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Ravina Aggarwal, Smith College

On Location in Ladakh: Love, War, and Mani Ratnam's Dil Se Border Controls, Border Crossings

As media representations of the Kargil war reveal, landscape and territory have dominated the portrayals of Ladakh while the people who inhabit this region are rarely brought into mainstream debates around definitions of the nation and its borders. Such foregrounding of land over people can also be seen in popular films like Dil Se, a movie about chasing love in the shadows of political conflict. A substantial portion of this film was shot in Ladakh but the location remains unacknowledged. This paper sets Mani Ratnam’s film against the realities of the border war in Kargil and compares it to earlier films to offer a commentary on political, gendered, and racial aspects of border constructions.

Laura M. Ahearn, University of South Carolina

"We Were Kings Once": The Gendered Construction of Magar Identity in a Speech by Gore Bahadur Khapangi

On January 2, 1993, Gore Bahadur Khapangi, a well-known Magar activist and leading figure in the Rastriya Janamukti Party, gave a speech in Junigau, a small Magar village in western Palpa District, Nepal. This paper offers a close linguistic analysis of Khapangi's speech and of its reception by the villagers. I examine how Khapangi presented a skillful reading of history and politics in order to construct a Magar identity that builds on existing gendered stereotypes of Magars as brave and honest soldiers in opposition to Brahmans as wily and lazy landowners. Weaving multiple voices and languages into his speech, Khapangi urged his audience members not to allow Brahmans into their homes, and told them to "order" their Magar-speaking daughters-in-law from other villages to teach their children the Magar language, which is not currently spoken in Junigau. "As long as we lack social emancipation, our political emancipation will be completely impossible," Khapangi declared. In the years following Khapangi's speech, the Rastriya Janamukti Party has acquired few adherents in Junigau, but the ideas Khapangi expressed have been taken up by many villagers. For this reason, Khapangi's speech provides important insights into the processes of social change occurring in Junigau and throughout Nepal.

Huma Ahmed-Ghosh, San Diego State University


This paper will trace the impact of Westernization and on the changing images of women in India. The analysis will be based on the sociological and cultural changes taking place in response to India's shifting economic system, which has become more strongly oriented toward global capitalism in recent years. With the opening of markets in India and the import of consumer goods, patterns of consumption have altered, and powerful media images have come to influence standards of value. This is exemplified in the figure of the Barbie doll, in that it acts not just as a child's toy, but as a high status consumption item and as an embodiment of a particular ideal of femininity. The ideals embodied in media culture cater to those with consumer power, who tend to be younger, highly educated, and more individualistic. In propagating images of youth and freedom, media images contribute to the erosion of the extended family and the values that support it, and may leave older women, often most dependent on the support of others, stranded. This paper will explore the changing images of women in India and their influence on ideals of beauty, examine the effects of India's participation in the global marketplace on women in general and older women in particular, and raise questions about the degree to which "globalization" is the proper term for a process whose momentum comes so strongly from the West.
Syed Faiz Ali, University of Virginia

Inside Looking Out: Imagining Migration in Hyderabad, India

There are two questions that are frequently asked about migrants: why do they leave, and what do they do once they get where they are going? Studies of immigration and ethnic behavior often look at how migrants in their new places conceive of and reproduce "home", as for example how pre-Revolutionary Tehran gets reproduced in Los Angeles, or how Pakistanis and Indians in Hong Kong think about India and Pakistan, though they may have never set foot in India or Pakistan. In this paper, I flip the focus - I examine how Muslims in Hyderabad ("home") construct the idea of "abroad", and how the reality of "abroad" affects those at "home". Based on extensive interviews conducted in Hyderabad (1996-98), I ask two interrelated questions: how Muslims in Hyderabad imagine the outside world (specifically the United States and Saudi Arabia), and what effects the flow of money, ideas and people have on social organization of Muslims in Hyderabad.

Matthew Allen, Wheaton College

Systematize, Standardize, Classicize, Nationalize: The Work of the Experts' Committee of the Music Academy of Madras, 1930-1950

The interest of early 20th century South Asian nationalists in demonstrating the existence of indigenous "classical" performance traditions is by now well known. This paper examines a classicizing discourse which took place from ca. 1930-1952 under the auspices of the Music Academy of Madras, since the 1930s the preeminent venue for Carnatic music performance and scholarship. The Academy convened an Experts' Committee to discuss issues perceived to be of critical import to Carnatic music. Committee members, the majority of whom were Congress Party stalwarts, non-musicians from professions like law and medicine, fervently argued that extent performance practice needed to be systematized and standardized in order to be perceived as classical. Who were the people who constituted themselves as experts; why did they frame the problem as they did; and how did this discourse articulate with subsequent musical change? In addressing these questions the paper attempts to illuminate the symbiosis between nationalism and the arts in pre-independence India, and the legacy of this discussion in artistic performance since independence.

Emily Altermatt-Rice, University of Pennsylvania

Banking Sector Reforms

In August 1999, the Verma Panel issued a report on the status of "weak" public sector banks in India. The report recommended comprehensive financial, operational, and organizational restructuring as the only hope to save these weak banks from closure. No previous recommendations have stated the case for reform so strongly. It is certainly true that the three "weak" banks targeted by the Panel's report are in dire straits. However, the implications of the Verma Panel's findings should not be dismissed as applicable to only a few isolated examples. The Verma Panel called for a concerted, good faith effort on the part of the state, management and employee unions to put their recommendations into action. Particularly in the probable absence of state mediation, the approach to reform taken by labor and management at the first three weak public sector banks will pave the way for others. This paper will follow the reform efforts made by several public banks, particularly in the realm of work force reductions, in an attempt to understand how broader reform of the public banking sector may be accomplished.
Anjali Arondekar, Smith College

Border/Line Sex: In the Wake of Richard Burton Border Controls, Border Crossings

This paper travels from the muddled translations of Richard Burton in the nineteenth century, to the visual vexations of Mira Nair’s post-colonial Kama Sutra. In these representational ventures, national border-zones, such as Sindh and Kashmir, substitute sexual taxonomies, producing geographies of perversions such as the Sotadic Zone. From the colonial to the post-colonial moment, sex and sexuality become the representational playing fields on which border/line subjects are produced, from sexually normative Hindus, to deviant, emasculate Muslims. Such heuristic gestures, I argue, are crucial to the mapping systems of nationalism wherein the colonial/post-colonial body intervenes as the new legitimate subject of the Indian imaginaire, nationalism, sexuality, sexual taxonomies.

Sukanya Banerjee, University of California-Riverside

Nationalist Identities and the Traveling Concept of Metropolitan Space: M.K. Gandhi in England and South Africa (1888-1896)

The colonial encounter in the imperial metropolis of the late nineteenth century was strikingly different from the encounter staged in the colonies. As the narratives of travelers to England, especially London, reveal, the strictly hierarchical nature of the colonial relationship was oftentimes masked in the metropolis, thereby allowing Indians to view the imperial metropolis as an exemplary site for colonial relations. The difference between the Anglo-Indian encounter in the colony and the one in the metropolis plays itself out prominently in Gandhi’s autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth, as well as his letters written during his lengthy sojourn in South Africa, both of which articulate the crucial yet complex ways in which the imperial metropolis figured in the diasporic colonial imagination.

Examining Gandhi’s account of his stay in London and comparing it with his disappointment upon his return to India, my paper seeks to analyze the ways in which the imperial metropolis seemed to offer a more salubrious political space for the colonial subject vis-a-vis the colonies. Moreover, I focus especially on how the metropolis features as a touchstone for determining colonial relations, as evident in Gandhi’s crusade to guarantee the benefits of imperial citizenship for Indians in South Africa. In his participation in the debate over the Franchise Bill in 1894, particularly, Gandhi repeatedly appeals to the Crown and draws upon his own positive experiences in England to substantiate his petition to ensure voting privileges for Indians.

In studying the manner in which Gandhi’s negotiations between empire, colony, and metropole attempts to extend the sway of imperial authority precisely at its moment of ebbing influence, I extend the discussion to examine the consequences of this figuration. Using Gandhi’s autobiographical text and his letters from South Africa as evidence, I wish to highlight the ways in which tropes of travel and diaspora highlight the heterogeneous ways in which the diasporic nature of the imperial terrain, especially the metropolis, provided a starting ground for Gandhi’s political career as well as helped distill certain ideas of citizenship and national identity for Indian subjects in South Africa.

Dina Bangdel, Western Michigan University

Iconology of Vasundhara in Nepal: Deciphering Categories of Tantric Buddhist Methodology

Tantric methodology is often categorizes deities, ritual, and meditation as bahya "outer”, guhya "secret" and abhyantara “inner.” These generally reflect the movement from exoteric, openly
accessible Tantric practices to secret, more esoteric spheres that are restricted to the initiated. Iconology and symbolism of Buddhist images may also be interpreted to signify such core categories of Tantric practice.

The paper will discuss the iconology of Vasundhara in this context and place it within the larger cult of Tantric goddesses (yoginis) of the Newar Buddhist community in Nepal. As the patron deity of Buddhist women and as the goddess of wealth, Vasundhara is central to the lay practices. Yet, her iconology also hints at practices that are confined to the highly esoteric methodologies of the Highest Yoga Tantras. Using the ritual practices and material evidence, the paper aims to decipher Vasundhara’s multivalent symbolism within the categories of Tantric practices; further, Vasundhara’s role among the Tantric Buddhist yoginis will also be considered.

Amy Bard, Columbia University

"To Whom Shall I Sing Lullabies Now?" Form, Function, and Feeling in "Women's Songs" as Poetic Genres of the Shi' Mourning Assembly

This paper examines the functions and feelings ascribed to several poetic sub-genres, especially lullabies and mehndi (pre-wedding) poems, in Indian and Pakistani Shi' mourning rituals (majalis-e aze). In these pieces, contextual markings from outside the majlis enable performers to evoke complex admixtures of tribute, grief, devotion, and affection. Poignant lullabies and wedding "songs" derive some of their complex emotional tenor from widely resonant Indian rituals and from their intense contrast of sorrow with joyful familial or devotional love. Studying the inflow of popular song-types into circumscribed Muharram rituals provides a vantage point on debates and tensions within Shi' communities over how to classify "music" and "poetry," over the propriety of each in today's mourning assemblies, and over relaying historically attested "facts" of Imam Husain's martyrdom at the hands of the Ummayyads, as opposed to elaborated narrative or stylistic accretions. Examples of "loni" and "mehndi" poems performed in both men's and women's majalis also allow me to interrogate a frequently articulated belief that historically dubious versions of Husain's martyrdom, pleas for the martyrs' intervention in the day-to-day lives of majlis participants, and sentimental language and bathos feature far more prominently in women's Muharram rituals than in men's.

Paul F. Benjamin, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

Origin, Development, Current Condition of Gaon Bikash Samitis in Nepal and Towns in Wisconsin, U.S.A.

In 1806, a British administrator, Thomas Munro, wrote that the Indian village was "a kind of little republic." This idea was picked up by a variety of Indian nationalist authors and later Mahatma Gandhi claimed that a village "is a complete republic, independent of its neighbors for its vital wants . . . " The idea of the village that began to emerge in Nepal in the 1950s, the gaon panchayat, was largely an incorporation of these ideas.

Twenty years after Thomas Munro described Indian villages as "little republics," Alexis de Tocqueville was in the United States of America studying democracy in America. One of the first objects of his study was local governance, the towns of New England especially. In Democracy in America, he wrote that "[i]n no country of the world do the citizens make such exertions for the common weal. I know of not people who have established schools so numerous and efficacious, places of public worship better suited to the wants of the inhabitants, or roads kept in better repair." The similarity between the perceptions of Munro in 1806 and de Tocqueville in the 1820s is striking. Was there a common cultural origin to the two concepts of local government?
This paper explores the development of the idea of town government in the United States and village government in Nepal. Examples are taken from towns in Wisconsin, the origin of whose local government law is New York. The development of the concept of the village is traced also for Nepal. Finally, a brief analysis is given for the current condition of towns in Wisconsin and villages in Nepal.

Stephen C. Berkowitz, Southwest Missouri State University

Translating and Transforming Sri Lankan Buddhist Histories

This paper argues that medieval Buddhist history writing challenges modern historiographical conventions by highlighting literary concerns over fidelity to traditional sources. The extent to which twelfth and thirteenth-century authors and scribes engaged in editing and elaborating upon the received narratives of history demonstrates that the Buddhist historical record was not inviolable. Rather, in a comparison of the Pali and Sinhala Thupavamsas, we shall see evidence of deliberate attempts to alter a narrative of the past for the sake of transforming the audience.

This reading of Sri Lankan Buddhist history suggests an alternative to purely descriptive and normative interpretations of the past. Rather, a closer inspection of the Pali and Sinhala versions of the Thupavamsa indicates that historical narratives could be envisioned in a fluid manner, whereupon translators and scribes enjoyed considerable freedom to amend historical accounts and fashion new narratives. Additionally, significant differences appearing between the cosmopolitan Pali version and the more localized Sinhala version raises important questions regarding the motives of translating histories into local languages and the values previously attributed to a knowledge of the past.

Peter J. Bertocci, Oakland University

Pir Veneration in Modern Bangladesh: The Majhbandari Movement

There has been little study of Sufi religion in present-day Bangladesh, where historically this version of Islam has had great impact in the development of a distinctive indigenous Muslim tradition. This paper introduces a widespread, but thus far little known movement of pir (Muslim saint) veneration found in Bangladesh today. Centered on a dynasty of pirs and their elaborate shrine complex located in the village of Majhbandar in southern Bangladesh, this movement attracts an untold number of people from across the socio-economic spectrum. Although claiming connection with the Qadiriyya and Chishtiyya Sufi Orders (tariqa) so prominent in the history of Muslim South Asia, the Majhbandari Tariqa, as its members call it, is a largely indigenous movement which has adopted and adapted traditional Sufi discourse and modes of spiritual expression. Devotees carry on their activities in dispersed local urban and rural groups, and they congregate by the thousands at Majhbandar during the many occasions that commemorate the various pirs' birth, death and other anniversaries throughout the year. The paper outlines the movement's history and organization and presents observational data from one of the Majhbandari commemorative gatherings held in late 1999.

Ashok Bhargava, University of Wisconsin - Whitewater and Suresh Desai, Montclair State College

NRI, NGOs, Education and Economic Development

Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) have long had a desire to play a role in India's economic development. As the income and wealth of the NRI has increased they have the potential to play a significant role in a variety of ways including direct investment, portfolio investment, and
investment in human capital - through education and humanitarian aid. This paper examines the theoretical underpinnings of investment in human capital and evaluates the empirical evidence of how NRI investment in human capital is being channeled currently. The first part of the paper will place the role of human capital in the context of development. This includes the role of education at various levels and its role in poverty reduction. The second part of the paper examines the empirical evidence of the role of education in India's economic development and the efforts made by NRI's to work with non governmental organizations (NGOs) to play a role in that development. Finally an effort is made to develop a plan for the most efficient method to utilize and leverage NRI resources to maximize the development of human capital.

Emily Blanchard West, the University of Minnesota

"Puella ex Machina: The Female Assistant in the Mahabharata"

From the rakshasi Hidimba to Ulupi the ssnake girl, the Mahabharata teems with female characters who arrive out of nowhere to provide male protagonists with friendship and valuable assistance. In contrast, strange males encountered in the wilderness are ordinarily hostile to strangers, and far more likely to be an obstruction or a danger than a benefactor. A comparative perspective reveals that this phenomenon is by no means unique to the Mahabharata, but is also a common occurrence in the Homeric epics, as well as elsewhere in the Indo-European tradition. The proliferation of a successful pattern is the standard way in which epics grow and enlarge, and a type-scene with such a widespread occurrence is worthy of special scrutiny. A close examination of these encounters with female strangers reveals several reasons why this is such a productive motif, especially when compared with the very different outcomes of encounters with male strangers. The casting of female characters in recurring helpful and supportive roles reveals a great deal about perceptions of the feminine inherent in the Mahabharata, and about the role those perceptions play in the structuring of the epic.

Jeffrey M. Brackett, University of Pittsburgh

Famous Myths and Mythic Fame: Maruti's Popularity in Western Maharashtra

Although Hanuman devotees in Maharashtra speak and write of their region's special love for Hanuman, the Marathi-speaking region is not renowned for elaborate temples, festivals, pilgrimages, rituals, gurus, monastic traditions or influential texts associated with the god. Hanuman's "popularity" in the region derives, rather, from two main sources: the ubiquity of his temples and his association with Samartha Ramdas Swami, a 17th century Maharashtra religio-political saint, traditionally believed to have been King Shivaji's guru. While the latter connection would suggest that today's political "heirs" of Shivaji -- the Shiv Sena -- would co-opt Hanuman as a part of their pro-Maharashtrian rhetoric, this has not been the case. Rather, the symbology and mythology of Hanuman -- Maruti in Maharashtra -- have remained surprisingly apolitical. Moreover, Maruti myths are highly localized, resisting the tendency found in other parts of India of streamlining the diversity and richness of Hanuman's lore into a "syndicated" pan-Indian Hinduism. In my paper I present a variety of day-to-day localizing tendencies encountered in Maharashtrian Maruti temple-myths, and suggest the possibility that the diversity of Maruti narratives is itself expressive of Maharashtrian identity, in opposition to the limiting Hanuman narratives found in pan-Indian nationalism.

