

**“Listening to [Whom] on the Rocks of the Arabian Sea?”: A Rhetorical Analysis of Antara Ganguli’s  
*Tanya Tania***

Antara Ganguli’s *Tanya Tania* (2016) is a young adult epistolary novel portraying a complicated friendship between Tanya Talati in Pakistan, and Tania Ghosh in India. The narrative highlights their correspondence between February 1991 and December 1992, a period during which sectarian violence is stirring up in both Karachi (Pakistan), and in the North of India. While the novel gives the reader access to the correspondences, reflecting a budding female, adolescent friendship, it also positions the reader as a witness to the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay (India), following the demolition of the Babri Masjid, a 16<sup>th</sup> Century mosque, elsewhere in the North of India. In this paper, I use Rhetorical Theory of Narrative to analyze the resources employed by Antara Ganguli to “navigate [the] tension between over-simplification and nightmare-inducing intensity” of the conflict (Gangi 6). In addition to doing so, I argue that *Tanya Tania* is an embedded novel, wherein Ganguli crafts a character narrator (Tanya Talati), who turns out to be the author of this epistolary narrative.

As reviews on several websites indicate, flesh-and-blood readers of *Tanya Tania* are confounded by the ending of the novel, where there is a sudden shift from the epistolary discourse to a chapter featuring second-person narration. Using the novel’s design as the focal point of my analysis, I pose broad questions about “judg[ing] formally, ethically, and aesthetically” a) Tanya Talati’s embedded novel, and b) Ganguli and her novel, drawing attention to the change in the narrative format towards the end (Phelan 110). I respond to these questions by performing a rhetorical analysis of *Tanya Tania* by using the framework of Judgments and Progressions in Fictional Narratives proposed by James Phelan. In conclusion, I propose that the design of this novel has a bearing on the reader’s interpretation and experience of the plot, and of the conflicts presented as part of the story.