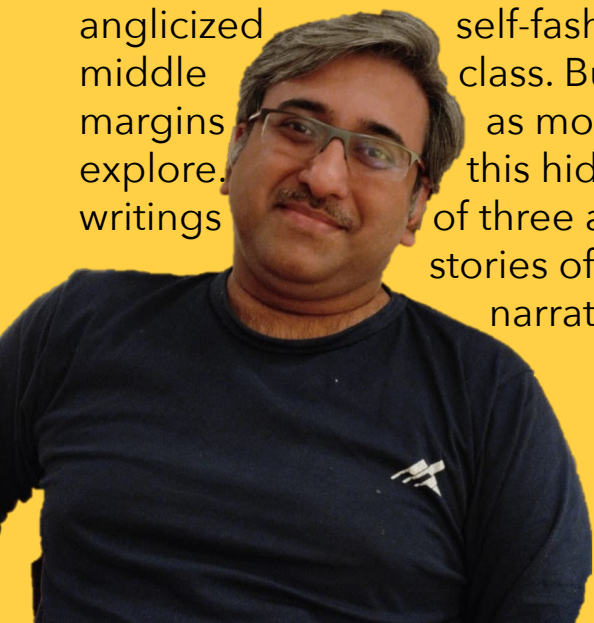


## Beyond the Trope of National Homecoming: Indian English Life Writings and the Secret History of Anglicized Self-fashioning

For more than six decades now, Indian English literature has been primarily studied through the lens of either Indian nationalism or postcolonialism. Predictably, therefore, the process of canon formation of Indian anglophone literature has prioritised texts which can be easily read as narratives of anticolonial resistance or assertions of the indigenous self-identity. In terms of Indian English life writings, this has meant foregrounding autobiographical texts written by political activists like Surendranath Banerjee, M.R. Jayakar, and Jawaharlal Nehru who participated in India's nationalist movement against the British empire.

However, anticolonial nationalism is only one aspect of the complex response that Indians, especially middle-class Indians, exhibited towards the colonising British. Another aspect of that response was marked by a strong sense of anglophilia and a desire to model oneself after the coloniser. A careful exploration of the archive of Indian English literature reveals that this anglophilia and the desire for anglicized self-fashioning is woven into a number of life writings produced by the Indian middle class. But these texts have either remained understudied or relegated to the margins as monster creations of maverick anti-national authors. My paper seeks to explore this hidden history of Indian desire for anglicization by focussing on the life-writings of three authors, Cornelia Sorabji, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, and Dom Moraes, whose stories of self-fashioning provide the secret counterpart to the autobiographical narratives of Indian nationalist leaders.



Friday, April 22: 2 pm  
SAI, Room: 130.00.03

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