

INTERACTIVE ARTICLE COVER

RUPKATHA JOURNAL

ON INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN HUMANITIES



ISSN 0975-2935

About the Journal

Journal DOI	https://dx.doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha
Journal Home	www.rupkatha.com
Indexed by	Scopus Web of Science: Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) DOAJ
Journal Metrics	CiteScore 2020: 0.2 SJR 2020: 0.162 SNIP 2020: 0.193 JCI 2020: 0.50

About the Issue

Issue	Volume 14, Number 2, 2022
Editor	Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay
Issue DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n2
TOC	https://rupkatha.com/v14n2.php

About the Article

Title	Decoding the imperial “grip” in J.G. Farrell’s <i>The Singapore Grip</i>	
Author/s	Prashant Maurya¹ & Nagendra Kumar²	
Affiliation	¹ Humanities & Applied Sciences Area, Indian Institute of Management Ranchi, India. ² Dept. of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India.	
Author ID	None	
Funding	No funding received. Published free of any charge.	
Article DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n2.21	Pages: 1-9
Abstract	https://rupkatha.com/v14n221	
Full-text PDF	https://rupkatha.com/V14/n2/v14n221.pdf	
Article History	First Published: 26 June 2022	
Article Impact	Check Dynamic Impact	
Copyright	Aesthetics Media Services	
Licensing	Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0	

This Open Access article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For citation use the DOI. For commercial re-use, please contact editor@rupkatha.com.

Decoding the imperial “grip” in J.G. Farrell’s *The Singapore Grip*

Prashant Maurya¹ & Nagendra Kumar²

¹ Humanities & Applied Sciences Area, Indian Institute of Management Ranchi, India.

Email: prashant.maurya@iimranchi.ac.in

² Dept. of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India.

Email: nagendra.kumar@hs.iitr.ac.in

Abstract

The Singapore Grip (1978) is the third instalment of the Empire trilogy by Booker Prize-winning novelist James Gordon Farrell. It inscribes colonial Singapore’s socio-economic situation through the story of a British tycoon who is engaged in multi-commercial enterprises, mainly rubber business, in the colony of Singapore. The present paper examines the titular phrase “Singapore Grip” in the novel. It argues that Farrell explores many aspects of British colonialism in Singapore through this phrase. By decoding the multiple connotations of the phrase, through reading instances from the novel, the paper will foreground the social, political, and economic issues critical in understanding colonialism in colonial Singapore.

Keywords: historical novel, colonial Singapore, J.G. Farrell, imperialism, grip, capitalism.

Introduction

While accepting the Booker Prize in 1973, James Gordon Farrell had criticised the then Booker Prize sponsor, Booker McConnell Ltd, for its exploitative policies towards the poorly paid employees working in the Far East units. And during his acceptance speech, he declared that “he would use his prize money (£5000) to write a full-scale study of commercial exploitation, set around the fall of Singapore in 1941” (McLeod, 2007, p. 91). *The Singapore Grip* (1978) is the product of Farrell’s desire during that point in time. It is the third instalment of his Empire trilogy, the first and second being *Troubles* (1970) and *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973).

The phase of nearly two and a half months, beginning from December 1941 to mid-February 1942, is this novel’s timeframe. It inscribes Singapore’s socio-economic situation during this phase through the story of a British tycoon, Walter Blackett, who is engaged in multi commercial enterprises, mainly rubber business in the colony of Singapore. The novel’s plot relates to a series of events taking place in and around the lives of the characters of the Blackett family amidst the gradual annexation of Malaya by the Japanese Imperial Force. According to Earl Rovit (1998), this novel is a chronicle of an “imperialistic venture, predetermined by the greed of venal men” (p. 640). While the novel’s chief focus is on the British commercial exploitation for sure, there are certain other grave issues that Farrell foregrounds in the novel. The present paper examines the titular phrase “Singapore Grip” of the novel to highlight those issues. It argues that Farrell explores many aspects of British colonialism in Singapore through this phrase. By decoding the multiple connotations of the phrase, through a reading of instances from the novel, the paper foregrounds

the social, political, and economic issues critical in understanding colonialism in colonial Singapore.

Why Singapore?

