*Cleaner Fish or Doctor Fish*

**Job Talk Abstract**:

I would like to begin this job talk with a very brief mention of the strange shift that has happened in my academic and professional life. After being immersed in the world of literature for fourteen long years, by some unanticipated workings of fate, now I am suddenly the coordinator of an emerging Media Studies department. Perhaps, one of the positive outcomes of this migration has also been my brief stint as an Invited Lecturer at TISS to teach a course on Media, Culture, and Society. At this juncture, I should usher the board's attention to two very personal and integral aspects of my existence. The first is the loss of theatre, which I have been associated with as a scriptwriter and director since my university days; the second, akin to a passion project, is the creation of an independent YouTube channel where I interview renowned scholars from all over the world and make it available for aspiring students and scholars of literature, gender studies, disability studies, posthumanism, and cinema.

<div align="center">Is Posthumanism the Solution to the Anthropocene?</div>

This part of my talk focuses on my current research and my desire to open a Centre for Posthumanist Studies. The questions we need to ask at the very beginning of our understanding of posthumanism as a discourse and a way of life are: Do humans deserve to be saved from the onslaught of the Sixth

Mass Extinction? Is it too late to dream about inclusion of all non-human animals and cancellation of our speciesist supremacy? If we have always been an environment-oriented, interspecies-dependent posthuman, what has been the contribution of mythology, spiritualism, and religion in shaping up that non-dualistic universe? Does posthumanism refer to existence that is pre-dual, non-dual, or post-dual? Can ancient spiritual belief systems be employed in re-imagining a time that we have lost? I would like to engage with technological and spiritual practices as an archaeological tool in designing a post-hierarchical, knotted posthuman cohabitation.

I would like to refer to a kind of tentacular approach to my understanding of posthumanism. How do we address the notion of continuation inside the Anthropocene. There are predominantly two vital ways to continue or remain — presence and absence. In presence, the human animals extend their stay on the earth either through posthuman interrelations and assemblages or transhumanist uploading of consciousness into machinic brains. Absence then is linked to total disappearance, extinction, existing as spectral forms, as fossils, and geological impressions. Anthropocene requires recognition of our precarious situation; extinction demands an imagination of self-annihilation, of reading ourselves as a nomadic process in environmental histories. The question remains not how to save humans drowning in cognitive capitalism and biological extermination, but rather if it is possible to track and locate interkingdoms so that what emerges is not entirely the Anthropos but an interconnected symbiont. What is simultaneously imperative is to find the ground (geographical, political, and ethnographic) and the local perspective from which one alleviates the crises. It is also equally necessary to explore the surrounding habitat, not just neighborhood flora and fauna, but the lives of endangered species and the debilitating effects of technological growth. On the one hand, we have the symbiotic, well-balanced animal world and the self-regulating, autopoietic earth systems that will continue to operate even with the absence of homo sapiens. On the other end of the spectrum, connected yet vastly 'unnatural', is the dystopic scene designed by human technology, gradually moving towards its dissolution. However, I believe that hope and endurance can also be extracted from our primitive myths and folktales. In our Anthropocene era, it is imperative that we release these vanishing symbols of diversity and unity from memories of diverse civilizations. Once we are in a position to reimagine the experiences of these fantastic, speculative fabulations, a new pathway for human-non-human-machine-tree encounters and entanglements could be forged.