Antoinette Burton, University of Illinois

Ghostly Interiors: House, Home, and Archive in Attila Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column
In this paper I propose to read Attia Hosain’s partition novel, Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961) as an archive not simply for the events of the 1930s and 1940s in India but for the experience of colonial modernity more generally as well. Sunlight is a particularly apt text for engaging the relationship of home to the archive as it relies on representations of home to reconstruct the past by memorializing one family dwelling and, by extension, one community’s experience of terror and political violence. The structural centrality of the house to the story is matched by its structural vulnerability, enabling it to stand not just as a nostalgic symbol of what was, but as a silent and accusatory witness to the upheaval of history. The paper will also examine how crucial the house is as a source of memory for the novel’s main character (Laila) and, more specifically, how its location at the intersection of the home and the world reminds her that “private memory is constantly assaulted by the revisionary moment of history” (Pickering, 1997). In doing so I hope to contribute more generally to the literature on women and memory in 20th century South Asia by analyzing the discursive forms and rhetorical strategies Hossain used to produce Laila as a remembering subject, and by examining the larger problem of what kinds of memory colonial modernity required from Indian women -- and how historical imagination was made and re-made through their engagements with it.

Indrani Chatterjee, Brown University

The Continuum of Kin and Kind

This paper looks at the household of the Nawab Nazims, located in Murshidabad, between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. By focussing on specific examples, it argues that there were different routes of incorporation by which purchased and slave-descended children could be assimilated into a group of kin. The process differed by gender and age. While under the East India Company, such processes were compromised on financial grounds, they were retarded further by doctrines of Muhammadan law devised later in the century around issues of legitimacy and consanguinity.

Sudipto Chatterjee, Tufts University

Engendered Spaces: Masculinity on the 19th-Century Bengali Stage

Up until 1873, men played women on the Bengali stage of Calcutta. When the first western-style professional Bengali theater company was founded, however, one of the sea-changes was the introduction of actresses on stage. This transition happened in the context of a controversy that raged for at least a decade. The body of the male actor who portrayed women, and the body of the prostitute-actress who replaced him, became the projection screen for ideas of nationhood and nationalism.

As the female body came to represent the nation-as-mother, the male body was visualized in the image of the worthy warrior son. This image of manhood conflicted with the apparent effeminacy of male actors who played women on stage. As such, one of the reasons presented in favor of having women appear on Bengali stage was that the feminization of those boys and young men who played female roles could then be eliminated. At the same time, new moral and ideological dilemmas were generated in the middle-class consciousness by the marginal status of those women who became the first professional actresses in Bengal.

This paper looks at the Janus-faced politics of gender representation on the western-style Bengali stage of 19th-century Calcutta and how it related to the changing concept of both the feminine and the masculine.
Zahid Chaudhary, Cornell University

Violence and Visuality: Felice Beato and the Aesthetics of Death in 1857 Photographs

The concept of technological progress, in the colonial context, is inextricably tied up with conceptions of racial, historical, and national progress. As such, the position of photography in British India becomes a site for colonial mobilization that works its effects at both the symbolic and the material level. The bodily and architectural ruins following the uprising of 1857 gave new life to a genre of documentary photography depicting violence: hanglings, or decay of tom bodies of "rebels." The Lucknow photographs by Felice Beato stage history in their reconstruction of immediacy and truth, by digging up the skeletons of the rebels and scattering them in the ruined courtyard of Sikanderbagh. I would like to examine the phantasmagoric aesthetics of death in Beato's photographs, which go beyond the logical extreme endpoint of a colonialism that seeks the death of the (insurgent) native, by continually performing the spectacle of death. What is the relation between colonial violence and technological reproduction? Are such photographs the effects of the beginnings of a fundamental shift in the modern subject's perceptual apparatus, which Benjamin gestures toward at the end of his Artwork essay?

Susan T. Chen, Emory University


In the context of anti-Colonialism, Frantz Fanon argued that to be recognized by the colonizer is a tangible desire borne by the colonized. Fanon’s observation opens up the space for further exploration of the locales where the practice and representation of the colonized’s psychology can be perceived. R. K. Narayan was already an international literary celebrity when his English-language novel The Guide was published in the 1950s. The novel was soon converted into the commercial Hindi film Guide. The novelist’s publicity of the time and the prolonged popularity of the Hindi film make the text and its "cross-genre translation" interesting locales for understanding the identity politics of the newly independent India from a perspective derived from the concerns of Fanon. Both the English novel and the Hindi film reveal a strong intention of constructing a positive image of the nation. However, while the image of India composed in the novel was mainly projected to draw appreciation from the cosmopolitan readers outside the country, it is in the Hindi film prepared for the domestic market that the admiration which the nation is willing to gain from an international context was remade into an important component of the new nation’s identity politics.

Praveen Chaudhry, University of Pennsylvania

Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Its Impact on India’s Democracy

A great deal of debate exists on how to evaluate the growth of Hindu Nationalism in the past decade in Indian Politics. There is a broad agreement that India might lose its democratic nature and the country is moving towards Hindutava. While there can be legitimate doubts about the spread of Hindu nationalism both at the Center and in State politics yet it is too early to predict that the India is moving far away from democracy and may lose some of the basic foundations that was laid down by its leaders like Nehru and Gandhi. The purpose of this paper is to carefully evaluate the election results from 1990-1999 both at the central and state level and to argue that the spread of Hindu Nationalism may not bring any fundamental threat to the deep rooted democracy in India politics.
Christopher Chekuri & Himadeep Muppidi, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Vassar College

Identity, Modernity and Migration: The Political Economy of 20th c. Deccan

This paper explores the domestic precursors to the current global migratory patterns from the Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh. Beneath the surface of the current migration into the economies of the West lies a complex history of migration, conceptions of modern rational self, and most importantly the politics and economy of the region. In particular, this paper will explore the history of the agricultural migration between the rich deltaic regions into the interior 'dry' lands of the deccan during the later 20th century. This migration was instrumental in the redefinition of Hyderabad as a metropolitan space, the emergence of region-centered politics, and the seething tensions in the cultural politics of the two historically diverse regions of Andhra and Telangana. This study seeks to beyond explanations based on Planning, Irrigation, and Development, by turning towards the caste histories, cultural productions so as to arrive at a history of the migrant farmers themselves. Part of a larger project of study of alternatives to colonial/postcolonial modernities, we seek to understand the confluence of identities, migration and modernities in the making of a global south India. It explores the intellectual, cultural, social processes that were created in the process of their rise. As such we explore the domestic routes of their migration from coastal deltaic districts into the interior Hyderabad, Deccan. The route includes, not only a physical migration, but a recourse to economy and education informed by a modern rationalist imagination.

Jennifer Chertow, Stanford University

Within and Against Hegemony: Counter Constructions of Tibetan Identity in Chicago

This paper concerns itself with discourses that produce moments of what I call "existential dissonance," when dominant ideologies about refugees generally and Tibetans in particular produce language, institutions, practices and beliefs that are fundamentally antithetical to self understandings and the orders of signification that locate members of these groups in the world. It is this unexpected meeting of a self with an already scripted and often dominating depiction of that self which motivates my discussion. I will analyze an ethnographic moment when a Tibetan interpreter refuses to translate a question posed by a well-meaning American because it interpellates Tibetans as part of a lost or dying culture. The discussion will center around the question of whether the interpreter's decision not to translate constitutes agency and if so what kind of agency that would be, given the limitation a Foucauldian analysis places on the actions of a radically constructed subject. By weaving in other accounts of Tibetans in Chicago, I will attempt to address the ways in which Tibetans mobilize and counteract the rhetoric of nationalism as well.

Ellen Christensen, Illinois Institute of Technology

Reclaiming Sacred Hindu Space at Ayodhya: The Hindu Right and the Politics of Cultural Symbolism in Contemporary India

In 1983 the Hindu right planned to build a Rama temple in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya. The project, initiated by the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), focused on liberating the site of Rama's birth. The scheme was supported by the VHP's affiliate, the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), and the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). The project was controversial, as it required the demolition of a sixteenth-century mosque on the site. The temple campaign ended with the 1992 destruction of the mosque, sparking communal violence and rioting across India and Pakistan. In this paper I present a concise history of the Rama temple controversy, investigating how the Hindu right utilized the spatial and architectural symbolism of the scheme to
help construct an image of Hinduism under siege, which they mobilized to buttress the BJP’s ambitious political agendas.

I use the Ayodhya controversy as a case study to address the central theoretical issue of this panel, the emancipation of cultural pluralism. Following Manfred Steger, I argue that purist theoretical approaches cannot explain fully the explosive power of ethnicity and identity politics. My talk draws on constructivist, instrumentalist, symbolic and psychological elements to explore the nature of the symbolic. The paper is a contribution to the broader task of investigating how, since the Emergency in the 1970s, Hindu nationalism has garnered popular support and political clout after decades of relative failure on both fronts. I argue that further investigation of the cultural symbolism of the Hindu right helps us understand how groups construct concepts of national identity, and how they mobilize them in the struggle for political power in contemporary India.

Mark Cohen, Temple University

Indian Business Associations: Collective Responses to the Reforms of 1991-2000

One argument in the literature of political economic development views the role of business associations (chambers of commerce) as integral to the development and maintenance of a collaborative dialogue between government and business. One of the problems facing Indian business associations in fulfilling their roles as dialogue facilitators is the widespread cleavages within the business communities. This fragmentation has resulted in the formation of three apex business associations, each with their own constituencies and interests. As a result, an inability to develop broad representation for the entire Indian business sector exists, forcing each apex association to develop its own individual responses to the changes in the Indian political economy since the crises of 1991. This paper will examine the underlying causes of the divisions within the Indian business community and examine the responses of the various business associations to the economic reforms during the last decade.

Gitika Commuri, University of Southern California

Post-Colonial Identity and Cultural Nationalism

In the recent years there has been considerable work on the issue of post-colonial identity. Cultural nationalism is seen as an integral feature of this kind of identity. Nevertheless very little attempt has been made to differentiate between kinds of cultural nationalism. This paper focuses on India and the debates within it, prior to independence and since after, focusing on the different articulations of cultural nationalism. It is argued that the cultural nationalism in the early phase as identified by Nandy(1983) and Chatterjee(1986, 1991) is different from that today. Both the authors see cultural nationalism as a realm in which the search for the authentic self emerges. It is clear from the discussions here that the other is the imperial power and there is an attempt to create a self that is local and contextualized and different from the other. (While I am here considering some commonalities between the authors I am not making the assumption that there arguments are the same.)

Increasingly arguments made about Indian national identity and perceptions of its changing character, allude to the issue of cultural nationalism. However one should not mistake it for the very same cultural nationalism identified by the above authors. The other 'today is no longer merely the outsider but very much within the boundaries of the state. In fact aspects of what used to be considered the other has become a part of the self to a much greater extent.

This paper examines such questions as: What then is the nature of cultural nationalism today. How is it different from the previous articulations of cultural nationalism? What conditions enable the change in the identification of the other.'
Stephen F. Cunha, Humboldt State University

High Promise: Tourism Development in the Tajik Pamirs and Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains, Alaska

The Tajik Pamirs rise where the Hindu Kush, Karakoram, Tian Shan, Alayskiy and Kunlun Shan ranges converge. Similarly, the Wrangell, St. Elias, and Chugach Mountains converge in the Gulf of Alaska where the Pacific and North American plates collide. Both regions offer extensive mountain wilderness, free flowing rivers, rare wildlife, and unusual flora. They also present unparalleled opportunities for "sustainable ecotourism" such as mountaineering, backcaching, paddling fishing, and sport hunting. This illustrated paper 1) presents the relevant biophysical and human characteristics of both regions, 2) compares government and private sector efforts to develop tourism, and 3) postulates on the future of sustainable tourism in both regions. Ecotourism in the Wrangell-St. Elias region established a new model for park development in the United States, while public-private "dual professionalism" has met mixed success in Tajikistan. Federal legislation effectively protects the Alaskan resource, while land degradation associated with independence and civil war is thwarting tourism development in the Pamirs.

Iftikhar Dadi

Contemporary Visuality in Urban South Asia

The growing and increasingly visible subjectification process manifested in civic institutions, contemporary media, nationalist and religious discourses in urban South Asia intersect with everyday practices to give rise to many unanticipated possibilities for visual expression of the popular. Some of these potentialities however, remain invisible to theories of modernity that focus solely on homogenization. The imbrications between the global and the local, between capitalist modernity and transnational media on the one hand, and myriad local practices on the other, have produced an amazingly rich, diverse urban visual popular culture, a culture that has been continually magnified throughout the twentieth century. Can this efflorescent, dynamic constellation of everyday urban visuality be conceptualized? Any such conception must carefully consider on the one hand, positivist methodologies that attempt to objectively and accurately describe the observed, and on the other hand, recognize the very impossibility of studying that which remains beyond objective description. Through a partial perspective of looking at plastic toys in Karachi, this paper will highlight the methodological issues of theoretical visibility and subaltern invisibility, and the dynamic between larger structurations and everyday visual praxis.

Vasudha Dalmia, University of California-Berkeley

The Passing of the Seasons: Delhi at the Turn of the Century

The key chapters of Krishna Sobti's widely acclaimed novel Dil-o-danish (1995) often begin with an almost set description of the seasons, the extreme cold, heat and the threshing rains that hit the northern plains of India but acquire a particular flavor in the old walled city of Delhi at the turn of the century. The paper will explore the use of these descriptions to both set a particular tone as also to change it, to mourn the passing of the old order as also to greet the coming of new one.

Sudeep Dasgupta, University of Amsterdam

Consuming Culture, Producing Identity: Contemporary Globalisations and the Production of 'Indian Culture'
The nebulous term 'globalisation' reverberates differently depending on the various interlocutors in the struggle to affirm, or intervene in, the field of cultural politics. While the ideology of globalisation hypostatises 'Indian Culture' as integral to contemporary capitalist expansion, its opponents hark back to a traditional notion of 'culture' in a naively ethno-cultural mode. The burden of my argument rests on reconstituting 'culture' outside both these framings in order to interrogate the discourse of history-as-development that subsumes both these tendencies. Thinking 'history' outside both its linear manifestations and beyond the postmodernist infatuation with fragmentation, I argue that both tendencies in the current globalisation debate veil the modern functioning of power as it incessantly re-encodes the two discourses of 'value', the 'human' and the 'surplus', in both their culturalist and economic forms.

Kavita Datla, University of California at Berkeley

Teaching Native Sovereigns: The Education of the Nizam of Hyderabad

The paper explores the controversial succession of the infant Mir Mahboob Ali Khan to the Hyderabad throne in 1889. It examines the negotiations between the British Resident, the Hyderabad court, and the Nizam's native tutors in order to formulate new standards and structures under which to educate the young sovereign. The aftermath of the 1857 led to complex negotiations of the relationship between the princely state and the British government. The education of the young sovereign, therefore, became the site for the evolution of the doctrine of paramountcy, emergent modes of administrative practices, and most important of all, the reformulation of the educational agendas.

Shilpa Dave', University of Wisconsin - Madison

Community Beauty: Transnational Embodiments in "Miss India Georgia"

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, the effects of rapid transmissions and globally televised images continually allow first generation immigrants to maintain community ties to their respective homelands be it once or twice and thrice removed from their culture of national origin. The recreation of cultural activities in another country becomes increasingly easier as cable networks offer TVASIA and video stories offer and widely distribute "camera copies" of newly released films in the United States. First generation and second generation South Asians have ready access to Hindi films, the Indian film stars, and Indian popular culture to the extent that dances choreographed to popular Hindi songs are featured at university campus cultural shows throughout the country. Indian culture is not only accessible but also the culture and the values inherent in Indian culture can be reproduced for the American born second generation.

