mesh
multidisciplinary environmental studies in the humanities

GLOBAL SOUTH STUDIES CENTER COLOGNE

Alexander von HUMBOLDT STIFTUNG

MESH – Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities,
GSSC – Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne, Germany
with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

invite you to a

2-DAY WORKSHOP

MULTISPECIES THINKING *in times of Crises:* ECOLOGIES OF CARE AND ETHICS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

JULY 23–24, 2026
(THURSDAY & FRIDAY)

LOCATION
MESH, University of Cologne, Germany

THE WORKSHOP ADDRESSES

- Multispecies Thinking in Global South Literature
- Care and Ecological Empathy in Indigenous communities
- Indigenous knowledge and decolonial care
- Pluriversal Futures and Multispecies Engagement

As planetary crises deepen, communities in the Global South continue to imagine and practice more just and livable worlds. This workshop brings together scholars and practitioners to explore multispecies thinking through the ethics of care, reciprocity and Indigenous knowledges.

Multispecies Thinking in Times of Crises: Ecologies of Care and Ethics in the Global South

July 23–24, 2026

Venue: Erich Auerbach Library, MESH
(Weyertal 59, back building 3rd Floor, 50937 Cologne)

Organised in collaboration with the Global South Studies Center (GSSC)

Workshop

Interdisciplinary discussions of the effectiveness of the ethics of care and reciprocity, which are the foundational values of many Indigenous worldviews, are now emerging. The proposed workshop aims to accentuate this aspect of environmental and planetary thinking, specifically attempting to deliberate and comprehend how alternate modes of developmentalism have been prevalent in different communities of the Global South.

Some of the pertinent research questions that this workshop will address are how Indigenous knowledge acted as an exemplar of multispecies thinking and holistic living, in what ways can these knowledge forms be regarded as advocating mutuality and care for human and non-human forms? Why and how are the versions of multispecies care being represented in literary and other cultural documents? Can fiction from Indigenous communities in the Global South serve as representative narratives for imagining alternative possibilities of relating to the planet and reconceptualising pluriversal developmentalism and justice?

As planetary crises deepen, communities in the Global South continue to imagine and practice more just and livable worlds. This workshop brings together scholars and practitioners to explore multispecies thinking through the ethics of care, reciprocity, and Indigenous knowledges.

For more information, registration, and contact details please scan the QR code

Programme Schedule

Thursday, 23 July 2026

all timings CEST (Central European Summer Time)

Time	Session
09:00–09:20	Arrival and registration
09:20–09:30	Welcome and opening remarks by *Prof. Dr. Kate Rigby*, Director of MESH, AvH Professor for Environmental Humanities, and *Prof. Dr. Michael Bollig*, co-founder of the Global South Studies Center, Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology
09:30–11:00 **Panel 1: Multispecies Ecologies of Care** Chair: Goutam Karmakar	*Claiton Marcio da Silva*, Pequi Trees and Multispecies Ecologies of Care in the Brazilian Cerrado: Colonial Frontiers, Resistance, and More-than-Human Histories *Jenia Mukherjee and Agrima Mishra*, Sacred Obligation and Brackish Life: Vernacular Multispecies Care in the Sundarbans *Mridutpal Sinharay*, Taxonomic Diplomacy and Multispecies Care: Reimagining the Pygmy Hog in Assam, India
11:00–11:30	*Coffee break*
11:30–13:00 **Panel 2: Elemental Relationality, entanglements and literary responses** Chair: Bieke Willem	*Xiaohui Liang*, The Severance of Elemental Relationality: China's Compressed Modernity in *The Waste Tide* *Rakibul Hasan Khan*, Hope in the Anthropocene: Eco-Collectivism and Multispecies Entanglement in Contemporary South Asian Novels in English *Pritha Chakraborty*, The Ethics of Cohabitation: Multispecies Belonging and Religious Environmentalism in the Indian Sundarbans Delta
13:00–14:00	*Lunch break*
14:00–15:30 **Panel 3: Multispecies entanglements and environmental governance** Chair: Nsah Mala	*Léa Lacan*, Multispecies Lifeways and Local Claims: Doing Politics with Nonhumans in the Kenyan Forest *Henry Tambala*, Multispecies Care, Ethics, and Entanglements: Reimagining Development Through Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme *Antony Osome*, Extended Personhood and Reciprocity in Oral Narratives on Forest Governance among the Tiriki in Vihiga, Western Kenya

