

To mark the 10th anniversary celebrations of its inception, the Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences invites you to the upcoming session of the lecture series titled “Key Ideas in Human Sciences”

At

4:00 pm, Friday, 22 November 2019

On

**“What *Becomes* the Bhadrakok:
Time-Binding Difference”**

By

Tonisha Guin

Academic Fellow

Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda

Venue:

Conference Room

Centre for Contemporary Theory

C-303, Siddhi Vinayak Complex

Faramji Road, Alkapuri, Baroda 390007



Abstract:

The presentation takes up one of the key concepts of General Semantics—time-binding—and examines the ways in which it may be applied in current academic discourses of identity, identity formation, and identity projects. It argues that modern identities are discursive-performative, and explores the process of meaning-making to see how the notion of time-binding resonates with poststructuralist notions of selfhood and social formation. To do so, it uses the exemplar of the Bengali mainstream identity category of the Bhadrakok. The word Bhadrakok has been passingly familiar within Indian Cultural Studies, enough so that it is frequently used to reflect on questions within discourses of gender, colonialism, post-colonialism, modernity, urban studies, anthropological enquiries and social commentaries without critically engaging with the concept itself: it's commonsensically taken for granted that what the word denotes is shared knowledge. This is largely due to the fact that despite the plurality and deeply cosmopolitan constitution of the Bengali population, the mainstream representation of the “Bengali” has for long perambulated almost exclusively around the hegemonic figure of the Bhadrakok. The word is therefore at its core a Bengali mainstream identity category and, like most cultural identities, arguably represents an imagined community. Given this, it provides a deeply fecund but occluded site when it comes to examining the implications of notions of time-binding and identity project.



About the Speaker:

Tonisha Guin holds a Masters in English (Literary and Cultural Studies) from The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Her doctoral thesis, titled “What *Becomes* the Bhadrakok: Bengali Bhadrakok Identity Formation and Barabazar, Kolkata,” completed as a research scholar affiliated to the Department of Cultural Studies, EFL University, Hyderabad, is currently under examination. Her areas of research include politics of representation, performativity, identity studies, gender, body studies, Indian modernity, and the politics of everyday life. She has published articles on identity, spatiality, popular culture, biopolitics, and intersectionality. Before joining the Forum on Contemporary Theory as its Academic Fellow, Tonisha has worked as a teacher, editor, translator, and peer-to-peer counsellor.

All are welcome.