The documentary, "Miss India Georgia" follows a group of Indian contestants through a cultural beauty contest in Atlanta Georgia and ultimately showcases the selection of the aesthetic and cultural embodiment of the ideal Indian in America. Working with Omi and Winant's notion of national racial formation, I will discuss how the cultural beauty pageant in "Miss India Georgia" disrupts the idea of a unified Indian American community. Specifically, I will address the following questions: How is the pageant a venue for the reproduction of first generation Indian values on the second generation? How does the diasporic nature of the contestants and the expectations of the position of "Miss India" conflict with the construction of a coherent vision of India by Indian Americans and with an ideal child of the second generation? How do South Asians seek to produce themselves and how does this conflict with the values in youth culture.
Steve Derne, State University of New York - Geneseo

Continuities in Hindi-Film Love Stories

Scholars, journalists, filmmakers and filmgoers argue that Hindi-film love stories of the late 1990s are markedly different from those of the 1970s and early 1990s. They emphasize that recent films were perceived as "clean," and, so, attracted more middle-class audiences than the violence and revenge fars that had previously dominated Bollywood cinema. They emphasize that the association of villainous behavior with modernity has decreased as films increasingly celebrate Western lifestyles. They emphasize that heros and heroines who sacrifice their own desires in favor of family consideration are important components of these films. Some say that these changes represent a "decisive turn in public taste." This paper suggests, instead, that the most popular social films of the 1970s-early 1990s also attracted a middle-class audience because they were regarded as "serious" films. While the heros and heroines of earlier films were presented as less Westernized than the stars of more recent films, in both eras, stars mediate between the extremes of excessive traditionalism and excessive modernization. Lovers in films today continue to show sexual self-control and respect for family authorities. While celebration of consumerism is increasing, the changes observed by scholars, filmmakers, filmgoers and journalists have been overemphasized.

Keila Diehl, Stanford University

Exile Takes Place Somewhere: How the Indian Cultural Landscape (and Hindi Film Songs in Particular) Complicates Tibetan Refugee Ideals

For many reasons, scholars, Western supporters and Tibetans themselves have largely turned a blind eye to the ways that India and Indians are integral to any understanding of contemporary Tibetan culture or identity in exile. The anti-assimilationist rhetoric of Tibetan refugees in South Asia is, however, complicated by their widespread enthusiasm for Hindi films, cultural objects whose power as agents of escapist fantasy, role-modeling and social catharsis has been well studied. Some Tibetans perceive the "Hindi film craze" in the refugee community as a significant threat to the paradigm of cultural preservation that is so central to their community's political work in exile. Tibetan fans of Hindi films, in turn, are well aware of this potential conflict and have developed ways of exploiting the slippery slope between non-ironic and parodic stances as they consume and, more recently, produce the film music that they enjoy so much. I suggest that, in this way, film songs are used by Tibetans both as an excuse or opportunity to participate in Indian life and to draw attention to the cultural differences that potentially deeply qualify the extent of or desire for that participation. My discussion of these issues is grounded in ethnographic analyses of particular film screenings and musical performances in refugee communities in India.

Jonathan D. Durr, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Reframing The Space of Bollywood: A Postcolonial Reading of Landscape in Popular Hindi Cinema.

The song-and-dance sequences integral to Indian popular cinema are commonly associated with experiencing a budding romance or imagining the fulfillment of unrequited love. Hindi popular cinema has relied on these sequences from the 1940s until today to both accelerate narrative and capture audience imagination. While these landscapes reflect tropes from Indian literary traditions, a postcolonial reading reconstructs these images to reflect the Indian within the global community. Although these song-and-dance sequences have remained relatively static, the context of their creation has changed. Liberalization of the Indian economy, increasing globalization, and growing box office power of the NRI have contributed to dramatic changes in Bollywood film production. Bollywood producers constantly searching for new worldwide locations
for filming, have transformed landscape into a cultural commodity which translates into the exotic. In this paper, I suggest that a possible postcolonial reading of landscape in these song-and-dance sequences assigns the traditional to the physical landscape, reserving the cultural landscape as public spaces where the Indian hero and heroine renegotiate modernity and the Indian image on Indian terms.

Richard Eaton, University of Arizona, Tucson

Deconstructing the Muslim/Hindu Binary with Precolonial Epigraphy

This paper will discuss four epigraphic texts, narrative texts, and chronicles— all dating to the Delhi Sultanate period — that deal with interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in precolonial South Asia. The focus will be threefold. First, it is possible to show how one can bring such texts to life in the classroom for the purpose of engaging students with issues as they were seen in their own day. Second, it is crucial to show the range of responses and interactions that vary according to (a) time-period, (b) region within South Asia (c) context of interaction, and (d) social class of participants involved. All of this is to intended to deconstruct the simplistic, totalizing binary "Muslim/Hindu" opposition that is all too familiar. Third, the paper demonstrates how the current wave of postmodernist and postcolonial studies has so massively privileged the British Raj as the centerpieces of South Asian history that precolonial history has been all but obliterated. My own contribution is a modest attempt to begin the healing process of restoring pre-British history to the classroom.

William N. Elison

Prisoners of Filmistan: Framing, Performance, and Ways of Seeing in Indian Film Culture

This paper will introduce the tenants of a village enclave located inside Filmistan Studios. In the urban heart of West Bombay, six households, formerly part of an agricultural settlement, constitute a permanent set within a film production facility. The tenants’ living spaces and performances are employed in the village sequences that are an established part of standard Hindi film narratives. Propositions for further ethnographic work at Filmistan will address a twofold inquiry. The first will examine the tenants’ agency as both producers and consumers of mass-mediated village imagery: an important contextual factor here will be a trend that can be identified in the Hindi cinema towards an increasing fetishization of the village space as a reified, pan-Indian arcadia. The second line of inquiry will draw on anthropological and film studies approaches in exploring how different, culturally conditioned ways of seeing might endow such arcadian images and spaces with an authoritative role in the construction of national subjects.

Jean Ellickson, Western Illinois University

An Alternate View: Religion in a Bangladesh Village

This paper contrasts the homogeneity of Islamic belief and ritual in one Bangladeshi village I studied with the diversity and conflict in the modes of belief and practice in another that I studied six years later. In the first village, Muslims saw themselves as no different from any other Muslims elsewhere and considered themselves typical of the worldwide Muslim umma as they perceived it. In the second I found a different situation. Here the village was split between Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi School of Law, more typical of the country as a whole, and members of the group known as Muhammadiya or Ahl-i-Hadith. The latter claimed strict and direct adherence to the Quran and hadith, rejecting all the later schools of law, opposed the presence of women otherwise tolerated by Sunnis during Eid performances of public worship, and inveighed against the veneration of local saints and their shrines so commonly found among Bangladeshi Muslims.
as a whole. The paper outlines differences in belief and ritual practice between the Muhammediya and the more dominant Sunni ideology in Bangladesh, illustrating the considerable religious diversity that can be found in Bangladeshi Islam today.

Michael Fisher, Oberlin College

The Families of Begum Sombre of Sardhana

Removed by circumstance from the normative Indian patriarchic, patrilineal family structure, Begum Samru of Sardhana (1741/53-1836) entered diversity of families. In her youth, she left or was sold by her Muslim natal family, apparently entering the female-centered world of dancers/courtesans. Purchased by Walter Reinhardt, a German Catholic mercenary, as his mistress/second wife, she shifted her position by her force of will into the central figure in his household, even during his lifetime, but especially after his death. Having no biological children, she made his progeny her dependents, ruling the state of Sardhana and creating around herself a court family that combined elements from Islamic, Catholic, and Hindu cultures. She chose a love-marriage with a Catholic French officer in her army, which sparked a mutiny by her army, led by Reinhardt’s son. While her new husband died in the coup, she survived and recovered her throne. An intimate of the Mughal imperial family, she strategically shifted her political support from the Marathas to the British at a key moment, thereby perpetuating her rule. Finally, she arranged the marriage of Reinhard’s great-grand-daughter, and selected the son of that marriage as her heir. Using primary source material, this paper will analyze Begum Samru’s diverse families.

Julie Flowerday, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Constructing a Photography Exhibition for Hunza, Pakistan, 1930s and 1990s

Hunza in Treble Vision: 1930s and 1990s is a photography exhibition constructed about a small community of villages in the high Karakoram valley of Hunza in northeast Pakistan. Three photographic scenarios of this community are juxtaposed with one another: one made in British Colonial India principally between 1934-35 by the late Colonel David Lorimer, a retired British Colonial officer, and two others made in Pakistan during 1999 by me.

SINGLE VISION comprises a core selection of 1930s photographs that describes the restricted road to the community, the local rulership, and economy. DOUBLE VISION is a paired version of each of the selected photographs from the 1930s photographed again in the 1990s. The paired photograph typically contributes ambiguity—double vision—to its predecessor because surrounding conditions have changed. TREBLE VISION is based on Lorimer’s thematic construction, but I focus on the postcolonial landscape and explore the difference of peoples lives in what is now Pakistan.

In discussing the construction of the exhibition, I consider how differences between Lorimer and myself contributes to the meaning of the photographs. Meaning is a self-reflexive process that is contextually based. Never co-equal, it reverberates with power and intention.

Marcia J. Frost, Grinnell College

Village Establishments in South Asia

In 1824 the monsoon failed across most of western India, and scarcity and fear of famine were widely reported throughout Bombay Presidency. In Kheda district the demographic impact was a sharp decrease in population growth as mortality of young girls rose, and adult males and
adolescents of both sexes migrated in search of food and employment. The adverse demographic impact of this scarcity was not, however, equally felt by all castes. In this paper the ability of the vasvaiya (village establishment) castes to survive the adverse effect of the 1824/5 scarcity is explored. In Kheda district vasvaiya were entitled to compensation from the village corporation and/or the individual households to whom they provided goods and services. Entitlements from the village included grain from the heap, tax-free or concessionary-rate land, and/or a cash salary. Entitlements from individual households included grain (levied per household, plow or cart) and cash. These entitlements to grain, land and cash varied widely across vasvaiya castes. In this paper the per capita grain equivalent of the vasvaiya entitlements in 18 villages are estimated, and the hypothesis is tested that vasvaiya castes with smaller per capita entitlements experienced more adverse demographic consequences during the scarcity than those with larger per capita entitlements.

Tatsuro Fujikura, University of Chicago

"Development, Discipline, Dynamism": ‘Active Youths’ and the Practice of Liberty in Post-Jana Andholan Nepal

The paper explores tensions and possibilities of contemporary politics in Nepal through an inquiry into the socio-political location of the ‘youths’. In particular, the paper focuses on the aspirations and strategies of the youths engaged in politics and grassroots development activities in rural western Nepal.

"Development, Discipline, Dynamism" is the motto of the Sports Council of Nepal. The motto signifies a governmental anxiety, and its will to both contain and exploit the power of the youths for the project of nation-building. The category ‘youths’ has gained additional salience since 1990. "Democracy", it is said, signifies discrediting of traditional authoritative figures. In development talks, the three alleged challenges to Nepal's growth, "poverty, lack of education, and unemployment" intersect at the category 'youths'. In the meantime, more and more youths are recruited into the front-line of development works. The bodies of youths are also deployed in the often violent politics of multi-party democracy. The youths' in contemporary Nepal constitute a critical node where complex battles between governmental will and various movements for social transformation are being fought, and the aspirations and actions of the youths in this conjuncture provide glimpses into the limits and possibilities of the political present.

Yasuko Fujikura, New School for Social Research

Debates on Trafficking in Women and Prostitution: The Question of Family Values in Democratic Nepal

The paper analyzes the politics of female sexuality in contemporary Nepal by focusing on public debates on trafficking in women and prostitution generated by NGOs, women activists, lawyers and journalists. In particular, I focus on the notion of "innocence" in the discourses on trafficking in women to identify such dividing practices as polarization of childhood and adulthood, health and disease, the criminal and the innocent, and forced and voluntary decision making. I will explore how this notion, central to the international human rights discourses, has been remade in the public debates in Nepal, incorporating dominant idea of unmarried female child in terms of family honor, as well as images of simple, uneducated, poor village girls, as viewed through middle class sensitivity. The examination of these debates will illuminate aspects of the configurations of, and the challenges faced by the aspirations towards equality, justice, and human rights in contemporary Nepal.
Bishnupriya Ghosh, Utah State University


As a historically significant moment of reckoning for the Nehruvian India, the Babri Masjid destruction has invited reconsiderations of national community, state, nation and, inevitably, the past. Here I analyze three direct visual representations of the Bombay riots of 1992-1993: Anant Patwardhan’s two-hour documentary, a self-proclaimed “inquiry,” “Father, Son and Holy War”; Amy Lal’s 20-minute essay, “Jala Do,” a part-autobiographical reflection on her “return” to Bombay; and the more well-known feature-length family melodrama, Mani Ratnam’s Bombay (1995), plotting the fortunes of one family before and during the riots of 1992-1993. Together these texts, with their varying claims on historical truth, attempt to account for the Bombay riots—how did this come to be? From where does the violence stem? The desecration of the civil space that is Bombay, perceived to a microcosm of the plurality that is India, and its fall to majoritarian politics, preoccupy these filmmakers as a test-case for the possibilities of Indian nationhood past the Nehruvian era. My paper will demonstrate the ways in which all three filmmakers deploy a series of audiovisual strategies—editing, camera movement, voice-over narration and extradiegetic music—to present their somewhat differently aligned progressive politics.

Durba Ghosh, Amherst College

Residing with a Begum: Family, Politics and Child-rearing in Early Colonial Hyderabad

This paper analyzes how the child-rearing of mixed-race children became intricately connected with the dynamics of family, politics and the emergence of racial anxieties in early colonial India. Taking up the diplomatic controversy surrounding the conjugal relationship between the British Resident of the East India Company, James Achilles Kirkpatrick (1762 - 1605), and his native female companion, Begum Khair-un-nissa, (d. 1836) granddaughter of a nobleman who was a member of the Nizam's court in Hyderabad, this paper will examine personal correspondence and court chronicles to illuminate the ways in which racial, religious and social identities were negotiated and elaborated within Kirkpatrick's extended family and the nizam's court. Moreover, this paper will argue that the domestic spaces of colonial contact were a productive site for the amplification of various types of anxieties between colonizer and colonized. By examining the liminal figures of mixed-race offspring, I follow the ways in which the colonizer/colonized dichotomy might be disaggregated in order to enable a more nuanced reading of how racial and cultural distinctions were produced within the family and mapped onto the politics of empire. In moving from the household to the larger British empire, this paper will chart how the Kirkpatrick household was an example of the empire writ small.

Priyamvada Gopal, Connecticut College

Seedhi Si Baat, Ya Mirch Masala? Translations of the Progressive in the Cinematic Aesthetic of K.A. Abbas

A prominent member of the Progressive Writers Association as well as the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), K.A. Abbas wrote several novels in English and Hindi during the course of a flourishing journalistic career, but his greatest contribution has been as the scriptwriter and scenarist of several popular commercial films, many of them landmark successes in the long history of Indian cinema. His collaboration with superstar and director Raj Kapoor is as legendary as the stupendous success of his quasi-naturalistic cinema in the Soviet Union. This paper will examine Abbas' translations of Progressive ideologies, aesthetics and narratives of social transformation into the idiom of the cinematic popular. Noting the specific and symptomatic ways in which these translations are gendered, the paper also comments on the relationship of genre formation to economies of production such as those embodied by the film industry. Of
specific interest here are Abbas' early English novels Inquilab and Tomorrow is Ours, the collaborative IPTA film on the Bengal famine, Dharti Ke Lal, as well the Awara/Mera Naam Joker/Shri 420 film trilogy which focuses on the question of environment versus heredity in the emergence of the new citizen-subject of postcolonial India. Abbas almost single-handedly developed an influential language of popular cinematic realism that is marked by its dismissal of conventional notions of credulity and facticity. A key concern of this paper is the gendering of this realism and its relationship to more avant-garde notions of the real where too, women often become shorthand for "the real."

Peter Gottschalk, Southwestern University

Challenging Identities: Muslims and Hindus in "A Virtual Village"

Classes in South Asian religions often include Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism to the exclusion of Islam - a religion not commonly considered indigenous to the Subcontinent. Yet students who take courses in Islam seldom expect a focus outside of Arabia. When Islam in South Asia is considered, too often it is construed as an invader driven by a logic of domination and exclusion that forcefully sets Muslims apart from their non-Muslim neighbors. Coping with a short semester and an expansive tradition often prompts teachers of religion to forego the cultural complexities of identity and reduce descriptions to the seemingly straightforward level of "religion." This paper seeks to explore some of the difficulties in teaching Islam in South Asia while demonstrating new approaches through "A Virtual Village." This internet-based teaching resource allows students to virtually explore a north Indian village and, most pertinently, discover for themselves through narratives and images how the residents are not simply "Hindus" and "Muslims" who divide their village into communally-exclusive spheres. Instead, the students realize the complex identities and interactions that are part of everyday life in north India, including religious life, which can be shared as often as not.

Inderpal Grewal, San Francisco State University

Refugees, Cosmopolitans and Americans: Narrating South Asian Sikh Women in the US

This paper will focus on the emergence of gender-based asylum within refugee law in the US and the transnational contexts in which South Asian Sikh women are able to obtain asylum. I will examine the narratives given by Sikh women in San Francisco to the INS and look at the issues regarding new forms of cosmopolitanism, state subjects, and the kinds of cultural identities constructed in the practice of crossing borders.