15:30–16:00	Poetry Reading with *Nsah Mala,* Poetic Multispecies Care for our Congo Basin and Planet
16:00–16:30	*Afternoon tea*
16:30–17:30	Closing discussion & informal exchange

Friday, 24 July 2026

Time	**Session**
09:00–09:30	*Arrival and coffee*
09:30–11:00 **Panel 4: Climate crisis, pluriversality and epistemic diversity** Chair: Léa Lacan	*Abosede Omowumi Babatunde*, Tackling the Climate Crisis through Indigenous Livelihood Practices in Nigeria's Oil-Extractive Communities *Pedro Pablo Achondo Moya*, The Pluriverse as an Ontological-Epistemological Approach to Multispecies Relations in Times of Socio-Environmental Crisis *Mars Edwenson T. Briones*, Ecologizing *Bayanihan* in Archipelagic Neighborhoods: Multispecies Care Amid Cascading Disasters in Philippine Climate Fiction
11:00–11:30	*Coffee break*
11:30–13:00 **Panel 5: Pluriversal Imaginaries, Indigenous Knowledge and Literary Narratives** Chair: Kate Rigby	*Payel Pal*, Towards Pluriversal Imaginaries: Indigenous Knowledge, Ethics of Care, and Indian Literary Narratives *Bieke Willem*, Psychoactive Plants and the Pluriverse in Latin American Science Fiction *Mafruha Ferdous*, Multispecies Ethics and Ecologies of Care in Amitav Ghosh's Environmental Narratives
13.00–13.30	Book Launch of *Unsettling Extinction* (2026, Bartosch, Heise & Rigby) and launch of the journal *Global South Literary Studies* (published by Taylor & Francis Group)
13.30	Concluding Lunch

Abstracts

Panel 1

Pequi Trees and Multispecies Ecologies of Care in the Brazilian Cerrado: Colonial Frontiers, Resistance, and More-than-Human Histories

Claiton Marcio da Silva
Professor of Environmental History
Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, Brazil

This talk explores the pequi tree (Caryocar brasiliense) as a more-than-human historical agent within the long-term transformation of the Brazilian Cerrado, exploring how a native fruit tree mediates colonial expansion, frontier-making, and contemporary struggles over land, care, and ecological survival in the Global South. Rather than treating the pequi merely as a botanical resource or regional symbol, I argue that it constitutes a living archive of multispecies relations historically sustained by Indigenous peoples, quilombola communities, peasant populations, and extractivist groups in Central Brazil. The paper investigates how pequi-centered lifeways embody forms of ecological care and relational ethics that have long resisted colonial and developmentalist projects. Historically excluded from plantation economies and global export circuits, the pequi persisted through practices of collective gathering, seasonal mobility, food-sharing, medicinal knowledge, and agroecological coexistence. Its marginalization under modern agribusiness—especially the expansion of soy monocultures in the Cerrado—reveals an ongoing process of internal colonialism that devalues multispecies landscapes, vernacular ecological knowledge, and non-capitalist temporalities. By foregrounding the pequi, this paper challenges narratives that equate historical relevance with commodity integration or extractive productivity. Instead, it highlights forms of persistence grounded in interdependence, care, and ecological entanglement. Methodologically, the study combines environmental history, multispecies history, and ethnohistorical approaches. Sources include nineteenth-century botanical descriptions, regional agrarian reports, oral histories from pequi-extractivist communities, and contemporary environmental conflicts documented in legal and activist archives. The analysis is informed by postcolonial theory, political ecology, and multispecies scholarship, engaging authors such as Anna Tsing, João Luiz Ribeiro Fragoso, and Joan Martinez-Alier. Primary historical sources include botanical works by Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius and Otto Karl Berg, alongside regional land and agricultural reports and oral testimonies.

