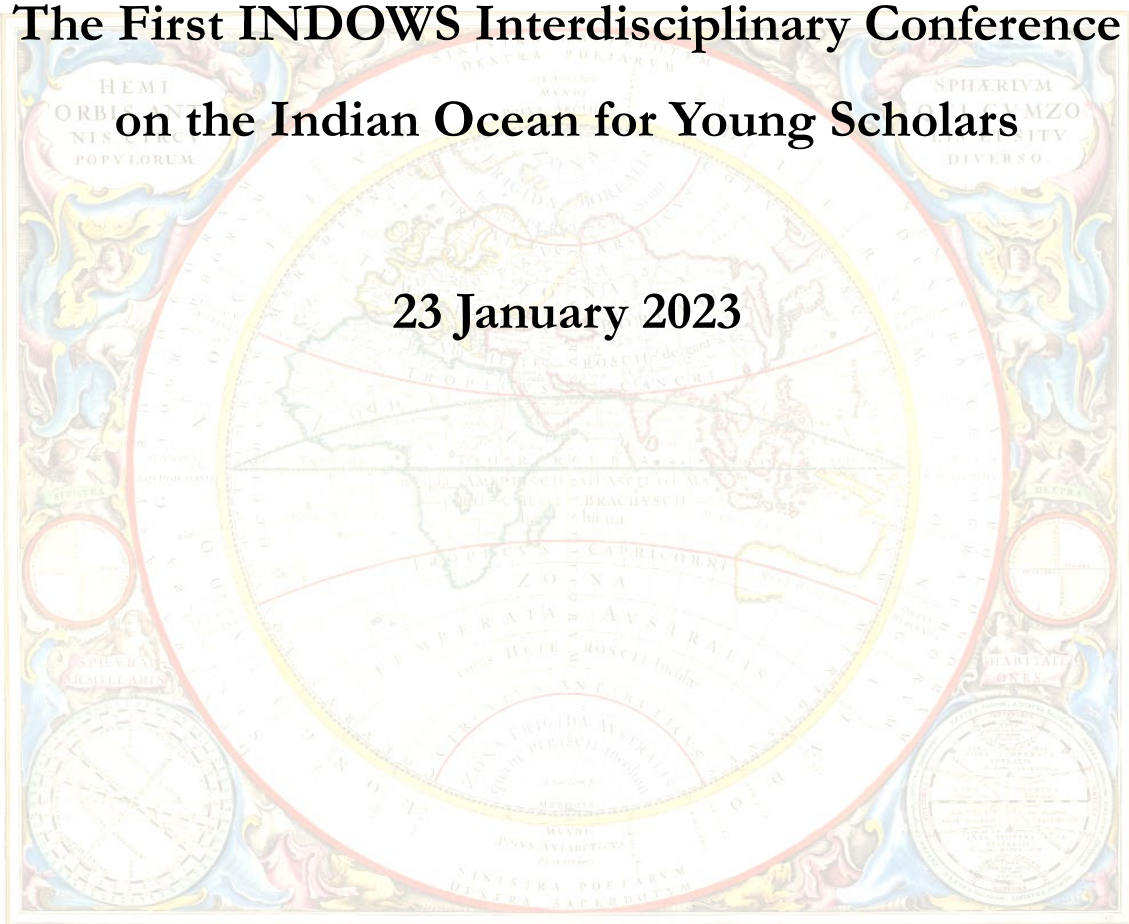


# The First INDOWS Interdisciplinary Conference on the Indian Ocean for Young Scholars

23 January 2023



Organized by

Center for Indian Ocean World Studies, National Museum of Ethnology (MINDOWS),  
A Member of Indian Ocean World Studies project (INDOWS)



**環インド洋地域研究**  
Indian Ocean World Studies

## **The First INDOWS Interdisciplinary Conference on the Indian Ocean for Young Scholars**

**Date: 23 January 2023**

**Venue: National Museum of Ethnology and Online**

**14:00-14:10 (JST)**

**Opening Remark**

**14:15-14:55**

**Azusa Matsui (Project Assistant Professor, National Institute for the Humanities)  
“Continuity and Discontinuity of History Accumulated on a Small Island:  
Mozambique Island in the Indian Ocean World”**

**15:00-15:40**

**Harleen Kaur (Ph.D. student, South Asian Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts and  
Social Sciences, National University of Singapore)  
“Orchestrating metropolitan existence: The political idea of New Delhi, circa. 1930-  
1950”**

**15:50-16:30**

**Lakshmi Pradeep (Graduate Student, National University of Singapore)  
“Commodified Tuna: Story of fishing, conservation, and frictions from  
Lakshadweep Islands in the Indian Ocean”**

**16:35-17:15**

**Tuhin Mukhopadhyay (Ph.D. student, Department of English and Culture Studies,  
The University of Burdwan)  
“Ocean and Beyond: A Benthic Imagination of Black Historiography in August  
Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean and Henry Dumas’s ‘Ark of Bones’”**