Gregory Grieve, University of Chicago

Cashing in on Culture: Or From Dharma To Capital In Three Easy Steps Emerging Cultures of Economy in the Kathmandu Valley

This paper is an initial exploration into the economics of cultural tourism in the Nepalese City of Bhaktapur. It concentrates on the Bhaktapur Festival 1997, which was held on October 22-26, 1997. This cultural gala attracted 400,000 Nepalis and 20,000 Western tourists, and hinged on Bhaktapur's role as Nepal's "Cultural Capital," Since the reconstruction of over 189 of Bhaktapur's temples by the German-funded Bhaktapur Development Project, and the appropriation of heritage conservation by the local municipality, tourism plays an ever-increasing role in Bhaktapur's economy. From Bhaktapur's five-dollar admission fee to the small boys who hawk their services as guides, as one American expatriate living in Kathmandu said to me, "in Bhaktapur, when I hear the word 'culture' I reach for my wallet." Yet, the economy of tourism is more complicated than the strip mining of the city's heritage. And while some residents worry about "cultural
pollution,” most people in Bhaktapur are proud of there city’s new-found fame as a UNESCO World Heritage City. Moreover, they appreciate how tourist funds have been used for the city’s upkeep and the renovation of temples. In the paper I will outline the strategies for turning dharma into culture, and culture into capital, and show some of the ways that Bhaktapurians have put their “culture” to work.

Arjun Gunaratne, Macalester College

"We are the Buddha’s Descendants": Buddhism in the Shaping of a Tharu Identity in Nepal

The term Tharu is an ethnonym shared by a number of ethnic group inhabiting the lowland region of Nepal known as the Tarai. Since the end of Rana rule, the Tharu elite has been melding these various communities into a single ethnic category. While these Tharu communities vary a great deal in terms of their religious systems, Tharu elites in the Eastern Tarai have embraced Theravada Buddhism as a central aspect of their identity and claim to be descendants of the original Sakayas. They use Buddhism to define all Tharus as a community distinct from and superior to Nepal’s Hindu majority and reject the myth of Rajput descent put forward by Tharu leaders in other parts of the Tarai to account for Tharu origins. From their perspective, Tharus are the victims of both Hindu and Muslim civilization. This discourse is widely known and accepted in the leading Tharu ethnic association, the Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha. This paper discusses the views of two of the first and most articulate proponents of this thesis, Ramnand Prasad Singh of Saptari and Tej Narayan Panjjar of Udayapur. Other Tharus, while not claiming to be Buddhists, are nevertheless sympathetic to these ideas because of the prestige that attaches to the notion of being descendants of the Buddha.

Sumit Guha, Brown University

Rents, Markets and Services: Village Servants in 18th and 19th Century India

The missionary anthropologist William Wiser discovered the "Hindu Jajmani System" in a North Indian village in the 1920s, and sociologists and anthropologists quickly enshrined it as an ancient and vital organ of Indian society. Historical work on this topic has cast doubts on both the antiquity and the ubiquity of this institution. Thus Peter Mayer and Simon Commander have proposed that it actually came into existence in North India in the later nineteenth century as a consequence of socioeconomic changes at the time. Hiroshi Fukazawa had already used pre-colonial sources from Western India to suggest that it the traditional precursor of 'jajmani' was in fact the village servant (baluta) system. This paper reconsiders the issue in the light of sources from the same region and proposes that we recognize that the system was periodically repaired and recreated because of the rents that it generated - rents that were shared between political masters and the village servants. It thus attempts to show how the state and the market were both intrinsic to what have all too often been seen as 'pre-capitalist' social institutions in South Asia.

Ambreen Hai, Smith College

"E. M. Forster's Stories of Colonial Power, Violence, and Interracial Same-Sex Desire"

This paper will focus on two posthumously published short stories that E.M. Forster wrote concurrently with A Passage to India: (1924): "The Other Boat" (1913-58) and "The Life to Come" (1922). Both concern a tortured interracial homosexual relationship between an Englishman (in one a missionary, and the other a naval officer) and an upper class Indian. In each the white man is cast as hypocritical, weak but torn, and the Indian as unscrupulous, foolish, the one to pursue
and seduce the other. Each story ends in the murder and suicide of both lovers as disaster snowballs because of linguistic/cultural misunderstanding. Through a comparative analysis, this paper will examine how these ironic, multi-layered stories illuminate the complex imbrications of colonial power, violence and homoerotic desire. It will argue that they function as a conjoint critique of colonial race relations and homophobia through a form of imperial self-expose, which produces a darker reading of the dynamics of Fielding and Aziz in Passage and exemplifies Forster’s own complicated but unspeakable understanding of the ways in which such desire draws and depends upon inequities of colonial/sexual power and the pleasures of inflicting pain.

Kathleen Hall, University of Pennsylvania

Tradition and Translation: Paving Life Paths in the Sikh Diaspora

Modernity has brought about transformations of time and space or the "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interaction and the creation of ever increasing discontinuities across time and space. Yet, modernity has not brought an end to the importance of "tradition." "Tradition" is being refashioned outside of "traditional societies" in the deterritorialized spaces created by the movement of peoples, ideas and images. Forms of "tradition" are being produced within the borderlands of modernity that both reassert the continuity of "pure" and unitary traditions through time, while they reconfigure the connection of tradition to space. Among second and now third generation South Asians in England, there are individuals who are fashioning Rushdie-esque lives lived in "translation," as well as others who feel a deep connection with and commitment to religious and cultural "traditions" now transplanted in and mapped across global diasporic space. In the choices they make in their everyday lives, Asians in Britain are creating local lifestyles that are "translated" (hybrid cosmopolitan) or "traditional" and often a mixture of both. What I explore in this paper are the cultural dynamics that are informing the choices people are making as they create new ways of being British, Asian and more specifically "traditionally Sikh" in England. The paper illustrates these processes through biographical portraits of British Sikh individuals who have shared their lives with me, depicting the "life-paths" they are paving as they achieve social mobility in England.

Susan I Hangen, University of Iowa

Debating Democracy at the Margins: The MNO in East Nepal

Some Nepalis perceive the Mongol National Organization (MNO) as posing a threat to the country’s fledgling democracy. In this paper, I show how the MNO in fact strengthens democracy by instigating a process of questioning the post-1990 political system. The MNO is a small, marginal political party with support in rural east Nepal that seeks greater power for "Mongols," the numerous ethnic minority groups in Nepal, and calls for radical changes such as eliminating the monarchy and creating federal states. The MNO argues that the current political system is not a "true" democracy, pointing, for example, to the Election Commission’s refusal to register their party as an illustration of the limited nature of democracy in the new system. The MNO’s critiques of the present system offer insights into people’s expectations for the changes that would emerge after 1990, and their ideas about the meanings of democracy. Even while the MNO questions the existence of democracy in Nepal, the party’s ability to operate publicly and to openly debate democracy demonstrates the relative openness of the new system. Although the MNO and its opponents disagree on what constitutes democracy, these actors all voice their political claims through forwarding the idea of democracy.
Anne Hardgrove, University of Texas at San Antonio

Tourists, Traders, and the Invention of Family Memory at Historical Sites in Rajasthan

In this paper I raise the question of why migrant traders from Rajasthan, called Marwaris, built elaborately-painted mansions in their desert homelands of Shekhawati from the 1850s to the 1930s. I make the point that these houses - which for the most part were quickly abandoned -- were built as ancestral homes for ancestors who never lived in them. The aim of this part of my project is to understand the cultural and historical processes through which the migrant traders felt the need to construct such housing as a practice of marking and claiming their homelands. Second, I wish to raise questions about how these mansions are now being rapidly transformed into new objects of visual consumption, and how these objects, the havelis mansions, are acquiring a new importance through global tourism. Over the past twenty years, these elaborately painted and largely abandoned mansions, known as havelis, have become the latest Euro-American 'discovery' in the burgeoning heritage industry of Rajasthan. I end by examining this recent popularity of these mansions among foreign tourists.

Ishwar Harris, College of Wooster

Indian National Identity: A Gandhian Perspective

In India, the question of identity has always been a crucial issue, for a tremendous variety of peoples and cultures have occupied the land since antiquity. With the encounter with the West, however, this issue gained increased significance and importance leading to the period of the struggle for independence and into the 21st century. In this context, the role of Mahatma Gandhi and his disciples in defining national identity is crucial. In light of the current debate over globalization and global citizenship, the Gandhian perspective on "nationhood" is important in understanding the problems of national identity in India. This paper outlines the Gandhian perspective and evaluates it critically.

Deana Heath, University of California at Berkeley

"Defining 'Obscenity' in a Colonial Context: The Indian Government as Reluctant Censor"

One of the traditional views of the censorship of obscenity in India holds that the British Government in India attempted to inculcate their own notions of morality and obscenity in their Indian subjects via such means as English education in an effort to create 'moral' colonial subjects. Yet despite the Indian Government's institutionalization of Mill and Macaulay in college curricula and its periodic censoring of certain native publications, in the matter of obscene literature the colonial Indian state showed surprisingly little interest in controlling the reading matter of either its European or Indian subjects. In fact many of the pressures to censor obscene publications in India actually came from Britain, and while the Indian Government did indeed have 'official' and 'unofficial' systems for the censorship of obscenity in place by the late nineteenth century, these were in large measure a by-product of the mechanisms employed to censor sedition, and were nowhere near as invasive and arbitrary as the censorship systems for the control of obscene publications in Britain or in the empire's largest settler colony, Australia.
Hans Henrich Hock, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Who Owns the Past? -- Indigenism vs. Philology

The traditional Indological hypothesis of an Aryan invasion in South Asia has been severely criticized by both Hindutvavadins and other Aryan-Indigenists, including the leftist archaeologist Dilip Chakrabarti and the communist Bhagwan Singh. However, Dravidian and Deit nationalists advocate a non-Aryan indigenist position, adopting the most extreme versions of traditional Indology.

Both of these indigenist approaches lay claim to the Indus Civilization but lack solid philological grounding, often justifying this lack by claiming that traditional philology is unscientific. Unfortunately, neither approach has been able to replace philology with a methodology that yields consistent results - irrespective of ideological position. Claims of linguistic affiliation or non-affiliation, therefore, are mutually contradictory and cannot be resolved in the absence of a shared methodology. Traditional philology, by contrast, provides consistent solutions, both for prehistoric affiliations, such as the extra-South Asian linguistic affiliation of Sanskrit, and for established historical ones, such as that of the Prakrits and Sanskrit. I conclude by summarizing the implications of philologically grounded findings for the indigenism debate.

Matthew Hull, University of Chicago

Purdah, Privacy, and the Built Environment in the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metropolitan Region

This paper will describe how purdah practices in the Islamabad-Rawalpindi metropolitan region are shaped by the social composition and spatial order of settlements. The public-private organization of modernist Islamabad is contrasted to older urban and village socio-spatial orders that are better characterized in terms of a continuum from common to possessed, rather than in terms of a dichotomy between public and private. The paper argues that, paradoxically, the public-private organization of the built environment and social heterogeneity which are characteristic of modern neighborhoods intensify purdah practices among religiously conservative residents. Such a finding suggests that the increasing adherence to Islamic norms in urban Pakistan may in some cases reflect less a conservative backlash against modern urban life than a transformation in the conditions of action in urban environments.

Syed Bashir Hussain, University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh

The Economic Dimensions of Military Interventions in Pakistan--An Assessment.

The military has typically used political instability in the country as a justification for its interventions in the governance of Pakistan. However to maintain and prolong its hold over the state, the military leadership has found it convenient to invoke the economic imperatives of restructuring and development presumably to rectify the prevalent corruption and mismanagement. In that respect, the current reincarnation of military putsch is no exception. The highlights of the agenda of this regime include such lofty but non-specific goals as revival of the economy, improvement of investment climate, privatization of state enterprises, enhancement of tax collection, recovery of defaulted loans, accountability of the corrupt and the like. The interesting point about this line of rationalization for prolonging military rule is that so far it seems to have worked in every instance, in a manner of speaking.

The apparent credibility of this approach rests on two popular premises: First, the latest entrants to the privileged club of economic advancement (the so-called tiger economies) have all made it under the auspices of authoritarian rule. Second, the comparison of economic performance under
military vs. civilian management in which the former seems to excel. Even if the premises are
granted at their face value, the fly in the ointment remains. Despite prolonged military rule and its
avowed economic achievements the country remains in deep economic trouble. A closer
examination therefore is in order of facts and figures as well as the logic of the arguments to
decipher whether military interventions are part of the solution or a source of the problem.

Preminda Jacob, University of Maryland-Baltimore

Street Graphics: An Analysis of Cinema and Political Advertisements in Tamilnadu

This paper analyzes spectacular and controversial forms of film and political advertising, found
predominantly in the city of Chennai, India. Displayed at strategic public locations the
advertisements, known locally as "banners" and "cut-outs", impart a sheen of modernity to the
spaces of the post-colonial city. Commissioned both by the Tamil film industry and by local
political parties, banners, ranging in size from 10' by 20' to 10' by 120', are stretched canvas that
depict animated, brilliantly hued scenes. "Cut-outs", or towering freestanding portraits of film stars
and politicians hand-painted on plywood board, anywhere from 20' to 70' in height, usually
accompany the banners.

Despite the intensive labor and large sums of money invested in these constructions, they are
ephemeral: film advertisements remain on site between two weeks to three months; and political
advertisements are displayed for just two to five days, the duration of a political event. These
images are fascinating because they combine the power of the photographic image, which is
magnified to gigantic proportions, with the memory, or promise, of filmic pleasure. Formal
analysis of the images unpacks a complex semiotics of internationalism and neo-traditionalism as
well as a mix of commercial and esthetic messages.

Jon Jahnke, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Brahminical Bodies and Bhoga Bodies in 17th Century Madurai

The body of Roberto DeNobili, a Jesuit Missionary living in Madurai in the 17th Century, was a
testing ground for new ideas about religious conversion. His attempts to convert high-caste
Hindus were more successful than those of his predecessors because of the conversion he
brought about in his own body. Through changes in dress, dietary practices, language, and social
alliances, he became respected as a teacher of salvation. DeNobili proved that conversion to
Christianity without losing caste was possible, but it was still not considered entirely desirable by
large and influential groups. His "Brahminical Body" met with considerable resistance in the form
of the "Bhoga Body" favored by the Nayaks of Madurai and surrounding states. The exalted
folklore of the body focused on conspicuous consumption and sensual enjoyment by a ruler
closely associated with local deities. Saiva Siddhanta Bhaktas also favored a more sensual
notion of the body in religious practice and showed less concern with rigid practices to ensure
caste purity. These two groups proved especially resistant to DeNobili's conversion attempts
because their ideas about the role of the body in religious practice contrasted sharply with those
current in both Brahminical and Catholic discourse.

Anupama Jain, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Nation-Building in South Asian American Literature

Novels by certain South Asian women in the United States reveal that imagining community in the
late 20th and early 21st centuries is a project of transforming our ideas of nation in order to
consider how individuals enact multiple types of belonging simultaneously. Citizenship today, as
portrayed in novels by Meena Alexander and Bharati Mukherjee, is not only a matter of allegiance to one nation but is instead a more confounding participation in diaspora, migratory identities, and transnational cultures. In depicting such altered conditions of citizenship, these authors utilize a literary genre that has traditionally been a site for posing questions and proposing answers about the nature of self in relation to nation. The Bildungsroman was originally identified as a German novel form concentrating on the maturation or bildung of an ideal national citizen in the 19th century. Considered by some literary critics to be obsolete today, the genre is nonetheless still being usefully employed by women and other minority writers for its emphasis on responsible participation in a body politic and on the development of self-identity. These writers show us how this form can present us with a new vocabulary for discussing nationalism as it shapes and is shaped by South Asians within the United States.

Kajri Jain, Macquarie University

Muscularity and Its Ramifications: Mimetic Male Bodies in Indian Mass Culture

In this paper I want to open up some questions about the links between masculinity, muscularity, power (including state power) and the work of the mass-cultural image in postindependence India. In particular, I explore the corporeal figuration of gender identity in a modernity which is not necessarily predicated on a liberal conception of the subject, or on an epistemic constellation where masculine power and sexuality are tied in with a valorisation of the labouring body. I proceed by revisiting the issue of the increasing muscularity of male deities in the recent imagery of Hindutva, which, it has been argued, indexes the violence of Hindu absolutism. However, Hindutva also formed a basis for earlier anticolonial nationalism, so why have such muscular images only appeared in the past decade or so? In addressing this question via a series of iconic images, I situate male bodies - those of the consumers of these images as well as those figured in them - within an embodied, performative relationship to the iconic image, and within an equally corporeal complex of ‘mimesis and alterity’ in relation to female, divine, animal and caste-inscribed bodies.

