



The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the World

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & OFFICE OF
OUTREACH PROGRAMME,
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, NEW DELHI**

in collaboration with

MELOW

**(The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of
the World)**

cordially invites you to the

18TH INTERNATIONAL MELOW CONFERENCE

Themed

**“Sunny Pleasure Domes and Caves of Ice:
Utopias and Dystopias in World Literature”**

to be held

from 15th – 17th March, 2019

Venue: Inaugural Session - FTK CIT Conference Hall

at 10.00 am

Parallel Sessions – Mir Anis Hall, Dayar-e- Mir

Taqi Mir, Seminar Hall, Dept. of English, JMI.

As we go through literary history we note that the idea of Utopia and Dystopia inevitably changes with time. With the spread of education and learning, as the frontiers of knowledge are pushed back, the concept of the ideal haven of peace and happiness undergoes a change. If the earliest known work in this category is Plato's *Republic*, with time literature has thrown up Utopias that are very different from the Platonic ideal. In the sixteenth century Thomas More described a fictional island as Utopia. This was followed by several attempts at portraying imaginary Utopias and contrasting Dystopias. Examples may be cited from different cultures across the globe. In China, for instance, there exists the idea of Datong which translates as Utopia, and in medieval Europe the tradition of Cockayne, the land of plenty. In the Spanish tradition we have El Dorado. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984* are just a few well-known examples in this genre. The advance in science and technology has contributed significantly to different kinds of Utopias and Dystopias, shifting the focus to a trans-human or post-human world ruled by machines. There are feminist, religious, ecological, or political Utopias. Each has its own pros and cons. In recent years there is Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* which stands out as a dystopian text.

What is the significance of these Shangri Las of literature and how do they portray man's search for "lost horizons"? How and why does this yearning for an ideal place elsewhere change with the times? With the so-called march of civilization, as we move towards greater "development," what are the fears and phobias that that compel writers to create nightmare landscapes and anti-utopias where pandemonium rules?

The 18th International MELOW Conference, to be held at Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, from **15 to 17 March 2019**, will debate on these and related issues.

Local Organizing Committee:

Prof. Nishat Zaidi (HOD)

Prof. Mukesh Ranjan

Adeel Mehdi

Ms. Shimi M Doley

Dr. Asmat Jahan

MELOW 2019 is our 18th conference. Our earlier conferences are listed below.

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. 1998 September: in Hyderabad. | 10. 2010 Feb: in Chandigarh |
| 2. 2000 Jan: in Hyderabad. | 11. 2011 Sept.: in Hyderabad |
| 3. 2002 Jan: in Hyderabad. | 12. 2013 Feb: in Chandigarh |
| 4. 2003 April: in Chandigarh. | 13. 2014 Feb: at Jammu University |
| 5. 2004 Jan: in Hyderabad. | 14. 2015 Feb: in Chandigarh |
| 6. 2005 March: in Chandigarh. | 15. 2016 Feb: at Indraprastha University, Dwarka, Delhi |
| 7. 2006 March: in Hyderabad. | 16. 2017 March: in Chandigarh |
| 8. 2007 March: in Chandigarh | 17. 2018 in Dharamshala |
| 9. 2008 November: at Santiniketan, WB | 18. 2019 in Jamia Millia, Delhi |

THE ISAAC SEQUEIRA MEMORIAL AWARD:

In the memory of Prof Isaac Sequeira who was the guiding spirit behind our association, MELOW annually awards a prize for the best paper presented at its conference. The award comprises a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 5,000. The following delegates have been shortlisted for the ISM Award 2019:

Jasmine Sharma of IIT, Ropar
Nishtha Pandey of Jamia, Delhi
Samarth Singhal of Kamala Nehru College, Delhi

They will compete for the final award in a special session at the 2019 Conference.

A **Special Isaac Sequeira Memorial Lecture** is also delivered by an invited speaker. This year's invited speaker is the renowned Prof Sachidananda Mohanty.



18th INTERNATIONAL MELOW CONFERENCE

at
Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, from 15 – 17 March 2019



THEME:

Sunny Pleasure Domes and Caves of Ice: Utopias and Dystopias in World Literature



Reach us on: www.melow.in, www.melusmelow.blogspot.in
and <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003036474708&fref=ts>
Email: melusmelow@gmail.com



About MELOW

MELOW (The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the World) was first set up in 1998 as MELUS-India. It is an academic organization, among the foremost of its kind in India. The members are college and university teachers, scholars and critics interested in literature, particularly in world literatures, and literature across borders of time and space. The organization meets every year over an international conference. It seeks to maintain academic standards, encourage younger scholars and provides a forum for senior scholars in literature.

MELOW Office Bearers

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Secretary: Prof Manju Jaidka (Chandigarh)
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The Conference Theme: Sunny Pleasure Domes and Caves of Ice: Utopias and Dystopias in World Literature

Utopias are always in fashion, says Barbara Goodwin, as they hold up a mirror to the fears and aspirations of the times in which they are written. Or, as Jurgen Habermas says, since the early nineteenth century Utopia has become a polemical concept that everyone uses against everyone else. Ernst Bloch, on the other hand, is convinced that theorizing and articulating Utopias is an indispensable part of our critical cultural heritage. Literature being the expression of the innermost thoughts of human beings, for good or bad, better or worse, gives form and shape to suppressed desires, hidden phobias and fears, wishful thinking, and other emotions, transient, dormant or volatile. Literary activity has also been regarded as a form of escape to a Never-Never Land, and Erewhon or Utopia, an Eden or Paradise of sorts where nothing can go wrong. At the other end of the spectrum, contrasting with the desired wish-landscape, is the reverse, the anti-Utopia or Dystopia, reminiscent of Dante's Inferno, or Milton's Hell, far from the light of goodness, where evil reigns supreme.

As we go through literary history we note that the idea of Utopia and Dystopia inevitably changes with time. There are feminist, religious, ecological, or political Utopias. Each has its own pros and cons. In recent years there is Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* which stands out as a dystopian text. What is the significance of these Shangri Las of literature and how do they portray man's search for "lost horizons"? How and why does this yearning for an ideal place elsewhere change with the times? With the so-called march of civilization, as we move towards greater "development," what are the fears and phobias that that compel writers to create nightmare landscapes and anti-utopias where pandemonium rules?

The 18th International MELOW Conference at Jamia Millia, Delhi, from **15 to 17 March 2019**, will debate on these and related issues like the changing concept of Utopia through the ages, Utopias and anti-utopias in different cultures, the kinds of Utopias. It will also examine ecological and feminist Utopias, as well as the impact of technology on the concept of the ideal as well as cinematic representations of horror and hope.

Local Organizing Committee (Jamia Millia Islamia):

Prof Nishat Zaidi
Prof Mukesh Ranjan
Dr Shimi Doley
Dr Adeel Mehdi
Dr Asmat Jahan