Sacred Obligation and Brackish Life: Vernacular Multispecies Care in the Sundarbans

Jenia Mukherjee and *Agrima Mishra*
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India

This paper reads care ethics through the Sundarbans' vernacular pantheon and argues that multispecies care in the delta manifests as obligation owed to more-than-human others, honoured through reverence, fear, reciprocity, and ritual return. Drawing on the early modern Bengali *Mangal kavya* and *Pir katha* traditions, as translated and consolidated in Stewart's *Needle at the Bottom of the Sea* (2023), into dialogue with ethnographic fieldwork on Kumirmari island, Indian Sundarbans, the study examines vernacular narratives in which the care arc travels across a plurality of cosmological figures. *Daksin Ray* levies care as a juridical due, his tiger-body policing human excess; *Bonbibī's* care encompasses even the forest's predators; *Satya Pir* extends care as compassionate beneficence across species. Manasa, the serpent goddess, is revered because she kills; *Sitala*, the pox goddess

is worshipped because she both afflicts and heals. On Kumirmari Island, Gosaba Block, this cosmology accentuates contemporary ritual practice. At the earthen shrine, villagers communicate "the snake is the deity itself" and "this respect comes out of fear"; a kohl-eyed fish, recovered from flooded fields, is remembered as a deity. Here, fear accentuates obligation, and kinship is shaped through shared danger. Thereby, this paper advances a brackish ontology of multispecies care, where danger and obligation cohere as enmeshed conditions of life. The Sundarbans, therefore, emerges as a vernacular pluriverse (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018) from which multispecies care can be rethought as an ethic of cohabitation and planetary livability.

Taxonomic Diplomacy and Multispecies Care:
Reimagining the Pygmy Hog in Assam, India

Mridutpal Sinharay
Global South Studies Centre (GSSC)
University of Cologne, Germany

In Assam's grasslands, the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP) reintroduces the endangered pygmy hog (Porcula salvania) within landscapes already shaped by diverse human–animal relations. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper examines how the pygmy hog is situated within overlapping regimes of value – as sacred being, threatened wildlife, potential livestock, and ecological nuisance. These multiple positionings are not merely classificatory tensions but reflect divergent ethics of care, reciprocity, and cohabitation embedded in caste, religion, and everyday practice. While local cosmologies articulate relational modes of living with animals through idioms of purity, avoidance, and reverence, conservation interventions translate these into a singular framework of protection, often flattening situated forms of multispecies care. By foregrounding these frictions, the paper argues that pygmy hog conservation operates as an ontological and ethical negotiation – a form of taxonomic diplomacy that must negotiate local grammars of purity, utility, and sacredness – through which competing visions of care, responsibility, and ecological futures are contested. My analysis further demonstrates that pygmy hog rewilding here becomes a site of temporal negotiation, where futuring in Assam's pig worlds reveals more-than-human agency in shaping ecologies through a dynamic interplay of sacred pasts, contested presents, and emergent futures. This case invites a reconsideration of conservation not as a universal good, but as a site where pluriversal models of human–nonhuman relations and alternative environmental futures emerge.

Panel 2

The Severance of Elemental Relationality: China's Compressed Modernity in *The Waste Tide*

Xiaohui Liang
School of Foreign Languages
University of Science and Technology Beijing, China

Critical readings of Chen Qiufan's *The Waste Tide* mostly focus on material damage, pollution, exploitation, species extinction. This paper, inspired by Sarah Nuttall's reading for rain (2022), proposes an elemental reading that attends to human relations with wind, sea, earth, fire, and stars. What emerges in the novel is a loss that accompanies material damage: the destruction of elemental relationality—the originary capacity to be bound to the more-than-human world, a concrete form of multispecies thinking rooted in the Chinese Five Element cosmology (*wuxing*), *feng shui*, and "harmony between Heaven, Earth, and Humanity." Three textual details disclose this loss. First, waste people "prayed to the wind, the sea, the earth or the furnaces" (Chen, 77). Including the furnace, fire made thing, refuses capital's redefinition of fire as mere "energy input." Second, they "felt penitent" while cutting artificial bodies, "as if slicing apart real flesh" (77). The guilt registers what capital denies, that is, the boundary between "real" and "synthetic" is permeable within the same elemental flow. Third, after being reduced to "a living tool" (Vint, 46), Mimi still "gaze[s] up at the stars" (83–84). That act produces nothing and cannot even be commodified. But it preserves a perceptual link to the cosmic dimension of elemental relationality. These details reveal that capital's violence operates simultaneously on bodies and on the capacity for relation. Before wind becomes "energy," it must cease to be a being with agency. This destruction is coextensive with industrialization. Tracing China's compressed modernity across three phases—rural-urban migration (1979–1990s), e-waste labor (1990s–2010s), and post-2017 "green" upgrading, the paper shows that what distinguishes China is the speed of cognitive transformation, from a world where elements have presence to one where they are mute resources, in two generations. The novel ends with Kaizong sailing to trash islands, intending to reform it. This textual gesture echoes China's recent "ecological civilization" policies, namely the National Parks Law (2025), the 2026 e-waste regulation, the Biodiversity Plan (2025–2030). To recover elemental relationality is to recover the ecological wisdom of mutual generation and restraint (*xiang sheng xiang ke*).