Daniel Jasper, New School University

The Many Shivajis: Symbolizing Identities in Maharashtra

In recent years, the name and image of the seventeenth century Maratha king Shivaji has proliferated throughout Maharashtra. Ever-larger statues of him are erected and public works are given new names to serve as memorials to a "golden age" when he was king. This continues a nearly two century long tradition of invoking the heroic legacy of Shivaji as a symbol of identity in Maharashtra. Stories of Shivaji’s life and exploits are metaphors, representing identities, normative positions and programs for action. What Shivaji represents, however, is not uniform. Instead, multiple symbolic messages have been embodied in his legacy. How has the meaning of the Shivaji legacy shifted in different historical circumstances? In what ways can the same historical hero represent distinct identities? This paper looks at some of the different and competing narratives about Shivaji. Each narrative, developed under distinct circumstance signifies a particular identity position. Focusing on a range of interpretations, this paper looks at the many Shivajis that are part of his legacy, showing how the past is refashioned by different actors under differing circumstances.
Laura Dudley Jenkins, University of Cincinnati

Not without My Stereotypes: Muslim Personal Law Debates via Internet Based Instruction

International human rights discourses--like American undergraduates--are often skeptical of group rights claims. Muslim practices and laws are particularly likely to reach an unsympathetic audience in American classrooms. I will present my teaching case on personal law in India, part of Teaching Human Rights Online (THRO), a project of the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights. Personal law poses fascinating dilemmas: Does secularism mean equality or freedom? Does the debate over a uniform civil code versus personal laws pit women's interests against minority interests, and if so, how can minority women's rights be defined? Is compromise possible? How does the Hindu right's advocacy of a uniform civil code affect the debate? Court cases allow students to consider particular legal and political dilemmas, including the famous Shah Bano case over Muslim women's right to maintenance and the more recent Sarla Mugal case over marital rights when husbands convert to Islam. This teaching case will be developed further at the Electronic Railway workshop at the University of Washington this summer. I will reflect on student reactions and teaching strategies to encourage students to reevaluate stereotypes of Muslims and oversimplified notions of human rights.

Sally L. Jones, AFTRA

Staging Umrao

Umrao Jan Adaa, written at the turn of the century, is considered by some to be the most perfect novel in the Urdu language. In it the author, Mirza Mohammed Razi Ruswa, created the now-iconic character of the ultimate courtesan, Umrao Jan. Whether this character was a composite creation, actual prostitute, or an imaginary being doesn't seem to matter, as Umrao has taken on a life of her own as an emblem of a cultured and refined age in the arts, and as a romantic figure in pop culture. The novel, filled with the poetry of Ruswa, names Umrao as a poet, using Adaa in its title as well as Jan. A famous Hindi/Urdu film by Muzaffar Ali, made in the 1980s, was called Umrao Jan, utilizing the name given to her once she became initiated into prostitution, and follows the melodramatic events of her life as a courtesan. A play, written in 1993 by Geetanjali Shree and staged by Anuradha Kapoor in New Delhi, is entitled simply Umrao. As the title suggests, this play, created from a Feminist perspective, focusses on the female character. This paper will analyze how Geetanjali Shree adapted material from the novel for the stage and how a North American director, also a Kathak dancer, further adapted the play for a Toronto audience.

Elizabeth Jordan and Sahar Shafqat, Southwestern University

Islam, the Military and Democracy in Pakistan

In October 1999, General Pervez Musharraf led the Pakistani military in a bloodless coup to depose Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The coup ended a decade-long experiment with democracy in Pakistan that began with the August 1988 death of General Zia ul Haq, the Pakistani military dictator since 1977, in a mysterious plane crash. The October 1999 coup points to the fact that democratization in Pakistan since Zia's death and the subsequent transition to civilian rule has been an incomplete process, and Pakistani democracy was unable to consolidate. The failure of democracy in Pakistan is explained by numerous factors. This paper will limit the discussion to what we believe to be the two most important factors that have hindered the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan since the 1988 transition: the legacy of Zia's political manipulation of Islam, and the strength and hegemony of the Pakistani military in domestic affairs. The paper concludes with an assessment of theories of democratization, as well as what the future holds for Pakistani politics.
Indira Y. Junghare, University of Minnesota

Facets of Maharashtrian Goddess Possession

In the Goddess cult, or Shakti cult, the physical body is believed to be the abode of Ultimate Truth. The body serves as the perfect instrument for the integration of worldly, secular, and individual existence with that of the sacred, divine, and cosmic principles. In the phenomenon of goddess possession as represented in Maharashtra, a devotee transforms into a goddess or becomes a vessel to be freely occupied by a particular goddess. The goal of this paper is to look at few representative examples of goddess possession in the Maharashtrian context, noting the strong distinction between goddess possession as a common event (as in mediumship) and the more dramatic occurrences in ritual and festival contexts. Having examined the more regional manifestations of the cult of the goddess, we will demonstrate the intimate ties between goddess possession and the Shakti cult in Maharashtrian religion.

Paula Kantor, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Gender Constraints on Economic Opportunities: The Case of Homebased Garment Producers in Ahmedabad

The informal sector offers employment to a majority of the population of India, and this is particularly true for women, with the microenterprise sector, and homebased work more specifically, offering poor women their 'best' opportunity for work. This is because it offers flexibility in terms of work hours and location which they require in order to incorporate market work into their family work burden. However, the development literature states that there are gender differences in the quality of the economic opportunities offered in the informal sector due to women intensive and women exclusive constraints. The existence of varying constraints on economic opportunity by gender is widely accepted in the gender and development field though there has been little empirical work done to test for their existence and magnitude across economic sectors and work locations. This generalization of constraints leads to broad policy recommendations regarding how to improve women's economic opportunities. The purpose of this paper is to quantitatively test whether this literature is as generalizable as it is currently thought to be. This will be done by focusing on the case of homebased garment producers in order to determine whether the gender constraints applied to women workers in general are relevant in this particular sector and work location. Homebased work was selected because it tends to be the most exploitative within the informal economy due to relations of production which can foster dependence on intermediaries. Thus the paper seeks to determine if gender intensive constraints in particular disappear due to the respondents' work location in the home. The results have the potential to provide a more focused guide to policy regarding how to improve women's economic opportunities in the sector.

Charles Kennedy, Wake Forest University

The Politics of the Provisional Constitutional Order: Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf's Contribution to the Constitutional Law Tradition of Pakistan

On October 12, 1999, General Pervez Musharraf seized control of Pakistan's political system, displacing, arresting and later prosecuting the elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. But, the actions of the military were not portrayed as a "military coup" nor were the powers assumed by the new government construed as "martial law." Rather, under the terms of the Provisional Constitution Order, General Musharraf became the Chief Executive of the state, his actions insulated from challenge by the courts or by the constitution. Save for that restriction, the PCO did
not suspend, nor abridge, nor modify the constitution. To confirm this interpretation, the Chief Executive promulgated an Ordinance in January 2000 which required justices of the superior judiciary to take a fresh oath of office under the terms of the PCO. That is, assuring that the courts would not challenge the "constitutionality" of the PCO.

This paper will examine whether this system has "worked". It will address the following sets of questions:

1) Is the PCO system a true departure from the martial law tradition?; or is it merely a clever way of avoiding the unhappy connotations of the latter term? Has anyone bought the distinction?
2) How does the present constitutional order compare with previous "martial law" or military dominant periods of Pakistan's constitutional history?
3) How has the superior judiciary dealt with the constitutional and other issues raised by the PCO?
4) What options are left open to the system to change? What are the likely directions of future constitutional change in the state? Can there be an orderly return to a non-PCO constitutional system?

The author has written extensively on Pakistan's constitutional system. He is currently director of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies. He is the editor of "Pakistan:2000" (Lexington and Oxford, 2000).

Satti Khanna, Duke University

Performing Naukar ki Kamiz on Film: Mani Kaul's rendering of Vinod Kumar Shukla's Novel

The inquiry becomes interesting if we shift attention away from the representation of a literary text in performance to the evocative quality of both original text and subsequent "translation." As an exercise in description of evocative quality, I intend to compare the effect of Vinod Kumar Shukla's Naukar ki Kamiz (1979) with the effect of Mani Kaul's film based on the novel, The Servant's Shirt (1999). Shukla's novel is regarded by many critics, including Namvar Singh, as one of the most influential pieces of Hindi literary fiction of the last half-century. Mani Kaul's films are similarly regarded as pioneering work in world cinema. (MOMA is planning a retrospective of his films for Fall 2001.)

Robert Frost says poetry is what gets left out of translation. But what is the result when a poet of the cinema performs in his medium the poetic work of a preeminent Hindi novelist? By what criteria shall we judge such transformations? Can we conduct intelligible conversation about the quality of texts? Such questions seem unavoidable in a reading of Kaul's Servant's Shirt from the perspective of Shukla's Naukar ki Kamiz.

Nazli Kibria, Boston University

Globalisation and Family Change in Bangladesh

This paper considers theories of globalization, especially in the realm of culture, focusing on their implications for the dynamics of family change. While the idea of globalisation has received much attention, there have been few systematic attempts to consider its implications for family structure and relations. This paper uses the case of contemporary Bangladesh to consider issues of globalisation and family change. Furthermore, contemporary family trends in Bangladesh are explored.
Joanna Kirkpatrick, Bennington College

Recycling Images: Bangladeshi Ricksha Art in Context: Bengal and the World

Bangladeshi ricksha arts employ designs which can be found in Hindu and Muslim architecture and decoration all over both the subcontinent and Bengal in particular. Viewing ricksha art in the context of world popular art, one discovers designs similar to those found on rickshas, designs which I call "procedents," since most of them historically do precede ricksha art. This terminology allows me to illustrate similarities without attributing historicity which, in the case of ricksha art, would be difficult to trace. Some motifs in ricksha art may have been inspired not only by the migration of images across cultures, but also by the mere fact of a shared human genome and shared relationships to habitat. Finally, the spread of mass production print technology seems to have affected the dispersal of various image cliches also found on the painted rickshas of Bangladesh.

Lisa I. Knight, Syracuse University

Women "Bauls:" Discourse and Identity

This paper examines contradictions in the representation of "Baul" in Bangladesh, and of the identities of women associated with the term. The ideal Baul is usually held by the urban elites to be a musical mendicant, typically a man, who has no care for worldly attachments. In Bangladesh, Bauls have been variously targeted for their presumed threat to Muslim society or, conversely, they have been considered emblematic of Bangladeshi cultural and national identity. Contrary to the dominant discourse on Baul identity, which highlights religious and musical aspects, I focus on socio-cultural aspects of the term "Baul" and argue that it includes a wide range of people who selectively draw on or distance themselves from understandings of what it means to be a Baul. Women take greater risks in being associated with the group, because the term, when applied to women, implies loose morals and a challenge to conventional restrictive roles. I discuss differences in discourse on men and women Bauls and what is implicated in a woman's association with that term.

David M. Kipe, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Goats are Food Divine: A Comparison of Contemporary Vedic God and Hindu Goddess Sacrifices in Coastal Andhra

The vaclika Brahmins of coastal Andhra, the last remnant of the SouthAsian vedic tradition to cherish the requisite pasubandha sacrifice alongside the soma sacrifice, declare the goat to be the favorite pasu of the gods. Of all animals it is closest in structure to a human. In the same area, non-Brahman Hindus declare the blood of goats to be the favorite food demanded by their neighborhood goddesses. These two mutually exclusive traditions reveal many important distinctions in theology and practice, e.g. recipient of offering, timing, method of "killing", pattern of dismemberment, selection of primary body part, identification of life-essence, etc. Less well known are certain striking parallels concerning location, acquisition and preparation of the victim, forms of address to him, etc. This paper will explore comparatively the two traditions employing the sacrificer-ritualists' own terminology and explanations (field research 1980-2000) to complement textual studies.
Nita Kumar, NIAS, Wassenaar

Waters of Passion, Fires of Peace: What Indian Music tells us of Everyday Love

My paper examines the lyrics of film songs, classical songs, folk songs, and others in between, such as Rabindra Sangeet and Nazrul Geet. This is supplemented by historical and sociological reconstructions of artist, performer, and audience. I have two foci: one, to interpret the experience of love and its ethnoscociological dimensions. And two, to locate these as discourses, both within the nation and globally. If water equals passion, and not fire, in the popular understanding that some folk songs I have studied convey, then what does this mean to Indians in a global era?

Laura Kunreuther, University of Michigan

Say Love Not Politics: FM radio voices, the economy of affect, and the effects of democratic "free speech"

The People's Movement of 1990 in Nepal might aptly be called a revolution of the voice. In this paper, I look at a popular new avenue for speech, the interactive FM radio, to explore a more general phenomenon in this decade of multi-party democracy: namely, a discourse against politics that has ironically and powerfully taken shape in Kathmandu. For many in Kathmandu, democracy has meant the emergence of a new economy of affect based on the "free" expression of love. Love, FM radio producers insist, is not politics. However, like new political parties and development agencies, the makers of FM radio also see themselves as agents of social change. Here I explore how the FM radio producers and their listeners voice anti-political sentiments by drawing specifically on the language of democracy, politics and social change that surrounds them. The discourse of progress (bikas), "free speech", and the "betterment of society" have thus become a vital aspects of the sentiments and sentimentality expressed in letters sent to the FM radio. In conclusion, I open up to broader questions about the effects of this new economy of affect on the way FM radio listeners imagine politics, "love" and the possibilities of critique ostensibly enabled by democracy.

Omar Kutty, University of Chicago

Disciplining the Poor: The Work of the RSS in Urban slums.

The RSS's relationship to the lower castes is too often understood as a simple reassertion of upper caste dominance. This paper attempts to complicate this view by examining the extensive social work done in the low income neighborhoods of Delhi and Varanasi by a wing of the RSS called Sewa Bharti. The paper argues that the RSS's goal of fostering Hindu nationalist consciousness among the lower castes/urban poor simultaneously attempts to instill them with values of self-discipline, independence and legality. In so doing, Sewa Bharti is attempting to play the role of the state where it perceives the state to have failed. Moreover, since they legitimate their work within the discourse of Hindu nationalism, Sewa Bharti is functioning to make the state appear inextricable from their own image of Hinduism.

Chaise LaDousa, Syracuse University

From the "Three Language Formula" to Two "Mediums": Linguistic Constructions of Schooling in North India

The Indian State implemented the "three language formula" to define the parameters of linguistic pedagogy in schools. The formula includes the language of the state in which a school is contained as well as two other languages. Language distinctions often figure prominently in
discourse about schooling in India. In Banaras, Uttar Pradesh, the salience of the "three language formula" dissolves in the face of discourse about the language "medium", the primary language of pedagogy of a particular school. In its investigation of why the discourse of medium is primary in everyday conversation in Banaras, this paper avoids a simple correlation of the three language formula with the national and medium with the local. Indeed constructions of relations between the local and the national are present in both the three language formula and discourse about medium distinctions. An explanation of why medium distinctions are pervasive in discourse about schools lies in the differences between the ways that official pedagogical policy and local discourse defines what a language is, how a language defines groups of people, and how a language mediates the local and national.

Sarah Lamb, Brandeis University

**Tea, Prosperity and Time: Remaking Aging as Indian Americans**

A new group of immigrants has been entering the United States over recent years: older South Asian Indians coming to America for the purpose of being close to their U.S.-settled children. They come to this country primarily striving to sustain the long-term bonds of intergenerational reciprocity and affection that many view as central to an "Indian" and "good" family and old age. But life in America can never be the same as an envisioned life in India. People take some values, practices and images from "India," and some from "America," creating new, complex forms of family and aging across what sometimes appear as gaping divides between generations and nations. This paper explores the ways older Indian immigrants (re)make modes of aging, out of the transnational flows of people, goods, ideas, sentiments, and state policies between India and the United States. Much of the work on the South Asian diaspora has focused on youth. This paper takes the stories and dilemmas of older people as a focal point, revealing surprising new perspectives on family, tradition, life in America, and the ambivalence of being both/neither "Indian" and/or "American."

Christopher Lee, Illinois Wesleyan University

"...A Promise in the Name of Bearing Witness" Urdu Poetry, Memory and the (Re)construction of Muslim History in Varanasi, India.

"I should write such a poem, a promise in the name of bearing witness / Of the sadness of separation, and in the name of your memory." Yaqub Yawar, a poet of Urdu in Varanasi, India, uses this couplet as an introduction to a ghazal reflecting on the destruction of the Babri Masjid. Yet it is more than a simple reflection; the poem and its religious imagery refer to shared Muslim religious history, ritual and folklore, as well as to a recent happening of extreme importance to the Indian Muslim community. Yawar, like many other poets I worked with, uses poetry as a vehicle for myth, memory and the (re)construction of a Muslim present. In this paper, I suggest that the Urdu ghazal serves as a sophisticated discourse wherein North Indian Muslims can safely explore contemporary events through the lens of shared Muslim myth, ritual and memory, and by doing so reflect upon, recast and re-present the Muslim past as Muslim present.