Farrell has conceived Singapore as the setting of his novel for three significant reasons. First, Singapore was a colony of the British Empire. Writing a novel set in Singapore would complete the trilogy, which Farrell conceived to be based on the British Empire’s experiences in its three different colonies. It was probably the first colony that the British had negotiated for settlement. Sir Stamford Raffles, the British diplomat and statesman, “recognised the island’s geopolitical strategic significance and potential as a way station along the India-China trade route” (Horton, 2013, p. 1221). Besides, Singapore was the only colony, annexed under the Empire’s nose by another Imperial army by force. The British administration felt humiliated due to this loss. This loss created a state of embarrassment for the British Empire, which had never expected such a setback in its colony. Colin Cross considers it the “worst single military defeat the British Empire ever suffered” (1968, p. 240). This historic loss of the British also changed the perspective that the British Empire is invincible. To emphasise, the event marked the remaining days of the British Empire in its colonies worldwide. After this event, we see that the British Empire vanishes with its colonies’ decolonisation in the coming two decades. Hence, this episode holds a significant place in British Empire’s history, and nothing could be better than Singapore as a setting to close the trilogy on the British Empire. Ronald Binns rightly says, “The fall of Singapore in 1942 provided Farrell with an appropriately apocalyptic terminus to his trilogy” (1986, p. 85).

The second reason why Farrell chose Singapore was its economic significance for Britain. It was an important trading post and a vital economic hub of the British Empire in many ways. Cross observes, “[I]n the British imperial mystique it ranked second only to the Suez Canal itself” (1968, p. 141). It was a junction, halting-place and terminal for ships travelling to Australia and other nearby colonies and islands. It also contributed immensely to the British economy through its natural resources and vast plantations, mostly tin and rubber. John McLeod (2007) reiterates the same that Singapore had been a “significant commercial centre and a lucrative contributor to the fortunes of the British Empire – at one point almost half of the world’s rubber and tin was manufactured in the region” (p. 80).

The third reason, more of a personal nature, is that Singapore was one of the critical Naval Bases of the British and the Allied powers in Southeast Asia during the Second World War until its annexation by the Japanese Imperial Forces in February 1941. Farrell himself had witnessed the Second World War bombing at his own house, “Boscobel” in Southport in 1941 when he was six years old. The event affected him greatly. How could he write a historical novel series without writing something about the Second World War, whose memories were so fresh in his mind? According to Binns (1986), the bomb attack on his home “made an immense impression upon him” (p. 18), and its impact is visible in his mature fiction.

Singapore’s portrayal in the present novel embeds Farrell’s personal experiences, his conviction in communist ideology, his stand towards the anti-capitalist economy and his expectations and ambitions as a creative writer. It becomes a site where Farrell pours his long-standing anxiety and

reflections on colonialism. As a setting, Singapore helps Farrell fulfil his creative aspirations and write in an authentic way, which he believes his contemporaries lack due to their “narrow, conventional and impoverished subject matter and stylistic resource” (Binns, 1986, p. 15).

Decoding the metaphor “grip.”

Farrell explores many aspects of British colonialism in Singapore through the phrase, “Singapore Grip”. Initially, it is a mysterious phrase for the novel’s characters as everybody has his/her understanding of the phrase. But as the novel ends, the multi-connotation of the phrase appears in its full form. Farrell introduces his readers to the nexus of grip, which manifests itself in various forms. The following subsections highlight and discuss instances in the novel, where the “grip” has been exercised.

British economic strategies: The capitalist grip

According to Nayar, among other kinds of violence of colonialism, the economic violence is so “integral to the history of ‘Third World’ nations that no literature or critical approach, as far as I know, has been able to ignore it” (2008, p. 1). It is a well-known fact that the British Empire had extravagantly generated wealth from its southeast colonies. Being one of the most affluent colonies in terms of natural resources, plantations and cheap labour, Singapore, used to deliver an over-plus of monetary profit to the Empire. Farrell weaves Blackett and Web’s story to expose and comment on the grip of the exploitative British economic practices in Singapore. His “denunciation of imperial exploitation and mercantile greed becomes stronger in the novel” (Saunders, 2001, p. 457).