Hope in the Anthropocene: Eco-Collectivism and Multispecies Entanglement in Contemporary South Asian Novels in English[1]

Rakibul Hasan Khan
Specialist Projects (Instructional Design Lead)
University of Otago, New Zealand

The Anthropocene, a contested geological epoch that marks the present era in which human activity has led to the climate crisis, is often associated with diverse disabling emotions, such as despair, anxiety, and anger. Yet it is urgent to maintain hope to confront the climate crisis. In this presentation, I introduce my concept of "eco-collectivism" as a basis for hope in the Anthropocene. I have developed this concept through my study of a selection of twenty-first-century South Asian novels in English—including Tahmima Anam's *The Bones of Grace* (2016), Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), and

[1] This presentation is based on my forthcoming monograph *Eco-Collectivism and South Asian Anglophone Fiction: Hope in the Anthropocene* under contract with Routledge.

Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019)—which demonstrate the imperative for a new form of multispecies collective living in the Anthropocene. I define this multispecies entanglement as eco-collectivism, in which humans attempt to survive collectively with nonhumans in the face of social, environmental, or climatic violence. The multispecies collectivism outlines an alternative mode of existence to survive the climate crisis. This alternative prioritises collective survival over individualistic and self-centred ways of living popularised by neoliberalism. Drawing on emotions and affect theory, underpinned by a postcolonial ecocritical approach, I argue that eco-collectivism can strengthen the ethos of environmental justice, intertwining it with social and multispecies justice.

The Ethics of Cohabitation:
Multispecies Belonging and Religious Environmentalism in the Indian Sunderbans Delta

Pritha Chakraborty
Amity School of Languages
Amity University Bengaluru, India

The Sunderbans Delta has been represented as a habitat for the majestic Bengal Tiger, while the humans are often depicted as intruders who are negatively impacting its habitat. This reductionist view of humans as a homogenous agent of destruction overlooks and silences the generations of human–tiger entanglements and relational vulnerabilities that have shaped the sense of belonging in the Delta. Contradictory to popular belief that human settlements in the delta render the lives of tigers vulnerable, the paper argues otherwise. The study underlines the articulation of the moral economy and the ethics of care that shape the human–animal entanglements enabling multispecies cohabitation in the region with particular reference to the embodied traditions associated with the Tiger-Cult. In these fluvial lands where tiger-attacks are an everyday reality, the Lady of the Forest, Maa Bonbibi, and the Lord of the South, Dakshin Ray (who represents the tiger) are the most revered and feared deities of the community. Built on the foundations of multispecies cohabitation and balance, the cult's eco-spiritual practices lay in the establishment of a moral economy that necessitates the differentiation between need and greed, thereby establishing a limit to human extraction of forest resources. This paper explores multispecies belonging and relational vulnerability in the Indian Sunderbans through PAR-based ethnography, foregrounding the narratives of *gunins* and *bauleys* (tiger charmers/tiger whisperers), who are the custodians of the forest's ethics. They act as mediators between the forest and the village ensuring community survival. It adopts a decolonial methodology of *ethnorature*, approaching ethnography as literature, bringing together community voices, the author's own positionality, and the affective textures through which marginalized communities articulate their lived conditions in an increasingly precarious landscape.