**17:15-17:30**

**Concluding Remark**

## **Continuity and Discontinuity of History Accumulated on a Small Island: Mozambique Island in the Indian Ocean World**

Azusa Matsui

Project Assistant Professor, National Institute for the Humanities

Mozambique Island is a small island located in the southern edge of the Indian Ocean. The island has accumulated a unique history first as a trading center for Arab and Swahili traders, and later as the capital of Portuguese colonial rule. Despite its small size, it would be no exaggeration to say that the island forms “a region”, with its spatial and temporal characteristics shared within it which have been developed through the accumulation of its history of involvement with Portugal and the vast Indian Ocean world. Today, then, in the island, the neighborhood relationships among women are performed in a temporal rhythm which is created via interactions with its spatial characteristics that have been formed in the course of history.

However, the history accumulated on the island in the process of forming the present-day Mozambique Island as “a region” is not only continuous. This will be the point of exploratory examination of this presentation, focusing on the history of the formation of the island's dwelling space.

The dwelling space of Mozambique Island was born in the history of relations with Portuguese colonial rule and the Indian Ocean world, and at the same time, it is dwelled by people today. However, the characteristics of the space have changed through each different historical event and have been renewed each time. Therefore, the way of interactions between space and people dwelling there has also changed each time. In this presentation, I would like to show the process, which is not necessarily continuous, where the characteristics of the space have been sometimes lost or forgotten, and other times remained, and have come to interact with the rhythm of change in the neighborhood relationships of the women dwelling there today.

Various elements are intermingled to form “a region” today, which can be regarded as “a unified region” that shares certain spatial characteristics and temporal rhythms. At the same time, however, if we overlook each different historical context and the multiplicity of history observed in the process of its formation, we may fall into a wholistic perspective when we examine “a region”. This presentation will be positioned as a first step toward examining ways to describe the continuity and its coexisting discontinuity at the same time, targeting the dwelling space in Mozambique Island.

**Orchestrating metropolitan existence:  
The political idea of New Delhi, circa. 1930-1950**

Harleen Kaur

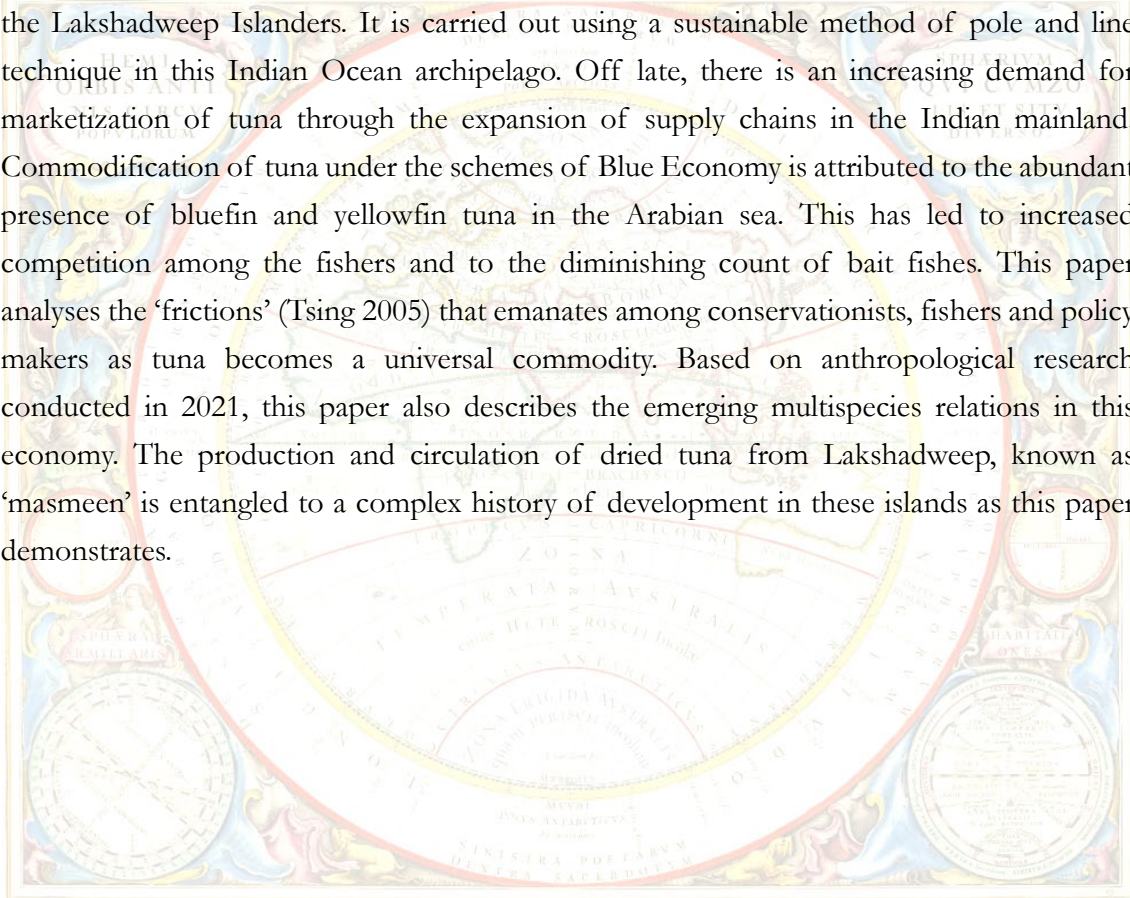
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In the years between 1911-1931, a city of ‘civil servants’ arose in the Indian sub-continent, fabled as the eastern Rome, and inspired from designs of Paris, Washington, Pretoria and Canberra; New Delhi aspired to bedeck the map of British Dominions. However, its fortunes transformed in 1947, and it became the capital of the independent Indian nation. As a capital city over the years, it has evoked many emotions related to the nation, modernity and Government. It is a city which holds the legacy of a country and places its history in the larger frame of the world. This task of a capital city, i.e. representation, became augmented in countries with a colonial legacy. As politically designed spaces, they not only held imperial modernist knowledge but also strove to carve their own identity in the post-colonial world. The evolutionary aspect of these cities associated with high-political imagination makes it crucial to look at the motivation, scheme and public discourse behind their urban façade. By tracing the idea of New Delhi as it evolved during the period between 1930 and 1950, this paper focuses on the understanding of the leading political figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru as they engaged with the colonial and post-colonial city. The overall structure of the essay includes three sections, beginning with an introduction of the theme in its general context. The following section looks at the commemoration of New Delhi in 1931 and its implications related to the changing British policy. The second section is concerned with the Indian criticism of the colonial vision of the Imperial capital. Finally, leading to the post-colonial political representation of New Delhi as the central capital.