Lauren Leve, Wellesley College

**Women, Development, and Desire in Nepal**

New anthropological theories of globalization complicate simple models that oppose the "local" to the "global" at the level of ideas, ideals, or institutions. This paper compares the conceptions and characterizations of "womanhood," "gender empowerment," and appropriate feminine roles held
and promoted by prominent international aid organizations working in Nepal in the nineteen-
nineties with the attitudes held by the Nepali women who were targeted for these “development”
interventions. Research carried out in central Nepal over a five year period suggests that rather
than merely reproducing or resisting “foreign” models and their messages, both the women who
took part in empowerment programs and others who didn’t but lived in the same communities
where programs had been held tended to be deeply affected by national and transnational
discourses touting independence, autonomy, and empowerment, and they came to see these as
signs of personal and gender development. At the same time, these women did not accept the
proffered definitions, and their accompanying ideologies, uncritically. Instead, their reported
experiences suggest that development creates new self-conceptions and desires at the local
level, which incorporate multiple, and potentially contradictory, expectations and ideals.
Contemporary notions of women and feminine development in Nepal are produced in the space
where the global is local: in the interstices between nationalism, globalization, and previously
more localized values, and in relation to the critical realities of material constraints.

Barry Lewis, Illinois Urbana-Champaign

The Mysore Parganas as Expressions of Regional Identities, AD 1800-1808

This paper examines the major spatial characteristics of Mysore parganas immediately after the
fall of Tipu Sultan. Primary data are the five maps of the Mysore Survey, conducted by Colin
Mackenzie 1800-1808. At a scale of 2 miles to the inch, these extraordinary documents encode
details about cultural features that are otherwise unavailable. The parganas on these maps are of
analytical interest as spatial representations of political and economic relationships at the local or
poligal level before British hegemony. Foremost among the spatial representations were forts,
most of which were highly visible expressions of the regional identity and political aspirations of
local chiefs. Forts and the control of force that they symbolize promoted illusions of stability and
protection throughout sections of Mysore that had endured chronic instability for several
centuries. In the hands of capable local leaders, a fort was an important alienable resource of
proven efficacy as a possible stepping stone to independence from higher authorities, and of far
greater practical utility than such symbols as kettle drums, elephants, and umbrellas.

Todd Lewis, Holy Cross College

Newar Buddhists in the Vortex of Countervailing Cultural Forces Buddhism and Identity in
the Himalayas

Contemporary Newar Buddhists have experienced a growing multiplicity of choices in the
Buddhist traditions represented in the Kathmandu Valley. While their long-established vajrācārya
sangha continues to perform rituals for the majority of households, Theravādin institutions draw
growing numbers to merit-making rituals and vipassanā meditation programs. Japanese sects
have also gained a following. Various Tibetan lamas, whose institutions have mushroomed in the
Valley since 1990, still attract Newar disciples, usually for healing rituals. Most recently added to
this pluralistic urban scene are two reformist/modernization initiatives that have arisen from within
the high Buddhist castes, both with the support of international Buddhist organizations. After
surveying this religious field, the paper will examine how these latter two groups reflect the
democratic political environment of contemporary Nepal; it will also explore how they must
balance their initiatives amidst the forces of "Newar nationalism" on the one hand, and a rising
awareness of Buddhist universalism, on the other.
Mark Liechty, University of Illinois, Chicago

Carnal Economies: Notes on the History of Restaurants and Prostitution in Kathmandu.

Since food and sex are so often linked in cultural imaginations, it is perhaps not surprising that the two follow similar, and often intertwined trajectories in cultural/economic process. This paper considers the cultural dynamics of commodification in the parallel emergence of restaurants and prostitution in Kathmandu. Both of these new "service" markets represent the public commercial availability of acts/relations/services traditionally associated with domestic space, and domestic gender roles. The commodification of food and sex services constitutes a recontextualization of intimate social acts into new public economies of social meaning in a marketplace of commercially mediated pleasure, desire, and distinction. Restaurants and prostitution are both "public" to the extent that they are "freely available" to anyone with money, yet both offer the consumer the intimate privacy of anonymous pleasures. In a cultural context where the potential stigmas associated with meat and alcohol consumption are not unrelated to those tied to illicit sexual relations, the commodification of food and sex offers particularly important insights into the shifting cultural logics of a new middle-class consumer society.

Wynne Maggi, University of Colorado

Inside the Menstrual House: The Kalasha Bashali as a Center for Women's Community and Culture

Although menstrual houses were once a common feature of many different cultures, today very few menstrual houses thrive as living institutions. This study of the Kalasha bashali is perhaps the only detailed ethnographic account of women's lived experience in a particular menstrual house. Two years of living and working with Kalasha women convinced me that speculation about menstrual houses as oppressive institutions designed by men to seclude women due to the "horror felt for their state" (as Graziozi [1981] describes the Kalasha menstrual house) could not be further from the truth (at least in this case). The importance of the bashali in women's lives goes beyond its ritual significance in Kalasha cosmology. The Kalasha bashali is an important center for female culture and community. Far from being a prison in which women are separated from the community and rendered powerless to act, the structure of the institution itself contributes to women's agency, both personally and collectively. Specifically, the bashali provides women with space from which to act -- to be creative and religious; to be part of the larger community of women; and to make personal decisions about marriage and reproduction away from the intense social pressure of village life.

Humaira Mahi, University of Minnesota

Globalization and the Consumer in Emerging Markets: 'India Will Survive'

There exist multiple points of view within academic disciplines as to how much multinationals and the specter of globalization in general harms or helps the development - culturally and economically - of emerging markets. The role of the consumer has been largely left out of this discussion. By using historical and modern analyses of acceptance and rejection of foreign influences in India we argue that consumers "...may appropriate consumer goods to enhance rather than erode their previous cultural imperatives" (Miller, 1996). By examining the consumer's role, we contribute to the globalization debate in demonstrating that the consumer can transform the meaning of the 'foreign' offerings to fit in to traditional meaning systems. We find that this process of transformation may involve the consumer rejecting offerings that do not fit into the existing cultural milieu. Consumer behavior literature has not empirically examined this issue, and our analysis suggests a direction for future research that gives the consumer an active role in the globalization debate.
Sunaina Maira, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

"Beyond Skin": Remix Youth Culture and the Politics of Desi Hip Hop

This paper explores the racial politics and material trajectories negotiated by Indian American youth, by focusing on the meanings of hip hop in remix youth culture in New York City. Based on an ethnographic study of Indian American college-age youth who participate in remix music parties in Manhattan, I argue that the turn to hip hop by urban Indian American youth is a way to express not just ethnic and national positionings, but also racial formations that construct Asian Americans as variously "almost white" model minorities or "near black" others, to use Gary Okihiro's work. Going beyond this binary framework, the paper suggests that the turn to hip hop is an expression of moments of racial alienation and class-coded ethnic anxiety. As such, it is part of the struggles of youth to define what it means to be Indian in the face of the anti-black racism that often prevails in the immigrant generation, as well as the bipolar racial structure of the United States. The paper addresses the larger debates about resistance and subversion in popular culture and also emphasizes the need to expand a narrow focus on South Asian diasporic experiences to include relationships to local cultural and political economies, particularly racial formations and class politics.

*(Beyond Skin is the title of Nitin Sawhney's album from Outcaste Records).*

Sheetal Majithia, Cornell University

Melodramatic Modernities: New Subjectivities in Indian Soap Opera

Recent studies of television melodrama have recuperated the genre of soap opera from a disdained and low form to a viable site from which to study the construction of femininity, national subjectivity, and modernity in non-metropolitan locations. Soaps' thematizations through melodrama of the role of women, nationalism, and the state, in producing new subjectivities have troubled the stable category of the modern that has facilitated the conflation of postmodernity with postcoloniality. This paper will map out various positions or understandings of melodrama as they pertain to the genre of the Indian soap opera. How do metropolitan and global understandings of the genre and its spectatorship allow us to attend to the forms of folk, popular, and epic forms that also underlie melodrama in the India televusual context? Although melodrama and soap operas in particular have traditionally been considered a feminized form of narrative, how do we account for their popularity among male and female viewers and state and corporate exploitation of this popularity in order to interpellate viewers as consumers into the new liberal economy? Is the production of a new modern subjectivity simply in service of corporate and state interests or can the practice of viewing soaps with pleasure and understanding allow us to situate soap operas as a possible site of resistant reading?

Madhavi Mallapragada, University of Wisconsin-Madison

'Indian' Women and the World Wide Web: Nation, Woman and the Indian Diaspora in the United States.

In this paper, I shall be examining the cyber production of an 'Indian woman' on websites that address the Indian diaspora in the United States. The politics of a representation of Indian women within a gendered discourse of transnationalism is the key focus of this paper. I shall be closely examining some of the key images and discourses surrounding the construction of Indian women on some of the 'popular' websites. I argue in this paper, that while the image of 'the Indian woman' continues to be symbolically central to the articulation of a nationalist rhetoric in diaspora,
one also witnesses the emergence of shifting discourses on the 'Indian' immigrant women—discourses, that I further argue, speak to the interrelations of technology, culture and 'community' in the production of a transnational identity. The specific technology of the Web, the role and significance of the dot.com generation of Indian immigrants to the US and the contemporary production of an 'ethnic' identity are some of the key ideas that shall be addressed within the scope of this paper.

Natalie R. Marsh, Ohio State University

Jalashayana Vishnu Imagery in Nepal: The Newar Tradition and Valley History

The image of Vishnu Anantashayana (“Vishnu-reclining-on-the-serpent-Shesha”) is widely known throughout India. Jalashayana, sometimes also called Sheshashayi Narayana and Anantanarayana, is found in a unique setting and context in the Kathmandu Valley. Of the four large reclining Jalashayana images known from Nepal, two are currently situated within large water tanks at sites that are actively visited and widely venerated—Balaniakhantha and Budhanilkantha. Mary Slusser and Gautamāvaijra Vajracharya have worked extensively on the dating, commissioning, iconographic, and political implications of these works. In concert with these significant contributions, I propose that an ethno-religious and culturally specific explanation for the commission of these unique and rare forms rests in the creation myth of the valley, which was once a lake.

Biju Mathew, Rider University and Taxi Workers Alliance

The Politics of Community in Organizing Immigrant South Asian Taxi-Drivers

The yellow cab has become an enduring metaphor for New York City and its hectic 24 hour-a-day rush. But just as the city has changed in recent years, consolidating its position as the world’s leading financial and cultural center, so too has the taxi industry which keeps it on the move. This is an industry where 14,000 of the 25,000 drivers are from South Asia. Cab-drivers in NYC first organized through the Lease Drivers Coalition (LDC), a unit created in 1993 under the aegis of the Committee on Anti-Asian Violence. Originally, the LDC targeted only South Asian cabdrivers in its organizing efforts. But useful coalitions with other immigrant groups have led to a broader organizing strategy, especially since the formation of the Taxi Workers Alliance in 1998. Drawing upon six years of organizing work within in the taxi industry, this paper examines two specific issues: first, the strain between community organizing and immigrant labor organizing; and second, the issues of organizing immigrant labor in the context of neo-liberal city and state policies.

Ernestine McHugh, University of Rochester

Sumitra’s Room: Representation and Experience in the Global Realm

Space and image can be conceived as a kind of discourse, one that conditions experience in interesting ways and that in its construction demonstrates identity and desire. Over the past three decades, the social and physical spaces inhabited by women in Nepal have altered greatly in response to patterns of globalization. Sumitra is a young college-educated woman whose family has moved from the Gurung village in which her parents grew up to the town of Pokhara. There, consumer goods, like televisions, motorcycles or automobiles have become important markers of status; access to neighborhoods is determined by wealth rather than kinship; and ideas deriving from development ideology figure into evaluations of worth. In this paper I will locate her room in a larger social context and explore the ways in which it expresses her orientation to life and reflects contemporary urban views of femininity.
Monika Mehta, University of Michigan

"Curious Effects: State-Censorship Benefits Film Industry"

Discussions on state-censorship largely focus on cuts imposed by the censor board and characterize censorship as a practice which prohibits or restricts representations. In analyzing Raj Kapoor’s Satyam Shivam Sundaram, I would like to shift the focus to a much less debated practice, namely, certification. This shift reveals that state-censorship is not simply repressive rather it has productive effects—effects which at times are beneficial for the film industry. In 1978, the Bombay Censor Board passed Raj Kapoor’s Satyam Shivam Sundaram with an Adult certificate and without any cuts. The film’s release caused much furor and public. In fact, two cases against the film appeared before the Supreme Court in 1980. The two litigants protested against granting Kapoor’s film an ‘A’ (Adult) certificate without any cuts. Ruling in favor of Raj Kapoor, the court noted that since Raj Kapoor had received a certificate from the Censor Board, he had not committed any offense—at least not a an offense against the state laws. In short, the certificate served as the state’s stamp of approval—and protected the film industry from future public litigation.

Kalyani Devaki Menon, Syracuse University

Acceptable Transgressions: Hindutva Discourse and Hindutva Practice

In this paper I consider Hindu nationalism as a movement that both produces discourse as well as encompasses contradictions to it. Using data generated over a year of fieldwork amongst Hindu nationalist women in New Delhi, I demonstrate that the actions of women activists were often antithetical to the prescriptions of self dictated by the movement. The ideal image of womanhood constructed by the movement portrays women as mothers of their biological families and of the larger family of the Hindu nation. This image requires women to be chaste and also self-sacrificing, placing the needs of family and nation above their own. While publicly encouraging this image of womanhood, the personal lives of many activists did not in fact mirror the prescriptions of self embodied in the image. The movement is aware of many of these transgressive practices and yet continues to support these women. I argue that analyzing the contradictions between the discourse and practice of members of the movement as well as the movement’s acceptance of these transgressions is key to understanding the expansionary power of Hindu nationalism today.

Usha Menon, Drexel University

The Question of "Militancy: Among Hindu Women: Changing Perceptions and Self-Understanding"

This paper will examine the issue of militancy amongst Hindu women. Since the 1980s, the media and more scholarly sources have reported on the militancy displayed by these women vis-a-vis Muslims institutions characterized by communal tension and violence. The Hindu women involved in such activities are said to belong to various Hindu nationalist organizations. Based on interviews done with women occupying a variety of leadership positions within these organizations, the paper will explore and elaborate on the following questions: Does such militancy exist? What form does it take? Does such militancy have roots in Hindu cultural traditions which sees no trouble in associating women with morally justifiable violence? What motivates these women to participate in violence? Is it religious hatred? If it is, what can be said about such experience of religious hatred? Much had been written and analyzed about communal violence on the subcontinent from the perspective of victims and survivors. Little, however, has
been explained from the perspective of the perpetuators. This paper would be a small step in redressing that imbalance.

Stephen Mikesell, Independent

Insurgency, Counter-Insurgency and Destruction of Democratic Possibilities in Nepal

The Maoist 'People's War' group in Nepal initiated an armed insurgency aimed at overthrowing the parliamentary monarchical state and establishing a People's Democracy in 1996. The state has justified authoritarian policies in the name of suppressing the insurgency, but without addressing the basic inequalities, aggravated by the 1990 transition to 'democracy'. This paper will outline the ways that constitutional democracy, People's war, and state reaction to it are feeding into the hands of international corporations by further undermining community structures and the democratic possibilities that they once held out.

Ali Husain Mir, Indiana-Purdue University

The Season of Coercion, the Season of Choice: On the Margins of Progressive Urdu Poetry

Critics have argued that the hegemonic consensus generated by the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) in Urdu poetry produced works that, while iconoclastic and revolutionary in their own fashion, also marginalized certain subjectivities. It is contended that the exclusive focus on the class divide and its consequent antagonisms by Urdu poets led to the trivialization or exclusion of other issues (such as race, gender, caste and sexual preference). In this paper, we lay out the terrain of this critique and read the works of Urdu progressive writers for evidence that both substantiates and refutes the accusation. In this paper, we look at the attempts of these poets to create a new form of Afro-Asian identity during the decade of the emergence of the non-aligned movement and intense anti-colonial struggles in Africa. We do this in order to highlight the role of the historical moment in the creation of a particular narrative and through this assessment, seek to understand the analytical and political choices made by Urdu poets of the PWA.

