movement triggered discourses on sedition, nationalism and dissent on media channels, due to the arrest of student leaders Kanhaiya Kumar, Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya on sedition charges for allegedly giving anti-India slogans during a protest arranged against the judicial execution of controversial figures, Afzal Guru and Maqbool Bhat. The movement also included criticism of Hindutva ideology, casteism and anti-Muslim sentiments in India. This study investigates the central question of whether the media framing of the JNU Azadi movement by channels, such as, Times Now, India Today and Zee News, is aligned with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) political and ideological narrative. Thus, the principal aim of the thesis is to determine how the Azadi movement was framed in the political debates and discussions in the India media. Using critical discourse analysis, the study examines how dissent, sedition and nationalism was portrayed in the media during the 2016 JNU Azadi movement, and media reactions following the bail of the arrested students. The research presents an historical account of student movements in India, past sedition cases, and the ideological positioning of the BJP with Muslim community and casteism, and relation of India media with past social movements. The study critiques the role of “god media”, and changes in sedition and state of Muslim and Dalit community under the BJP rule.



**Monirul Islam**

Department of History & Philosophy (DHP)

### **Sugarcane, State, and Geopolitics: Industrialization in Northern Bengal, 1930 –1960 -The Experience of Dinajpur (Setabganj) Sugar Mill**

#### *Abstract:*

The article examines the rise of sugarcane industries in Northern Bengal between 1930 and 1960, with a focus on the Dinajpur (Setabganj) Sugar Mill as a case of peripheral industrialization in South Asia. While Bengal's industrial history has been dominated by narratives of jute and tea, sugar provides a critical yet overlooked perspective on how ecology, agrarian politics, and state policy intersected with global technology and frontier geopolitics. Drawing on government reports, PIDC records, newspapers, and secondary scholarship, the study reconstructs how fertile riverine plains, tariff protections under the Sugar Industry Protection Act (1932), and imported German machinery enabled Setabganj's establishment in 1933, while fragile tenancy systems, peasant indebtedness, and procurement conflicts shaped its contradictions. Partition transformed these dynamics. The Ruhua Conference of 1947 linked the cane belt to high politics, as decisions over Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, and Panchagarh influenced not only the survival of Setabganj but also the width of India's Siliguri Corridor, one of South Asia's most sensitive strategic frontiers. For East Pakistan, the mill symbolized industrial survival under the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), yet inefficiency and cane shortages persisted. The article argues that Setabganj was more than a factory: it was a frontier institution that embodied both the promise and fragility of peripheral industrialization. By situating a local sugar mill within ecological, political, and Cold War contexts, the study challenges center-focused narratives and repositions sugar as integral to Bengal's industrial modernity. This is the first systematic study linking Northern Bengal's sugar industry to the political geography of Partition and the formation of the Siliguri Corridor, thereby offering new insights into the nexus of frontier industry, agrarian change, and regional security.



**Manish Kumar Agrawal**

South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)

## Universal Health Coverage for All - A Bangladesh Perspective

### *Abstract:*

This research examines Bangladesh's progress toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030, focusing on accessibility, affordability, and quality of healthcare. Using qualitative methods including literature review, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. It identifies critical challenges such as inadequate public health spending, workforce imbalance, weak regulation of the private sector, and high out-of-pocket expenditures. The study proposes policy recommendations emphasised on institutional strengthening, health financing reform, digital health integration, and enhanced community participation. Strengthening governance, increasing financial protection, and ensuring equitable access are essential for Bangladesh to realize inclusive, sustainable Universal Health Coverage and improved health outcomes for all.



**Kishore Dhar**

Department of English and Modern Languages

## Cross-Cultural Currents: Modernist Conceptions of Time, Space, and Identity in Woolf and Tagore

### *Abstract:*

This paper provides a comparative analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's *The Home and the World* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, looking at how each author expresses a regionally unique modernist aesthetic. It argues that, whereas Tagore externalizes modernity's rupture through political unrest, moral dilemmas, and cyclical notions of time derived from colonial Bangla, Woolf internalizes it through psychological fragmentation, subjective temporality, and stream-of-consciousness narration. Both writers question the dichotomies of public and private, self and society, and past and present, exposing modernity as an identity crisis and ideological conflict rather than as a straight line of advancement. By critically analyzing European and South Asian modernisms, this study shows how narrative form becomes a tool for questioning the cultural, political, and temporal assumptions of modern life. The argument, which draws on feminist and postcolonial theory, places Woolf and Tagore as pivotal figures who demonstrate how forces that are both private and historical, internal and collective, shape the contemporary subject.