**Commodified Tuna:  
Story of fishing, conservation, and frictions  
from Lakshadweep Islands in the Indian Ocean**

Lakshmi Pradeep  
Graduate Student, National University of Singapore

This paper discusses the promotion and commodification of tuna fishing in the Lakshadweep Islands of India. Tuna fishing is one of the major sources of livelihood for the Lakshadweep Islanders. It is carried out using a sustainable method of pole and line technique in this Indian Ocean archipelago. Off late, there is an increasing demand for marketization of tuna through the expansion of supply chains in the Indian mainland. Commodification of tuna under the schemes of Blue Economy is attributed to the abundant presence of bluefin and yellowfin tuna in the Arabian sea. This has led to increased competition among the fishers and to the diminishing count of bait fishes. This paper analyses the ‘frictions’ (Tsing 2005) that emanates among conservationists, fishers and policy makers as tuna becomes a universal commodity. Based on anthropological research conducted in 2021, this paper also describes the emerging multispecies relations in this economy. The production and circulation of dried tuna from Lakshadweep, known as ‘masmeen’ is entangled to a complex history of development in these islands as this paper demonstrates.



**Ocean and Beyond:  
A Benthic Imagination of Black Historiography  
in August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean and Henry Dumas's "Ark of Bones"**

Tuhin Mukhopadhyay

Ph.D. student, Department of English and Culture Studies, The University of Burdwan

It has been a recent trend, in the scholarly field, to think about the ocean critically, from anthropological, historiographical, sociological, literary, and other such various perspectives of scholarly studies, although, in the field of science, it is not that old. In science, the marine ecology is an important aspect of investigation, besides the studying the material properties of marine water, but there is an alternative aspect and an alternative discourse to this marine life as well. It would not be wrong to claim that ocean can be read as a historiographic material, a mnemonic text, although, throughout history, ocean has been constructed, in our popular imagination, as a void, in Auge's term, a 'non-place.' In material terms, seas and oceans are not just seen as connecting and linking spaces, but they represent and symbolize chaos and threats, and because of this, ocean has been shoved to the margin. However, if we delve deep into black history, we find that the world's largest holocaust, which is alternatively known as The Middle Passage (the middle leg of the triangular journey for slave-trading), was carried out in an ocean, the great Atlantic Ocean. In the Jewish Holocaust, approximately six million people had ruefully perished, and this number is multiplied with ten, when we are reminded of Toni Morrison's dedication in her eponymous novel, *Beloved* – 'sixty million and more.' This present study, therefore, seeks to identify the symbolic as well as the material connotation of the ocean water, and to recognize how the ocean water becomes an integral part of black American diasporic identity and of black cultural and historiographic legacy, predicated on a mnemonic context, as represented in August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* and Henry Dumas's 'Ark of Bones.' Though this work is not specifically focused on Indian ocean, it aims to bring out a literary-historical dimension of ocean water, which would be of much value in identity-formation, and would hope to make a significant contribution to Ocean Studies.

Keywords: Ocean, Historiography, Identity, Benthic imagination, Black literature