Raza Mir, Monmouth University

Dream And Nightmare: Progressive Urdu Poetry's Flirtation With Modernity

In 1957, when the Sputnik blasted offf into space, Sahir Ludhianvi, in a celebratory poem remarked:

Mere ahd ke haseeno, wo nazr nawaaz taare,
Mera daur e ishq-parwar tumhe nazr de raha hai
[Beauties of my generation, the stars that you dreamed of
Are now being presented to you by my loving era]

Active participants in the process of anti-colonialism and nation building in the 20th century, poets of the Progressive Writers Movement took to modernity with gusto. Their poetry celebrated all its artifacts: the repudiation of religion and spirituality, a celebration of the progress and the conquest of nature, the re-negotiation of identity to reflect newer institutions such as the nation, and a dream of an international utopian humanity. But modernity was not without its pitfalls. Over the past fifty years, the progressive tradition in Urdu poetry has struggled with the failed promise of
modernity: the betrayal of the expectations of independence, the resurgence of non-modern (illiberal) identity groups, the alienation produced within a modern society, and above all, the failed utopia of a liberated humanism as exemplified in the Asrarul Haq Mejaaz's landmark poem Awaera. In this session, I will draw upon the works of progressive Urdu poets in order to understand how they constructed a modernist dream, and how they dealt with it when it threatened to become a nightmare.

John Mock, University of California, Berkeley

Orality, Literacy and Scholarship: Shifts in Gender, Genre and Performance of Wakhi Oral Expression

The Wakhi, an ethnic minority group of less than 40,000, reside in contiguous mountain valleys where Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan meet, an area difficult of access. Researchers have largely focused on the unwritten Wakhi language, one of the Pamir languages in the East Iranian group of the Iranian language family. Soviet-era scholars working in the Tajik SSR described Wakhi grammar and published texts of Wakhi stories and songs in phonemic (modified IPA) transcription. These have stimulated Wakhi poets to use this transcription system to write poetry, a fascinating situation in which the transmission and production of a culture's oral expressive forms are being altered by the work of the scholars who study the culture. This paper, based on my 1995-7 field research in Pakistan, looks at a specific traditional genre, bulbulik, that has been adapted and incorporated into a separate, modern genre, bayad. The paper discusses the introduction of a mode of literacy in an oral culture, the implications for models of transmission and performance, and suggests that socio-economic change underlies change in performance context and genre boundary.

Debali Mookerjea, University of Chicago

Unfinished Histories: the Partition of India

The existing historiography on the partition of Bengal in 1947 locates the experience of trauma exclusively on the loss of homelands, migration and refugee dilemmas, and dispossession of property. The experience of specifically gendered violence in this historical upheaval has been largely unaddressed. This has been more or less the case in Bengali literature as well.

A notable exception to this society-wide repression of memory is Jyotirmoyee Devi's 1967 novel Epar Ganga Opar Ganga. The proposed paper makes a sustained engagement with her text and the silence that surrounds it. Focusing on women's bodily experiences of Partition, I map both the histories of violence in Bengal and how the suppression of this history operates as an effective denial of citizenship. Attending to Devi's attempt at the recuperation of women's "unspeakable" stories and bodily suffering, I uncover how she simultaneously re-members the raped and mutilated bodies of women as well as the experience of this violence theretofore collectively repressed. Thus most generally, my study contributes to the growing literature on how, in an apocalyptic event of sectarian violence, struggles and anxieties both private and public can violently converge onto those bodies that are deemed most vulnerable to such a breakdown.

Frank Morales, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mistress of All Beings: Sri Laksmi as the Feminine Embodiment of the Absolute

The manifestation of the Goddess occurs in a wide variety of instances in the Hindu tradition. These include iconographic imagery, yantras, mantras and incarnations. In this presentation, the focus will be on two specific aspects of the nature of embodiment in relation to the Hindu
Goddess Laksmi. First, the paper will discuss the Sri-Vaisnava concept of Laksmi as being herself the embodiment of the divine feminine aspect of the Absolute. Secondly, there will be an exploration of the many ways in which this Goddess has made her presence known to her devotees. Thus, this presentation will focus on the process of the embodiment of the Goddess both from an ontological perspective, as well as a ritual and experiential one.

Srilata Mueller, University of Heidelberg

"He who will go tomorrow": The Saivite Saint Nandanar in Tamil Hagiography and Historiography.

This paper proposes to examine the shifting perception of Nandanar, the Saivite Saint, in the religious and political discourse of the Tamil country from his original appearance in the 12th century hagiographical work the Periya Puranam to the 1948 cinematic version of life. Nandanar in the Periya Puranam embodies canonical ideas of simple piety, patient endurance and faith. In this sense he tends towards being a still icon, without incongruities, atemporally placed in an attitude of frozen longing: waiting to see Shiva at Chidambaram as his name "He who will go tomorrow" implies. The hagiographical narrative serves to transport him to the desired place whence he vanishes. This simple story gained immense popularity in the 19th century through the songs composed on it by Gopalakrishna Bharatiyar (ca. 1811-1886) and first published in 1848. In this collection of songs the story of the saint's life undergoes a transformation through the introduction of a realistic narrative of Nandanar's travails, the emphasis on his low-caste status and his revolutionary heroism in triumphing over high-caste prejudice. In the 20th century the Nandanar story was retold at least three times through the medium of film with the 1948 version of Murugadasa being of particular interest: in this version Nandanar becomes the spokesperson for a form of orthodox Saivism which positions itself against "folk" religion.

The paper deals with this shifting discourse on Nandanar and addresses theoretical issues about the tensions generated between iconic portraiture and narratives of realism as well as about processes of re-iconization set into motion in modern politico-cultural discourse.

Shoma Munshi, Research Fellow, University of Amsterdam

'Mera joota hai Japani ... phir bhi dil hai hindustani': Visual Media, Consumer Culture and Identity Politics in India Today

There have been protean transformations in the Indian media landscape over the last decade. This paper will look at the implications of such sweeping changes in India and examine the following: a) The contemporary urban Indian scenario is one that is being profoundly shaped by the emerging media and consumer culture which are working simultaneously in generating thought and behaviour that is in line with existing values, institutions and practices; yet what has remained largely unexplored is how consumers/audiences can - and do - resist dominant meanings and messages; b) How culturally speaking, it has become difficult to distinguish between 'foreign' and 'indigenous' in media and commodity terms. What counts as "local" in India now is in no way fixed, but has become open to constant reinterpretation and negotiation (partly) as a result of the domestication of cultural goods from the West and the Asia-Pacific region, all of which are now readily available with the proliferation of cable and satellite television in India.
Mithil Mukherjee, University of Chicago

Sovereignty and the Indian Constitution: A Study

This paper is an analysis of the Indian constitution. It is part of a larger historical study that attempts to understand the specificity of the nature and dynamics of the democratic polity in independent India in terms of the specific alignments of networks of hierarchically organized political categories and institutions as they evolved through the colonial period. The post-independence Indian polity is an attempt to combine the British system of parliamentary sovereignty with the American system of constitutional sovereignty. In this paper I will explore the anomalies and conflicts that this attempt to combine two very different political systems gives rise to, and how they are resolved.

Kirin Narayan, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Mask of Fiction: Life Stories as Gifts

Eliciting life stories from second-generation Indian- and Pakistani-Americans, I have been frank about my wish to draw on their stories for both ethnographic and fictional purposes. Interestingly, the possibility of a fictional outlet appears to have most caught the imaginations of those I have approached. Speaking candidly of their lives, many young women and men have generously offered painful personal experience and choice ethnographic observations as gifts to shape a central character, Nikhil/Nick, a second-generation man who grew up in the mid-West as part of the post-1985 South Asian diaspora. In this paper, I explore the complex ramifications of drawing on a fictional character to construct parallel, ethnographically precise worlds. An imagined character, it appears, serves partly as a mask, displacing some of the awkward asymmetries of ethnographic encounter. Nick appears to have become what Vincent Crapanzano (1980), drawing on Sartre, has termed a "Third," a transcendent symbol in relation to which a researcher and subject may find common ground in life-history research.

Balmurli Natrajan, University of Iowa

Codifying Culture: Gender in the Making of a Potter Community in Central India

Over the last three decades, potter-artisans in the southeastern part of the state of Madhya Pradesh have witnessed a reworking of the leadership of their "community." The traditional "elders" have been gradually displaced by a group of potters who use their formal education as a critical marker to authorize themselves as leaders. In this process the Indian state as a provider of "development" to potters is an already-present agent. Bringing potters as artisans within the gaze of the state is accomplished by signifying potters as a distinct "community," a task that is seriously engaged in by the new leadership. Thus they systematically codify potter "culture" and publish it as pamphlets for consumption by ordinary potters. This paper examines this phenomenon, focusing on the way gender is constructed in delimiting the freedom and rights of women and the men they choose to have a relationship with. It also identifies how power itself assumes a qualitatively different and "modern" form in the making of a new potter "community."

Mekhala Devi Natavar, Duke University

The Transmission of Visions: Bhakti Poets sing in a New Age

Visions of Intimacy with the Divine, revealed in a shop and transmitted in the temple? Who has heard of Krishna Madhuri, the pen name for the merchant selling chavanprash and cardamoms at shop #362 in Tripolia Bazar? Or Rup, the pen name for a tiny gutka seller with a slash on his
cheek? They carry their little worn books carefully wrapped in plastic in their kurta pockets. Torn yellowed pages decorated in colorful inks, poem after poem, vision after vision. Visions like those described in songs by Mira and Sur. Scholars interpret the poems of these popular saint-poets from medieval times, plunging into hagiographies and speculating on their lives, their inspirations, their methods of transmitting visions. But I argue, why squint to probe a murky past when there are exciting new visions appearing before our own eyes? New poet devotees are writing songs which are being sung at temples, xeroxed and handed out at religious home festivals and danced to by twirling women under the stars. We might understand much more about how Bhakti literature was conceived, composed, transmitted and transformed into performance in the past by approaching the devotees who are presently engaged in a similar process. Who are they, what inspires their divine visions, how do they compose their poems within the parameters of popular ragas and film tunes, and where do they take their songs to be shared with others? A brief look at two modern day devotee poets in Jaipur, Rajasthan sheds light on the method of composition and transmission of visions in a new age.

Baldev Raj Nayar, McGill University

The Major-Power System and India After Pokhran II: Cooperation and Contention in Integrating India Into the System

"On May 11, 1998, India stunned the world by its nuclear tests at Pokhran and its accompanying declaration that it now stood as a nuclear weapons states (NWS). Apart from reasons of national security in a deteriorating security environment, India undertook the tests in a defiant, even if unarticulated, assertion of a claim on the part of India to the status of a major power, and simultaneous a proclamation of self-redefinition as a major power. The nuclear tests and the declaration of being a NWS were a challenge to the existing major powers in the world hierarchy, and they raised for them the important question as to whether or not to integrate India into the major-power system. The paper aims to look at the response of the major powers, both jointly and severally, to India's actions in the nuclear arena.

"It is the central hypothesis of this paper that, apart from an initial common stance of opposition, the major powers would tend towards taking varying positions on the integration of a new member, and that these variant positions would be a function of the compatibility of their national interests with those of the new claimant in three different arenas -- strategic, economic and ideological. In some sense, these three arenas exhaust the possible space for explanation, and to that extent the hypothesis may seem tautological. However, it serves as an important point of departure to see how these arenas reinforce or cross-cut each other and what the impact of such reinforcement or cross-cutting is, as also to determine which arena has priority over the others. It is an initial assumption here that the strategic arena has priority over the other two; in other words, strategic divergence or incompatibility will trump compatibility in the other arenas".

Sheila J. Nayar, Greensboro College

Cinematically Speaking: The Impact of Orality on Indian Popular Film

The "generic workings" (Chakrabarty) of the Bollywood cinema have in recent years been probed and assessed from a variety of perspectives: as promulgating national identity (Chakrabarty, Das Gupta) and buttressing the status quo (Pfleiderer & Lutze), to operating as a kind of collective fantasy (Kakar) or homogenizing agent (Nandy). There have also been serious attempts to lay bare incigenous precursory forces that have given the Indian popular cinema its distinctiveness and shape, and much discussion as to how its content reflects the unsettling impact of modernization on a society still wedded to traditional values (often the explanation for the films' success in other disparate third world nations).
Despite the validity of these interpretations, there has been scant consideration of another, equally significant influence on the form and content of Indian popular cinema, and one that may complement, if in fact not underlie, many of these earlier readings: the impact of orality and orally-based culture on Bollywood storytelling.

Drawing from the conceptual studies of oral tradition, particularly Walter Ong's seminal text, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, I extend such analysts' tracings of the "oral residue" that marks literature into the realm of visual media, positing that there are very clear characteristics of oral performance and orally-transmitted narratives ("the oral epics") operating within the Indian popular cinema-patterns that most likely emerged out of the need and desire to appeal to an audience that was largely non-literate. These include not only broad psychodynamic characteristics of orally-based thought, such as aggregative rather than analytic elements, a conservative-traditionalist rather than experimental mindset, but as well specific devices and motifs common to orally-based storytelling-from the use of clichés and the portrayal of gross physical violence, to the significance of the verbalized oath, the reliance on "heavy" characters, and the acceptance of, indeed preference for, formula.

Andrea Nightingale, The University of Minnesota

Ban Devi at work? An investigation of social and environmental change in Community Forestry

One of the conclusive outcomes of the 1980s debate on the "environmental crisis" in Nepal is that Himalayan ecosystems are constantly changing on both short and long time scales. In addition, it is clear that forest degradation is a locally specific phenomenon and one that is not easily generalized over large areas of the hills. Given the locally specific and stochastic nature of forest change, the problem then becomes how to understand that change in relation to Community Forestry projects, which are also dynamic institutions. This paper investigates historical forest management practices, current Community Forestry user-groups, and forest vegetation change in Mugu District of western Nepal. I argue that the way in which Community Forestry is locally implemented is influenced by antecedent ecological conditions and by the history of forest management practices. Furthermore, ecological conditions influence which kinds of management issues and conflicts emerge within specific user-groups and between user-groups and the State. The case study in Mugu presents compelling evidence that scholars and practitioners must develop the conceptual and methodological tools to analyze these fluctuating social and ecological processes and the multiple ways they interact to produce forest change.

Keri Olsen, Syracuse University

Contradictory Versions of a "Communal Clash": the Media and Working-Class Muslim Women's Accounts

This paper explores contradictory accounts of a clash and curfew in the city of Ajmer in February 1998. I contend that the media's portrayal is embedded in relations of power that privilege the construction of the event as a "communal riot", fostering suspicion of the minority community and eclipsing alternative versions. I focus on the accounts of working-class Muslim women. Implicitly responding to and resisting official discourses that communalise the event, these women reject the idea that the event was a product of Hindu-Muslim tensions. They talk instead of an unjust imposition of curfew on the neighborhood, followed by police abuse of the public. In recounting experiences during curfew, they articulate a vision of the way that they deserve to be treated by the State – as equal, law-abiding citizens of the Indian nation. Often bracketed or deemed limited, faulty or potentially biased, these women's narratives raise important questions regarding the legitimacy of official discourse and our reliance upon it.
Elizabeth Otten Delmonico, Truman State University

Basavanna and Rasa

The vira rasa which delights most non-Kannada readers of Basava’s vachanas is to some degree a function of A.K. Ramanujan’s selectivity. He chose vachanas which appealed to his own existential sensibility and rendered their suggestive paradoxes exactingly. The emotional tone of many other versions of the saint’s life and work is differently nuanced. Among twentieth century translations, for example, Menezes and Angadi’s relatively complete rendition is stamped with more abstract and plous diction, heavier didacticism, less suggestiveness, and fewer energetic rhythms than Ramanujan’s. Narayana Rao’s translation of the Basava Purana creates vira rasa again: the early hagiology sparkles anew with wonder and wit as it valorizes a playful yet dangerous submissiveness to linga, jangama and guru. In Girish Karnad’s tragic Tale Danda, Basavanna’s heroism is so tempered by prudence, and the text itself is so clearly shaped by its twentieth century message, that the longest-lasting emotional tone emerging is dread-dread of what people can do to one another overwhelming both heroism and compassion. Jagadguru Mate Mahadevi’s Revolution inKalyan seems calculated, juncture by juncture, to elicit awe, but the awe is so masochistically toned that the text works better as a case study exemplifying Abhivanagupta’s seven impediments to rasa than as a stimulus to adbhuta rasa. The old aesthetics still has much to teach us.

Geeta Patel, Wellesley College

Crossroad not Borderzone: Miraji’s Plays of Identity Border Controls, Border Crossings

Miraji (1912-1949), and Urdu poet who took a woman’s name, uses his popular poetry (qit and ghazal) and essays on translation and history to explore the poetics of the border through the image of a cross-roads. In this paper, I will discuss Miraji’s particular image and its ramifications to open up the static conceptualization of the border as a line marking off one zone from another. Miraji’s work allows one to rethink the border and identity, difference as well as the nation-to-be as contested and produced. Miraji used translation, language mixtures and the play of imagination, time, and space to expose the official construction of borders through religion, census data, and productions of political identity.

T.V. Paul, McGill University

The Modern Great power System: India in Comparative Perspective.