**Kirti Mohan Paul**

Department of Law

## **Legal Reforms in Bangladesh's Capital Market to Enhance Foreign Investment: A Comparative Study of Investor Protection Mechanisms in the USA**

### *Abstract:*

This research critically examines the legal inadequacies of Bangladesh's capital market and proposes reform strategies to attract greater foreign investment through a comparative analysis with the United States. Focusing on investor protection, the study identifies key obstacles such as weak regulatory enforcement, insider trading, political interference, and insufficient legal safeguards for investors in Bangladesh. Using a doctrinal and comparative legal methodology, the study evaluates the strengths of U.S. investor protection frameworks. Additionally, the analysis also assesses the roles of regulatory authorities and legislation that serve as a model for market supervision in the U.S. These frameworks ensure transparency and market stability. Mechanisms such as whistleblower programs, class action suits, and efficient dispute resolution systems intensify the environment of legal enforcement in the securities market. In a retail investor-dominated market like Bangladesh, investor trust is vital. By juxtaposing the insights from the U.S. model with Bangladesh's outdated legal structure, the thesis identifies core gaps and recommends key reforms. The research concludes that while wholesale adoption of U.S. mechanisms is impractical, selective incorporation of best practices adapted to local contexts can significantly restore investor confidence and stabilize Bangladesh's capital market.



**Akhlaq Ul Islam**

Department of Law

## **Balancing the Digital Trade and Digital Sovereignty in Developing Nations: A Comparative Analysis of Data Localisation Efforts of China, India, and Bangladesh**

### *Abstract:*

Digital trade arguably constitutes 25 percent of total global trade and has a growth rate far surpassing that of traditional trade practices. Digital trade has presented an opportunity for developing nations to emerge as major stakeholders on the global stage. However, such an opportunity is also laden with the threat to digital sovereignty. Consequently, the developing nations find themselves in a dilemma between digital trade liberalisation and digital sovereignty. On the one hand, the free flow of data is encouraged to improve trade efficiency; on the other hand, data localisation efforts are evident in legislative and administrative actions, motivated by national security. In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine how developing nations are responding to the dilemma of digital trade liberalisation and digital sovereignty, with reference to their data localisation efforts. China, India, and Bangladesh have been selected for comparative legal analysis based on the apparent data localisation efforts of the respective countries, from the highest to the lowest. A doctrinal and comparative law research approach has been taken in the paper. The paper concludes with findings on how the size of the economy and leverage in global trade lead to divergent legislative and administrative approaches among developing nations and shape data localisation laws affecting digital trade.

NSU

# ALUMNI COLLOQUIA

School of Humanities & Social Sciences



**Sayere Nazabi Sayem**  
Department of Law

## Exploring the Viability of Preprints in the 'Exclusive' Domain of Legal Scholarship

### *Abstract:*

Although preprints are an amendable form of writing that is yet to be peer-reviewed, they have garnered wide recognition and acceptance across several disciplines. However, such is not the case in humanitarian disciplines like law. Citations of preprints are rarely seen in academic writings or discussed in formal conferences or discourses. There is an exclusivity in legal scholarship, where references such as books, book chapters, and journal articles gain prevalence, and the rest of the data is looked down upon in a way. Publication of traditional academic papers is a long process. This risks the topic of research losing relevance over time till the date of its publication. For time-sensitive topics or any other topic that requires immediate widespread attention, its research may be presented without the complexities of publication outlets. The original idea serves as the stepping stone for an academic piece and is considered a working paper or an idea in progress, as they may evolve into a longer piece of work in the future. It can also be considered a public notebook for accumulating ideas that are visible to the public for criticism. Although the initial stage of ideation may not inherently lower the credibility of an academic piece, it can initiate a discourse that further develops the idea. As long as the idea has been meticulously put forth and in an original manner, it should be worthy of citation in academic writings. The 'hierarchy' or exclusivity of forms of publications as references for a legal article may take away the purpose of research in the first place – the wider dissemination of the study. In such cases, preprints, being an open-access form of publication, can serve as a supplementary tool for research. In contrast, other disciplines, such as materials science, have witnessed a growing acceptance of preprints as credible forms of publication, sometimes even surpassing the credibility of traditional journal publishing. While platforms like SocArxiv (a preprint server for the social sciences and law) exist, the use of preprints in the legal domain is still relatively low. This does not discount the importance of peer-reviewed journals, but rather wants to open frontiers for the acceptance of preprints as a form of 'acceptable' reference for research endeavours, which is currently discouraged by several legal journals around the world.