Panel 3

Multispecies Lifeways and Local Claims: Doing Politics with Nonhumans in the Kenyan Forest

Léa Lacan
Department for Social and Cultural Anthropology
University of Cologne, Germany

In Kenya's Tugen Hills and Rift Valley, intimate human-forest relations underpin both social-ecological resilience and political resistance. In the Katimok forest, for example, residents experience the forest as an ancestral home where practices of care and attentiveness traditionally shape communal life. Local elders protect ecologically and culturally important trees and forest zones and monitor the flowering cycles of trees and animal behaviors to predict weather changes and adapt agricultural timelines. Drawing on ethnographic research, this contribution explores how multispecies lifeways support contemporary political claims and Indigenous positioning. By foregrounding intimate ties to legitimize the recognition of land rights and their forest lifeways, local forest activists in Kenya's Rift Valley – including Katimok residents, but also more prominently Ogiek, Lembus and Sengwer activists – position themselves as guardians or ambassadors for nonhuman beings in national and international legal arenas.This contribution interrogates the more-than-human political collectives emerging from these claims and the "voice" and representation accorded to trees and animals within them. While academic debates have focused on Western-centric notions of nonhuman citizenship and animal welfare, this contribution proposes to take local multispecies relations as a starting point to reconsider what political collectives may look like and who they include in the forest.

Multispecies Care, Ethics, and Entanglements: Reimagining Development Through Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme

Henry Tambala
Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities
University of Cologne, Germany

Amidst worsening climate change, biodiversity loss, and deepening social injustice, leading development paradigms—framed through sustainability, resilience, and growth—continue reproducing the crises they claim to resolve. This article argues these crises stem from capitalism's prioritization of extraction and profit over ecological and human wellbeing, visible in the spread of "sacrifice zones" where marginalized humans and non-human life are treated as expendable along lines of power, colonial history, and class. Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP), launched in 2005/06 with backing from the Gates Foundation, AGRA, the World Bank, and USAID, illustrates these entanglements. While FISP boosted yields initially, it entrenched dependence on hybrid seeds and synthetic fertilizers, leaving soils chemically "addicted" and degraded—a trajectory reinforced by post-crisis policies like the AU's CAADP and Abuja Declaration. Critics read these interventions as "disaster capitalism," where ecological and social crises justify further market-driven expansion, deepening human-nonhuman entanglement in cycles of extraction. In response, the article proposes multispecies thinking as an alternative ethical framework. Decentering human exceptionalism, it reframes the world as a relational web of humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems, shifting care and justice away from FISP's extractive logic toward agroecological and regenerative practices—crop diversification, soil regeneration, low-input systems—that sustain biodiversity and community resilience alike. Finally, the

paper foregrounds Indigenous and Global South knowledge systems, rooted in reciprocity and coexistence, as vital sites for reimagining ecological practice. Addressing planetary crises, it concludes, demands ethical reorientation toward multispecies care, not merely technical fixes.

Extended Personhood and Reciprocity in Oral Narratives on Forest Governance among the Tiriki in Vihiga, Western Kenya

Antony Osome
Institute for Ethnologie and the Global South Studies Centre
University of Cologne, Germany

This paper examines how selected oral narratives focusing on 'Ing'ombe ya Senge', together with everyday firewood-gathering practices among the Tiriki in Vihiga, challenge the human-nature binary that structures most modern ecological conservation models. Using qualitative extended ethnography, transect walks, semi-structured interviews and participatory firewood gathering, the study attempts to answer the question: How do Tiriki communities understand the forest not as a passive store of resources but as a relational ecological world in which humans, trees, and other life forms are bound through reciprocity and responsibility? The study's thematic analysis is informed by the concepts of extended personhood (Bird-David, 1999) and deep ecology (Naess, 1973). The paper thus argues that embodied forest practices preserve an indigenous ecological ethics grounded in restraint, selective use, and collective governance. As such, firewood gathering is not treated as mere extraction but as a culturally regulated practice where gatherers select particular kinds of wood, collect only dry wood, and avoid cutting living trees. These practices reflect a moral ecology in which humans are part of the ecosystem and accountable to it. By foregrounding indigenous knowledge as both narrative and practice, the paper shows how Tiriki conservation ethics unsettle modern frameworks that separate humans from nature while often sidelining local custodianship.