Farrell exposes the hollowness of the empire’s economic strategies in its colonies, which is truly capitalist, self-interested and cares little about the native smallholders. Binns (1986) rightly comments that Farrell’s “[N]arrative explores the vocabulary and practices of capitalism, investing the role played in business life by equity, bold holdings, commodity brokers, stocks, and standard profits” (p. 95). Blackett and Web rise on the native rubber smallholders’ cost, leading them to a perishable state. The anecdote of the old man left in the Chinese “dying house” to die reveals the corruption involved in the British system, which hampers the growth of the person at the lowest strata of society. The old man exposes the British authority’s multi-layered exploitation to Matthew. He reveals how the British estates swindle him and other smallholders. He tells how “the inspector did not give him a proper share of rubber to sell when he came to look at his trees for Restriction Scheme” (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 401). Also, “the European estates were given extra share for trees that were too young to make rubber *while the* smallholders were given nothing (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 403, italics mine).

Although the British Crown was running welfare schemes for native peoples, like the old man, unfortunately, the British people in authority never let them access that. The Rubber Institute, which was set up and run by the government, helped only the British estates and not the shareholders. The institute offered good rubber plants or the “high-yielding clones” only to the estate planters and not to the shareholders. Once they produce the rubber, the Inspectors do not give them a fair share to sell. Even the Rubber Regulation Committee that was constituted for rubber exports from Singapore had twenty-seven men from the estates and only one from

smallholders (for formality), thus denying their proper representation. He critiques the development programme of the Empire, meant to uplift their condition, as it is corrupt. The conversation between the old man and Matthew opens a space for critical analysis. It reveals that the Empire is very selective toward the idea of progress and economic independence for Singapore. The duplicitousness of the Empire lurks from the corruption in the programmes run in the name of developing and progressing Singapore. The British are themselves engaged in snatching away the benefits, which rarely reach the indigenous people.

Further, the grip of business in Singapore’s ordinary life is profound. The conception of Singapore is that of a land engrossed in commerce and trade, creating wealth. Huat (2008) aptly says, “[T]he economic success of Singapore has made it a ‘model’ in its own right for other postcolonial nations and in this sense ‘post-colonial’, where the global rather than colonial is the reference for the local” (p. 239). Therefore, it was one of the favourite business spots of traders and merchants. The commercial spirit of Singapore is apparent during the war times also. When Major puts an advertisement in a newspaper calling for assistance to the committee, the replies he receives are astonishing. One Chinese firm letters him to sell his stirrup pump (used to extinguish the fire), and another firm offers him to buy a rake-and-shovel from his firm for lifting out firebombs. This is not an end to the commercial spirit during the war times; two other replies are more amusing. One is of a certain firm selling Evelyn Astrova Face Powder with a tagline “War is horrible but preserve your composure and don’t look terrible” (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 259), another is of Gold Bird (Ceylon) Tea, which stated, it “will soothe and refresh you in your worried moments” (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 259). The idea that business does not bother the state of affairs till it is making a profit is emphasised as true by Farrell. During such odd times, when people’s lives are in danger, the business enterprises are engrossed in money-making, taking advantage of the situation.

Labour trafficking: The colonial grip

Singapore is a multicultural country with people living there from different parts of the world. These people, in some cases the ancestors of these people, had come here as indentured labours to work as coolies on plantations. Not all of them came willingly; the colonisers’ grip was so tight that they had to come. To meet the labourers’ demand, Britain organised large scale emigration of Indian and Chinese labourers to overseas plantations economies like Singapore (Sen, 2016, p. 42). The agents of the British Empire roam in the poverty-stricken villages to trap labourers. The grip of the colonial agents can be inferred from the following lines:

[A]gents had roamed the poverty-stricken villages of South China recruiting simple peasants with promises of wealth in Malaya together with a small advance payment (sufficient to entangle them in a debt they would be unable to repay if they changed their minds), then delivered them to departure camps known as ‘baracoons’; once there they will be entirely in the power of the entrepreneur for use as cargo in his coolie-ships (each person allotted, as a rule, a space of two feet by four feet for a voyage that might take several weeks). (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 294)