**Ahmed Ehsan Kabir Shaan**

South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)

## **Garments: The Nation's ATM We Love to Hate**

### *Abstract:*

The Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector of Bangladesh is often criticized for the lavish lifestyle of some owners, defaulted loans, and money laundering scandals. Yet, it remains the nation's economic lifeline—contributing over 80% of export earnings, empowering millions of women, and sustaining GDP growth. This presentation explores both sides of the debate: the abuses and excesses, but also the unseen contributions and resilience of the sector. If garments were to collapse, the multiplier effect would devastate banking, real estate, transport, and household income nationwide. Instead of dismissing it as a curse, we must recognize RMG as a complex but essential blessing.



**Imtrita Hossain Elma**

Department of Law

## **Ecocide as a Crime in Bangladesh: A Constitutional Obligation or Legal Impossibility?**

### *Abstract:*

As the climate deterioration intensifies, judicial systems throughout the world are increasingly calling for the necessity of recognizing ecocide as a crime on par with genocide. Despite Bangladesh's constitutional obligation to environmental preservation as stipulated in Article 18A, there is currently no specific recognition of ecocide as a crime under national legislation. Thus, the research paper investigates the legal and constitutional implications of criminalizing ecocide in Bangladesh, a country that is susceptible to environmental annihilation. The study relied on doctrinal research by observing constitutional and statutory provisions in conjunction with other domestic laws. The research also applied comparative legal analysis to examine the international developments, particularly efforts to recognize ecocide as the fifth core international crime, alongside selected national legislations to assess whether Bangladesh may pursue a similar trajectory. The paper tries to answer whether Bangladesh's law can evolve to accommodate ecocide or whether systematic restriction makes it a legal impossibility. By analyzing the national and international legal structure, the research discovers that, although constitutional grounds exist for recognizing ecocide as a domestic crime, considerable legal and systematic barriers must be addressed. The study concludes with possible legal reforms and recommendations for integrating ecocide in Bangladesh's legal framework.



**Sara Kabir**

Department of English and Modern Languages

### **Grieving Amongst the Fireflies — Exploring Childhood, Loss, Trauma, and Grief in Studio Ghibli's Animated Fantasies**

#### *Abstract:*

Studio Ghibli, a trailblazing icon in the Japanese animation industry, has made its mark as one of the most critically acclaimed and award-winning animation studios out of Japan to bring spellbinding fantasy narratives to life. The existing scholarship on Studio Ghibli focuses on the themes of environmentalism, capitalism, mythology, the politics of war, and religion amongst others. However very few sources have focused extensively on the exploration of grief, loss, childhood, and trauma within the Studio Ghibli corpus. By close-reading four Studio Ghibli films—*My Neighbour Totoro* (1988), *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988), *Spirited Away* (2001), and *The Boy and the Heron* (2023)—this paper explores how these narratives utilize the fantastic to navigate childhood trauma and coming-of-age experiences. Building on Cavallaro's (2015) analysis of anthropomorphism in Japanese narrative traditions, Kidd's (2011) opinions on narratives of trauma, and Zipes' (2009) exploration of fairy tales in trauma therapy, this study situates Studio Ghibli's work within broader storytelling practices that blend the fantastic with reality to navigate childhood trauma. Drawing on theories of anthropomorphism, liminality, and the indigenous Japanese religion of Shinto, the paper argues that the films employ fantastical elements and spiritual motifs to humanize complex psychological emotions. The dissertation further discusses McQuinn's (2020) and Farris' (2019) concepts on liminality and transitional spaces, highlighting the role of liminal spaces which serve as metaphors for the transformative journey of coming to terms with grief. The study also incorporates Goldberg's (2009) and Smith's (2022) insights on the intersection of reality and fantasy in the Ghibli universe, showing how characters navigate between worlds as a way to process and endure their trauma. Looking at both Eastern-centered studies on death such as Kondo-Arita and Becker's (2023), alongside Western-centric ones like Di Ciacco's (2009), this analysis aims to form a holistic, nuanced reading of dealing with grief and trauma. The analysis reveals that while the portrayal of trauma in these films evolve over time—ranging from the subtle and allegorical in *My Neighbour Totoro* to the vivid and surreal in *The Boy and the Heron*—there remains a consistent emphasis on the transformative power of imagination. While these films confront profound themes of loss, they also offer hope and resilience, demonstrating the importance of processing grief as a part of growing up. Through their blend of fantasy and reality, Studio Ghibli's works provide a unique lens on trauma, and illustrate that there is beauty and possibility in confronting life's most difficult moments—providing a message of optimism amidst despair.