Panel 4

Tackling the Climate Crisis through Indigenous Livelihood Practices in Nigeria's Oil Extractive Communities

Abosede Omowumi Babatunde
Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

In Nigeria, industry scale extractive activities of oil multinationals have contributed to the climate crisis that continues to harm the fragile ecosystem that sustains the traditional livelihood derived from farming and fishing activities of the people in the oil-bearing communities. The violent response of the people to the environmental harms from oil-induced climate change and the adverse impacts on their traditional livelihood sparked attacks on oil facilities, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping of oil workers, illegal oil bunkering and sea piracy. This amplified the climate crisis because of the effect of greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4). Studies on the Nigeria's oil extractive region have documented the armed conflict linked to the environmental and livelihood insecurity. Yet, some communities have deployed positive adaptation strategies to cope with the oil-induced climate crisis. However, scholarship on the diverse adaptation strategies of the oil communities to the climate crisis remains scant. This paper explores the climate adaptation strategies linked to indigenous livelihood practices deployed by some oil communities to cope with the adverse effects on their traditional farming and fishing activities. Based on field studies, this paper found that oil communities deploy their indigenous cultural practices and local traditions in containing the spread of oil spill into farmland and fishing waters, securing farmlands from oil spills and preserving their traditional farming and fishing practices. The oil communities have also preserved the use of locally made fishing materials and their cultural practices of celebrating bountiful harvests like the fish and yam festivals. The indigenous livelihood practices have sustained the production of indigenous food vital to the people's food culture and consumption pattern. It promotes non-violent community responses to environmental and social contestation over access to oil benefits in the extractive region, where successive governments have not implemented effective climate mitigation strategies to tackle the oil-induced climate crisis.

The Pluriverse as an Ontological-Epistemological Approach to Multispecies Relations in Times of Socio-Environmental Crisis

Pedro Pablo Achondo Moya
Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities
University of Cologne, Germany

The idea of the pluriverse has recently been revived as a way to theoretically and methodologically address the different forms of knowledge through which we access and interpret reality. In this presentation, I aim to show that the pluriverse alone does not meet the demands of the Anthropocene. A multispecies approach, as developed by posthumanism and vitalist materialisms, may be far more effective in addressing the climate and socio-environmental crisis. Based on a narrative and bibliographic study grounded in the concept of the Pluriverse, it is concluded that it must be approached and developed through a threefold framework, which is already inherent in its very foundation: (1) the pluriverse as an onto-epistemic multiplicity, (2) the pluriverse as a sociopolitical alternative to capitalist and modern hegemony, and (3) the pluriverse as an ontological intertwining between humans and more-than-humans, related to living within the framework of the socio-ecological and civilizational crisis. This last axis, the least

developed, is precisely the one that requires the most attention if the goal is to deepen multispecies thinking. To this end, critical and philosophical thought that enables other ways of inhabiting the world is essential, as is a new artistic and affective sensibility for understanding and engaging with other species.

Ecologizing *Bayanihan* in Archipelagic Neighborhoods: Multispecies Care Amid Cascading Disasters in Philippine Climate Fiction

Mars Edwenson T. Briones
Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities
University of Cologne, Germany

Bayanihan is a Filipino concept and practice originally pertaining to neighborhood-based systems of mutual care and support widely regarded as foundational to building collective disaster resilience. Now broadened to encompass other forms of communities, it can be generally understood in terms of "toiling on another's behalf and assuming another's burden" (Jocano). Recent critiques, however, have pointed out how *bayanihan* has been co-opted by a neoliberal discourse of resilience that exploits traditions of community self-help and cooperation. In this paper, I propose an ecological articulation of *bayanihan* by discussing a piece of climate fiction in the Philippines: F. Jordan Carnice's "All That We Can Have." Set between the islands and seas of Bohol and Panglao, and in the context of polycrisis, the story offers the opportunity to examine the complexities of cascading disasters and multispecies vulnerabilities in the archipelagic Global South. By raising questions about the necessity of intrinsic motivation, the sustainability of camaraderie, behavioral spillovers, land-water pollution, and the propagation of an environmental ethos across multiple sectors, the story lends itself to an ecological and archipelagic rethinking of *bayanihan*, one that mobilizes the spirit of cooperation and extends care and compassion beyond village-level, land-based relationships to address the concerns of islands as more-than-human neighborhoods. Ecologizing *bayanihan* thus entails fostering an ethics of bearing not only other humans' but also nonhuman others' often human-imposed burdens.