Vera’s father and uncle had also been shipped from South China to this growing economic hub. He and his brother were brought here as indentured labourers, along with many others. Unfortunately, his brother died on the way because of suffocation in the airtight compartments of the ship in which they were brought. The unfortunate ones did not even get a proper burial,

and their bodies were thrown out in the sea to save the ships from contamination. There is a similarity between the ships and the holocaust trains of the Nazis. Similarly, Vera's uncle met the same fate as many Jews while transported from one camp to another in holocaust trains. This episode reflects that the British colonials were no less cruel and inhuman than the Nazis as far as labour transportation is concerned. Farrell portrays a similar incidence of inhumane treatment in *Troubles*, where Edward forces Murphy to become the subject of his dehumanizing scientific experiments (Maurya & Kumar 2020b, p. 2175).

Proliferating prostitution: The sexual grip

Prostitution and brothels are at the core of colonial Singapore. According to James Warren (1990), prostitution flourished in colonial Singapore and became a multi-dollar business (p. 361). He notes that the "presence of prostitutes was functional in supporting colonial economic expansion" (1993, pp. 257-258; qtd. in Hui, 2003, p. 11). Lenore Manderson also notes that colonial capitalism "built based on imported male labour and the greedy demands for raw materials of industrialising Europe" (1997, p. 372) contributed to the massive prostitution in Singapore.

The imperial grip on the brothel business is evident in the novel. Farrell uses sex and prostitution as a tool to critique the Empire that controlled and proliferated prostitution for its own ulterior economic, social and political motives. The depiction of the young school-going Chinese girl on display for the British customers doing her homework draws the readers' attention to the vile brothel business where one exchanges sexual favours for money. The licensing of brothels in colonial Singapore was a deliberate attempt by the colonial administration to serve the sexual needs of the hundreds of thousands of labourers and soldiers deployed in military assignments. The brothels helped the British administration generate huge revenue and helped them control the labourers and maintain a peaceful situation in the colony of Singapore by providing them access to sex. It also helped them control homosexuality among the British soldiers which was against the Victorian morality and code of conduct (Maurya & Kumar 2022, n. p.).

According to McLeod, "The connection between industry and prostitution is clinched in the novel's title" (2007, p. 86). The title has sexual connotations as we see that Ehrendorf understands two meanings of the phrase. First, it means the rattan suitcase; second, it refers to the "ability acquired by certain ladies of Singapore to control their autonomous vaginal muscles, apparently with delightful results" (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 588). When Matthew first arrives in Singapore, he is advised by many to must-see "Singapore Grip". Also, in the novel, a reader comes across many instances where commerce is explicitly portrayed in sexual terms. For instance, Walter uses his daughter Joan as a sexpionage or honey trap for business profit. Joan's character in the novel appears more of a coquette, hunting for suitors and ditching them in one or the other way when her purpose is served. McLeod very aptly considers Walter and Joan as pimp and prostitute, respectively, who exploit the "business of pleasure to generate and secure financial gain" (2007, p. 86).

In another instance, during the grand parade's rehearsal to mark the golden jubilee of Blacketts and Webb, Monty, as a joke, adds a packet of contraceptives to the cornucopia of rubber products. The presence of contraceptives in the float of the parade which was to show the benefits and development the British have brought to Singapore hints at the link between commerce and the lewd world of sex in colonial Singapore. Elsewhere, one of the pimps cajoles Matthew by saying,

“Nice Girl . . . ‘Guarantee Virgin’ . . . You wantchee try Singapore Glip?” (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 216). In addition to the aforementioned instances, the phrase “Singapore grip” refrains many times in the novel, thus suggesting that sex is integral to colonial Singapore’s business and commerce.

Diseases and illness: The medical grip

The metaphors of disease are essential ingredients and recurring features of Farrell’s trilogy novels. According to Maurya and Kumar (2020a), Farrell’s novels are “crammed with instances of health problems, disease, medicine and death” (p. 55). Binns (1986), Crane and Livett (1997) and McLeod (2007) suggest Farrell’s biographical account as the backdrop of his interest in disease and medicine, as he suffered from a polio attack at the very young age of twenty-one. Binns explains the traumatic episode in Farrell’s life:

Prior to the polio attack, Farrell had been a healthy 12-stone 21-year-old, keen on sport. He was now transformed, literally overnight, into an invalid. His hair turned white, his weight shrank to 7 stone 6 pounds and he lost the use of both arms. He spent six months in a device, nowadays obsolete, known as an iron lung, which was used to administer prolonged artificial respiration by means of mechanical pumps. (1986, p. 22)

Farrell’s painful and terrifying experiences manifest themselves in the plot of his novels, where the presence of diseases is explicit. We also come across two mandatory characters, one a doctor and the other who suffers from medical complications. Farrell’s obsession with diseases, medicine, and doctors appears in *The Singapore Grip* in a similar vein. While the coming of capitalism in the novel has been referred to as the spreading of disease, the prevalence of venereal diseases among the Chinese prostitutes of colonial Singapore is imperative. According to Warren, “[V]enereal Diseases continued to wreak havoc upon the Chinese population right up to the eve of the fall of Singapore” (1993, p. 177). The grip of venereal diseases among the prostitutes of colonial Singapore was a major concern for the Empire as its soldiers used to visit brothels. Although the colonial administration tried to curb the menace by licencing brothels following the Contagious Disease ordinance, brothels’ clandestine operations and neglected medical facilities for prostitutes increased VD’s spread. In the novel, we see that Matthew and his friends decided not to enjoy prostitutes for fear of venereal diseases at ‘The Great World’. Farrell writes,

[I]n a nutshell, instead of risking heaven knows *what* dreadful diseases with the sort of women one was likely to pick up here at The World or anywhere else in Singapore he and his chums had decided to club together and they’d found a very nice Chinese girl called Sally who had her own flat in Bukit Timah. She was clean and not the kind who’d get drunk or make a fuss. (Farrell, 1978/2010, p. 203)

In another instance, the epidemic of typhus and cholera among the war victims concerns Major and Dupigny. Cholera is indispensable in the medical discourse of the South/Southeast Asian colonies of Britain. Farrell deals extensively with cholera in *The Siege of Krishnapur*; however, his focus in *The Singapore Grip* is malaria, tuberculosis, and dengue. Life in Tanglin is overwhelmed with numerous medical complications, especially Malaria and Dengue. Describing certain disadvantages in the colony of Singapore, Farrell prominently highlights malaria and dengue in the following lines, which are part and parcel of Singapore’s life.

Moreover, the mosquitoes in this particular suburb were only distant cousins of the mild insects which irritate us on an English summer evening: in Tanglin you had to face the dreaded anopheles variety, each a tiny flying hypodermic syringe containing a deadly dose of malaria. And if by good fortune, you managed to avoid malaria there was still another mosquito waiting in the wings, this one clad in striped football socks, ready to inject you with dengue fever. (1978/2010, pp. 5-6)

Farrell describes the poor natives in the novel inflicted not only with malaria but also with tuberculosis. The poor who sleep on the floor and hardly manage to earn bread twice do not ever get a chance for medical treatment. They die with that disease, and this is how they are relieved from its grip. Farrell ponders, could the bombing of Singapore relieve these poor creatures from their suffering? Farrell's poignant remark, "It will take high explosive, in the end, to loosen the grip of tuberculosis and malaria on them" (1978/2010, p. 248), demonstrates how poverty and imperial negligence impede a healthy life for the natives. Apart from all this, the grip of fever among the characters is common in the novel. For instance, Mr Webb dies after a prolonged illness, Matthew spends a considerable time in bed due to fever, etc. Binns rightly observes, "Illness is a powerful underlying metaphor in Farrell's historical novels" (1986, p. 23), through which he suggests the end of the British Empire in Singapore.

Conclusion

To conclude, the discussion in this article has decoded the multi-connotation of the phrase "Singapore grip". Referring to instances from the novel, it has shown how the phrase prominently manifests itself in colonial economic, sexual, medical grip. It has been argued that Farrell has foregrounded the stranglehold of British colonial policy in Singapore through the phrase. The novelist has been successful in bringing out all the ugly displays of power, politics and vile that the British colonial masters exercised in their colonies to sustain and up their economic interests. For them, the subjects are there to be used, exploited and hence mostly 'invisible'. However, the "grip" is temporary, and hence its power and authority also are transient. Farrell challenges this notion of external grip, and we see that by the time the novel ends, the grips are released. Walter loses his business, Joan loses Matthew, Britain loses Singapore and the grip of western culture and economy in Singapore is loosened.