**Gianni Mahsina Haque**

Department of Law

### **The Parallels of Morality and Positivism in Legal Framework: An Analysis of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and H.L.A Hart's "The Concept of Law"**

#### *Abstract:*

This paper examines the tension between legal positivism and moral legitimacy through a comparative analysis of H.L.A. Hart's "The Concept of Law" and Shakespeare's "Hamlet". Though the development of laws and legal systems have been associated with themes of morality, legal positivism claims that a legal system need not exhibit some specific conformity with morality or justice. Hart has a pragmatic approach to morality and indicates that law and morality has shared vocabulary like "justice", meaning there is existence of a relationship but there lacks interdependency. Morality plays a minimal functional role. The truth about natural law is that there are certain notions of morality that prescribes itself into the legal system so as to perhaps be parts of such legal system but not the entire premises of laws. In the early chapters, Hart establishes that laws gain power from acceptance and not moral obligations or customs which represent the moral principles of the particular society. Laws are valid due to procedural conformity and not the moral backdrop of it, understood through the primary and secondary rules used to describe the legal frameworks. Hart also successfully mirrors the modern legal system through this at least theoretically. However, if the moral and ethical dilemmas\* that Hamlet faces is taken into consideration, there is weight in the claim that an individual seeks for justice and moral validation from a legal framework. This begs an important question- even if the law isn't built on morality solely, is complete demarcation of the two possible? Hence, the ideas of morality, justice and their intricate relation to the legal system in relation to individual's redress is going to be explored by juxtapositioning "Hamlet" and "The Concept of Law".



**Syed Shahnawaz Mohsin**

South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)

### Bridging the Gap – From Campus to Career

#### *Abstract:*

In today's fast-evolving professional landscape, the transition from academic training to workplace performance often reveals a disconcerting gap. This session aims to critically examine the disconnect between higher education and the dynamic expectations of the real-world professional environment. Drawing from direct observations and industry feedback, we will explore the functional deficiencies commonly identified in new graduates by senior professionals and employers—ranging from practical skill gaps to challenges in adaptability and initiative.

The lecture will also spotlight key efficiency and effectiveness practices that supervisors value in high-performing team members, alongside the essential individual cognitive habits that underpin professional excellence. Finally, we will deconstruct the often-glamorized narrative of multinational employment, revealing how it can obscure the rich, overlooked opportunities in local markets. This interactive discussion invites students to rethink career readiness, recalibrate aspirations, and take proactive ownership of their professional development.



**Anika Afrin**

Department of English & Modern Languages

### The Grass Is Not Always Greener: Navigating EFL Teachers' Emotions and Tensions

#### *Abstract:*

Teachers often embark on their careers with the anticipation of a seamless and smooth trajectory of professional advancement. However, upon engaging in actual teaching practice, they gradually discern that their emotional lives and inherent tensions are key determinants of their career retention and success. The study, framed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory and positioned in phenomenological research paradigm, investigated the emotional experiences and tensions of four tertiary EFL teachers. The thematic reflexive analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interview data uncovered a spectrum of complex, unpleasant emotions and grappled with multifaceted tensions, henceforth, leveraging their pedagogical practices and overall job satisfaction. Despite these constraints, teachers reported to exhibit moments of agency through reflective practices and pedagogical resilience. Findings emphasize the urgent need for more inclusive institutional policies, mental health support, and sustainable professional development pathways for teachers. By situating teachers' emotional and struggling experiences within an ecological framework, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of teacher agency and emotional well-being in an under-resourced, yet emerging educational context like Bangladesh and beyond.



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