Panel 5

Towards Pluriversal Imaginaries: Indigenous Knowledge, Ethics of Care, and Indian Literary Narratives

Payel Pal
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
The LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur, India

A pluriversal future relies on egalitarian, non-hierarchical methods of knowledge creation, where no particular type of knowledge is seen as an absolute standard, and discussion is not confined to a top-down model or to dualistic frameworks. Pluriversal, as a counter concept to universal, recognises the intrinsic value of diverse cosmovisions, thereby affirming the ontological importance of varied interpretations, worldviews, and life practices, including those invalidated and suppressed by Western colonial powers. Pluriversal is inherently linked to decolonial thought, as it transcends existing hierarchies and promotes intercultural conversation among diverse human and non-human identities. This study examines the significance of stories, storytelling, and narrative frameworks in facilitating intercultural dialogue and expanding current cultural paradigms to reconsider the potential for a pluriversal future and associated political imaginaries. This study will analyse contemporary Indian literary fiction concerning indigenous communities and their non-anthropocentric epistemology, emphasising how these novels and their frameworks can be interpreted to affirm dialogues in the ethics of care and empathy. Focusing on Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* (2021), Siddhartha Sarma's *Year of the Weeds* (2018), and Sarah Joseph's *Gift in Green* (2011), which illustrate the principles of reciprocity, relationality, and eco-spirituality as practiced by non-mainstream and indigenous communities in India, I argue that these texts serve as an epistemic medium for fostering ethical principles regarding sustainable living and non-anthropocentric development. These narratives challenge traditional interpretative approaches and suggest that future transformation relies on a deep understanding of the ideologies and realities that have shaped the present. In so doing, these literary works align with the larger goals of decolonial thinking: that, in order to move towards a pluriversal future, it is essential to adopt a pluriverse of knowledge, de-legitimising the dualistic thinking championed by colonial capitalist frameworks.

Psychoactive Plants and the Pluriverse in Latin American Science Fiction

Bieke Willem
Department of Romance Studies
University of Cologne, Germany

This talk will focus on recent Latin American works of science fiction that highlight the possibility of the pluriverse in the context of the Anthropocene by constructing their plots around the consumption of psychoactive plants. It will examine firstly how the agency of these plants in fiction destabilizes the idea of a one-world world. Secondly, it will draw on the concept of "Welt(er)schöpfung" (exhaustion and creation of worlds) by Müller and Haraway's method and practice of "SF" to examine how, in these texts, worlding is closely linked to a thematization of and reflection on the destruction of worlds in the context of Latin American extractivism. Besides focusing on the relation between the notion of socioecological crisis and a renewed interest in psychoactive plants, this talk will also pay attention to the way in which the search for lost rituals surrounding the plants in these texts opens up possibilities for caring for existing worlds.

Multispecies Ethics and Ecologies of Care in Amitav Ghosh's Environmental Narratives

Mafruha Ferdous
Department of English
American International University, Bangladesh

This paper examines how Amitav Ghosh's writings engage with the relationships between humans, animals, and the environment in times of ecological crisis. Focusing on *The Hungry Tide*, *Gun Island*, *The Great Derangement*, and *The Nutmeg's Curse*, the paper explores how Ghosh connects climate change with histories of colonialism, displacement, and environmental exploitation in the Global South. His works repeatedly show that ecological crises cannot be understood only as scientific or environmental problems; they are also deeply connected to questions of power, inequality, memory, and survival. *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* show how rivers, forests and animals are not just a backdrop but something that actively shapes human lives. *The Great Derangement* and *Smoke and Ashes* criticize the failure of contemporary politics and literary forms to grapple with climate catastrophe, while *The Nutmeg Curse* offers a historical account of colonial violence against people and planet over the longue durée. Particular attention will be given to Ghosh's representation of care and interdependence across species boundaries. According to Ghosh, human survival is connected to the survival of fragile ecosystems and non-human lives. Ghosh's text strongly reminds us that the Global South has a past, a present, and more importantly, a future beyond colonialism and its effects. The paper ultimately argues that his works encourage new ways of thinking about coexistence, responsibility, and shared vulnerability in an age of planetary crisis.