Declaration of Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Funding

No funding has been received for the publication of this article. It is published free of any charge.

References

- Binns, R. (1986). *J. G. Farrell*. London: Methuen.
- Crane, R. & Jennifer, L. (1997). *Troubled Pleasures: The Fiction of JG Farrell*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

- Cross, C. (1968). *The Fall of the British Empire, 1918-1968*. New York: Coward McCann Publishers.
- Farrell, J. G. (2007). *The Siege of Krishnapur*. London: Orion Publishing Group. (Original work published 1973).
- Farrell, J. G. (2010). *The Singapore Grip*. London: Orion Publishing Group. (Original work published 1978).
- Horton, P. (2013). Singapore: Imperialism and Post-Imperialism, Athleticism, Sport, Nationhood, and Nation Building. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30(11): 1221-1234.
- Huat, C. B. (2008). Southeast Asia in Postcolonial Studies: An Introduction. *Postcolonial Studies*, 11(3): 231-240.
- Hui, T. B. (2003). ‘Protecting’ Women: Legislation and Regulation of Women’s Sexuality in Colonial Malaya. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 7(1): 2-30.
- Manderson, L. (1997). Colonial Desires: Sexuality, Race, and Gender in British Malaya. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7(3): 372-388.
- Maurya, P. & Kumar, N. (2020a). Colonial Medicine and Cholera: Historicizing Victorian Medical Debates in J.G. Farrell’s *The Siege of Krishnapur*. *Southeast Asian Review of English*, 57(2): 53-73.
- Maurya, P. & Kumar, N. (2020b). The Member of ‘Quality’ and the ‘Other’: Colonial Fallacy and Othering in James G. Farrell’s *Troubles*. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 28(3): 2167-2180
- Maurya, P. & Kumar, N. (2022). Race, Sexuality, and Prostitution in colonial Singapore: Reading J.G. Farrell’s *The Singapore Grip*. *South East Asia Research*. Manuscript accepted for publication.
- McLeod, J. (2007). *J. G. Farrell*. Devon: Northcote House Publishers.
- Nayar, P. K. (2008). *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Pearson.
- Rovit, E. (1998). J. G. Farrell and the Imperial Theme. *The Sewanee Review*, 106(4): 630-644.
- Saunders, M. (2001). The Tone of Empire: J. G. Farrell’s Great Theme. [Review of the book *J. G. Farrell: The Making of a Writer* by L. Greacen]. *The Sewanee Review*, 109(3): 453-458.
- Sen, S. (2016). Indentured Labour from India in the Age of Empire. *Social Scientist*, 44(1): 35 -74.
- Warren, J. F. (1990). Prostitution and the Politics of Venereal Disease: Singapore 1870-98. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 21(2): 360-383.
- Warren, J. F. (1993). *Ah Ku and Karayuki-san: Prostitution in Singapore 1870-1940*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prashant Maurya is an Assistant Professor of English and Area Chairperson of Humanities & Applied Sciences at the Indian Institute of Management Ranchi, India. His areas of interest are Literature & History, Historical Fiction, British Raj/Empire in fiction, and South Asian Literature. He has published in journals such as *English Academy Review*, *South Asia Research*, *Rethinking History*, *South Asian Popular Culture*, *Southeast Asian Review of English*, etc. He is an Early Career Member of the Royal Historical Society of London and sits on the Board of Historical Fictions Research Network. He can be reached at prashant.maurya@iimranchi.ac.in

Nagendra Kumar is a HAG Professor of English and former Head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India. He specializes in English Language, Literature

and Communication Studies. Besides publishing a widely reviewed book he has published research papers in reputed, Scopus and Web of Science indexed journals. He has delivered invited lectures and plenary talks in dozens of FDPs around the country and has successfully conducted around 15 AICTE/TEQIP Sponsored Short-term Courses and Workshops on various aspects of the teaching pedagogy, Soft Skills, Communication and Culture. He has been the recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award of IIT Roorkee for the year 2015. He can be reached at Nagendra.kumar@hs.iitr.ac.in