This paper will look at the parameters of the major power system in the modern age and the processes by which new members enter and old members exit the system. The effort is to see whether India will or will not enter this system in a peaceful manner. The major power attributes of India, in comparison with the contemporary great powers and regional powers, will be discussed. The paper hopes to elucidate the constraints and opportunities that India faces in entering the great power system despite the deep desire held by the Indian elite in this respect, a manifestation of which was the 1998 nuclear tests.
Richa Pauranik, Indiana University - Bloomington

Religious Nationalism and Historiography in South Asia: (Part I) Pakistan

This paper is the first of a two-part research project on religious nationalism and history writing in India and Pakistan. The shared history but differing religio-political ideologies of the two nations make for an important case study in the working of religious-nationalist historiography.

The paper's scope covers a period beginning with the first Muslim invasions of the sub-continent up to the 1965 Indo-Pak war, represented by the Social Studies and History school textbooks in post-Zia-ul-Haq Pakistan, and compared to those of pre-BJP India and of Stanley Wolpert's A New History of India (1993).

The paper shows a clear connection between Pakistan's education policy, Islamic-nationalist historiography, and the political socialization of its school children. In theoretical terms, it demonstrates a correlation of the theories of political socialization, nationalist historiography, and collective memory. Regarding Pakistan's representation of history, the study asks: 'Is it history, not history, or bad history?' Through detailed analysis, it concludes that Pakistani nationalist historiography illustrates a disjunction between history writing and a commitment to 'historical truth'. Part II of the research project, currently in progress, addresses the extent to which the same conclusions can be drawn from an in-depth examination of Indian Hindu-nationalist historiography.

Kelly Pemberton, University of California - Berkeley

Islamicizing Discourses: Ritual Performance, Devotional Texts, and the Reformist Challenge

This paper investigates Islamic and Sufi discourses surrounding the ritual use of na'\text{}\text{t} (poem of praise to the Prophet Muhammad), *hamd* (poem of praise to God), and Qur'\text{}\text{anic} verses (e.g. the fattha, or opening verse) in the Qawwali musical assembly, in milads, (celebrations of the Prophet Muhammad's birth), and in rituals of petitioning the saints of Islam. I highlight discourses that arose in the milieu of nineteenth-century India and against the backdrop of a revolution in print that facilitated the widespread transmission of information in Urdu. In this period shrines, saints, and the world of custom—the latter of which was particularly associated with women—attracted the attention of reformist groups who sought to purge the Indian Muslim community of customs which they deemed contrary to the letter and spirit of Islam. The use of Urdu along with Islamic symbols of authority in reform-minded literature became effective means of nurturing a pan-Islamic layer across a wide spectrum of Indian Muslim society. My paper compares and contrasts reformist discourses with responses from Sufis, who used the medium of print to counter or promote reformist critiques of belief and practice in the shrine setting.

Nihal Perera, Ball State University

Feminizing the City: Gender Relations in Colonial Colombo

Present-day Colombo is essentially a European colonial construction. The turning point was the Portuguese construction of a White male outpost in Colombo, in the early sixteenth century, marginalizing the Muslim trading port. Demographically, it took over five centuries for Colombo to become a "gender balanced city." This paper examines the processes that empowered women in colonial Colombo which, in turn, feminized the city. The paper is based on a book chapter that the author has recently completed.
Indira V. Peterson, Mount Holyoke College

Reimagining Performance Culture Through the Novel: The Construction of Devadasi Dance and Nagasvaram 'Traditions' in Thillana Mohanambal

Kalaimani's Thillana Mohanambal (TM) was one of the most popular Tamil novels of the 1950s, and was made into a popular film in 1968. TM's plot charts the course of love and artistic competition between 'Thillana' Mohanambal, a devadasi dancer from Tiruvurur, and nagasvaram player Sikkal Shanmugasundaram. However, Kalaimani's principal aim was to reconstruct for his readers the culture of sadir (later Bharata Natyam) dance and the periy melam (nagasvaram) in late 19th- and early 20th-century Tamilnadu, and especially in the Kaveri delta. TM owed its popularity mainly to the author's success in evoking for mid-20th-century Tamil readers a past that epitomized for them the 'indigenous' 'classical tradition' of the South Indian performing arts. Through an analysis of the novel's representations of the world of the arts, I have shown that Kalaimani used realism and thick description as novelistic devices to construct a version of 'tradition' which, while it focused on local traditions and on devadasis and nagasvaram players, thus interrogating and contesting the Madras-based, brahmin- and Academy-dominated 20th-century constructions of Carnatic music and dance, was nevertheless equally selective, idealizing, and embedded in discourses of the pure, the authentic and the national.

Melinda Pilling, University of Chicago

The Founding of a Nation-in-Exile: Tibetan Nationalism in the Post-war Era

This paper is concerned with the founding of the Tibetan nation-in-exile. I begin by examining Tibet's status before 1959 from the perspective of recent theories of nationalism. Most contemporary theorists of nationalism focus on nations that arose out of the post-war struggles for independence from imperial rule in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Tibet, which lost its de facto independence from China at this time of largely successful nationalist independence struggles, provides a radically different perspective on this era. In rethinking theories of nationalism from the perspective of Tibet, I explore the ways in which global politics helped to create two Tibets: a territorially bounded but colonized Tibet and a deterritorialized but independent Tibetan nation-in-exile. I pay particular attention to the founding moments of the Tibetan nation-in-exile in India. I ask: What discourses were at play in India's offer of refuge to Tibetans? How did the Dalai Lama present the Tibetan case to an Indian audience? Examining the writings and speeches of the Dalai Lama, I trace how his formulation of Tibetan identity and his imaginings of a free or truly autonomous Tibet have changed over the years. I consider the Dalai Lama's appeals for support to an international audience, focusing especially on the influence of Indian nationalism on his imaginings of Tibet.

John R Pincince, University of Hawaii

Resistance and the Rhetoric of 'Globalisation': Contrasting Discourses of the Sangh Parivar and the National Alliance of People's Movements

'Globalisation' has become the darling buzzword of television and print media, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, PepsiCo and Coca Cola. For others, 'globalisation' represents another phase of colonialism, westernization, and/or capitalism. This paper seeks to deconstruct the common application of the term 'globalisation' from a world historical perspective (a la Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, Sugata Bose, David Harvey and KN Chaudhuri) by way of critical analysis of the anti-globalisation discourse employed by the Sangh parivar and the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM). It is argued that the discourse of the Sangh and the NAPM is a reification of the primacy of the nation-state, which is an exclusive category of identity. Despite their fundamental ideological differences, the Sangh and the NAPM evoke a
common discourse reflective of political "Right" and "Left" nationalisms. This paper suggests that anti-globalisation rhetoric disguised as populist nationalism is itself a destructive form of identity resistance and nativism.

Anne Rademacher, Yale University

'Culture' Urban Ecology: Competing Constructions of Degradation and Restoration on the Bagmati and Bishnumati Rivers, Kathmandu

The Bagmati and Bishnumati Rivers, which converge at Teku in Kathmandu, are widely characterized as severely degraded and are active foci for internationally-funded ecological restoration projects. Drawing on ethnographic work among development planners, cultural restoration advocates, and residents of sukkumaasi (landless migrant) communities living proximate to the rivers, I explore competing constructions of river degradation and restoration, focusing on the conceptual pairing of ecological and cultural logics in forming definitions of degradation and legitimate visions of urban riverscape rehabilitation. By examining the creation and allocation of particular forms of cultural and ecological value in restoration discourses, I highlight the complexity of the journey from globally-conceived concepts like "green cities" and "sustainable habitats" to local experience and engagement with restoration initiatives. The case demonstrates how ecological projects reclassify both eco- and social systems, and in doing so expose relations of power that enable creation of value in the circulation of environmentally-affiliated forms of cultural capital.

Shazia Rahman, University of Alberta

"There Are No Women in the Third World:" Sara Suleri's Meatless Days

In Meatless Days, Sara Suleri creates a relational autobiographical subjectivity in order to avoid the staunch individualism of more traditional autobiographical subjects. Instead of creating a hierarchy where the individual is more important than the community, Suleri emphasizes the notion that the individual woman is enmeshed in communities of others. She also complicates the category woman itself. She insists that since the category woman is enmeshed in other categories such as culture and history, we must consider women within specific social and historical contexts. And lest we try to limit people to only these contexts, Suleri deconstructs the concept of native as well. Even though she insists that people cannot be separated from their contexts, such things as culture should not solely define them. Lastly, Suleri relates who people are to what they do. Her autobiography ends with the lessons her mother has taught her about practicing what one preaches. By relating women to communities, gender to nation, native to foreigner and theory to practice, Suleri defies and critiques the boundaries around all these categories and, in so doing, extends and disperses the limits of autobiography.

Katharine N. Rankin, University of Toronto

Local-Global Articulations: Neoliberalism and Newar Economics of Practice

This paper considers the articulation of global political-economic processes with local contexts of power through a study of the "economics of practice" (à la Pierre Bourdieu) in the merchant community of Sankhu in the Kathmandu Valley. It first illustrates the dialectical relationships among gender and caste ideologies, prestige systems, and patterns of social inequality. At the scale of individual consciousness, following the work of Steven Parish, the paper then explores the ways in which such ideological constructions occupy the minds and lives of women and low castes as common sense-as well as the extent to which women and low castes recognize the
established order as an arbitrary human construction. This discussion highlights the critical resources available within culture should planners learn how to recognize them. Finally, the paper considers how neoliberalism and the associated "open market" policies articulate with the Newar economics of practice. In particular it evaluates the progressive and regressive tendencies generated for women and low castes in the articulation of local cultural economies with emerging service-sector labor markets in Kathmandu and patterns of commodification.

Vaman Rao, Western Illinois University

Hindutva: A New Ideology or a Pragmatic Concept?

The word "Hindutva" has caused an enormous change on the Indian political scene. While it has been a battle cry for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), it has also acted as a coalescing agent among the older and established leftist parties who together see themselves as secular forces. It seems appropriate, then, to dismiss the idea that Hindutva is just an obscurantist ideology or nothing more than a fancy name for Hindu fundamentalism, as its detractors claim. There is no doubt that Hindutva does attempt to generate a sense of national exuberance based upon the glories of the pre-British and pre-Muslim periods of Indian history, and it has been the most effective tool in catapulting the BJP into the majority party within the short span of a decade or so. It may also be true that its effectiveness has reached a saturation point, and that the word "Hindutva" shall have to be defined more comprehensively in order to make it acceptable to the multiethnic society that India is. Attempts have been made in that direction, and this paper explores and evaluates those efforts.

Pallavi Rastogi, Tufts University

Midnight's Stepchildren: "Regional" Literatures, Mirrorwork, and the Politics of Indo-Anglian Literary Criticism

"Indo-Anglian literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has made to the world of books." -Salman Rushdie in his Introduction to Mirrorwork: 50 Years of Indian Writing, 1997.

Salman Rushdie may claim that the selections in Mirrorwork, his 1997 anthology of post-independence Indian writing, are truly eclectic; however all but one of the writers included in this collection have penned their way to literary glory by using the English language. Rushdie seems to suggest—indeed does actually suggest—that Indian writing in English is the building block of Indian literature as a whole; thus willfully neglecting the impact of the "regional" literatures in the construction of such a category. Keeping in mind a central question: why Indian writing in English has become the global phenomenon it is today, I intend to critique Rushdie's anthology as an exercise in a profound Anglophilia that further validates Euro-centric models of literary criticism instead of calling for a more hybrid mode of understanding not only Indian writing in English but also the literatures produced in the many varied "regional" languages of the Indian sub-continent.

Radharani Ray, The University of Texas at Austin

Moving Against Child Labor: A Case Study of the South Asian Carpet-Weaving Industry

This paper uses the movement against child labor as a case study to examine a practical application of Transnational Social Movement (TSM) theory. I begin with a description of Transnational Social Movement theory, its evolution and theoretical tenets particularly as contrasted with older social movements. The discussion of Transnational Social Movement theory includes an important critique leveled against the theory as it has developed in the United States.
While the specific critique refers to the U.S. context, I argue that most of the objections raised are valid in the context of developing nations as well. To this end, I use the case of child labor in the South Asian carpet-weaving industry to illustrate how Transnational Social Movement theory is unable to provide an entirely appropriate framework for understanding the problem and the related movement. The case study surveys the nature and magnitude of the problem, domestic efforts aimed at combating child servitude in carpet-weaving, international intervention through trade restrictions, and the criticism of the movement from a protectionist economic perspective.

Laura A. Ring, University of Chicago

Civic Intimacy: The Language of Women’s Attachments in a Karachi Apartment Building

Drawing on fieldwork in a lower-middle class Karachi apartment building, this paper examines the affective language of women’s neighbor relations as sites of national discipline and desire. Since the ’70s, multi-story apartment buildings have become increasingly the housing of choice for Karachi’s middle class. For residents arriving from rural villages, as well as for long-time urbanites shifting from more ethnically homogeneous colonies, the apartment building makes available new kinds of local attachments, and a new kind of neighboring public. Central to this dwelling is the emergence of particular regimes of sentiment, which govern, enable, and render intelligible the construction of local attachments. I focus here on women’s use of the English word share to convey a sense of emotional exchange, or intimacy, that is imaginable in the civic space of neighborhood - an intimacy that refers neither to the modern figure of the companionate couple, nor to the idiom of kinship. This simultaneously utopian and ambivalent intimacy is ambiguously intertwined with cultural notions of shame and reputation, and with the Pakistani nation-state’s specific enlightenment project. The terms and postures of this intimacy, I argue, can be seen as discursive and somatic sites of struggle over a national, or civil, sensibility.

Srirupa Roy, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

"Moving images: Audiovisual Representations of Nation and State in India”

This paper examines the production and deployment of visual representations of Indianness by the postcolonial Indian state. I am interested in exploring how the state’s engagement with the specific form of visuality as well as with images per se enables the production of a ‘state-effect’—i.e. the ways in which each envisioning of the nation entails an envisioning of the state itself, and the ways in which the medium of film in particular lends itself to this practice of ‘dual representation’. I focus on the images generated and circulated in and through three specific kinds of ‘visual fields’: (a) the Films Division of India, whose products explicitly foreground the state’s authoritative use of the cinematic medium to engage in the activity of ‘truth-telling’ about and to an infantilized national subject; (b) television ‘fillers’ and ‘shorts’ such as the Mera Bharat Mahan (My India is Great) series on national integration, where the state hovers on the sidelines as a ‘facilitator of entertainment’ for the consumer-national; and (c) ‘private’ products with self-professed ‘patriotic’ motivations and themes (music videos sponsored by Coca Cola India to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Indian independence; the Vande Mataram short films/advertisements/music videos produced by Bharat Bala Productions in 1997-9). Here the state makes itself ‘invisible’ as far as visual representations of Indian identity are concerned, even as it actively colludes in the making and dissemination of these products. What are the correspondences and divergences among these visual representations of Indianness? What kinds of social and political imaginaries do these visual imaginaries constitute—what kinds of relations between state and nation do they specify? Do state and non-state/private-sector makers of nationalist images use the visual form differently, and for different kinds of imagined audiences? Or does this division of labor and the accompanying assertion of difference between ‘official’ and ‘commercial’ images produce the ‘official’ itself as a particular, discrete, and identifiable image? By raising such questions, I hope to draw attention to the way in which the
nationalist imagination constitutes not just the intended audience of the 'imagined nation', but the image-maker—the modern state itself.

Agha Saeed, University of California - Berkeley

Martial Law and Socio-Political Reforms: An Analysis of the Military Regime's Discourse of Self-Legitimization

This paper deals with the three inter-related questions: 1) Why another martial law? 2) Can martial law be a vehicle for socio-juridical and politico-economic reforms? And 3) how does one understand the coup of October 12, 1999 in the context of globalization?

To that end, I will examine:

1) Martial law as an instrument of coalitional politics;
2) Military's idea of what it calls 'repair' of political institutions;
3) Martial Law regime's formal and informal, legal and political, dealings with major and minor political parties and their cumulative effect on the future of democracy in Pakistan;
4) Military regime's systems of self-justification designed to placate both domestic educated middle classes and international democratic as well as imperialistic pressures.
5) The debate and dissensus among the Pakistani elites after President Clinton's televised address to the people of Pakistan; and
6) Demands by some sections of the establishment for the military to contemplate an exit strategy.

Anindya Saha, Cornell University

Federalism and the Trend Towards Regionalization in India's Party System

Of late, the Indian party system has undergone a significant transformation, characterized by the rise to national importance of regional parties. I will offer a rational-choice explanation for this party system fragmentation and the increase resilience of such parties in the nineties which links it to the federal character of the Indian state. Attention will be devoted to the incentives behind the crafting of an improbable set of alliances with regional parties by the BJP, the currently dominant actor, and how these constitute mutually beneficial deals. My analysis will attend to the logic of how intentional action on the part of strategic political entrepreneurs, working within a given set of political institutions, gives rise to results unintended by any one actor. In the process, I will show how the institution of federalism has been dramatically transformed, both economically and politically.

Bhaskar Sarkar, University of California at Santa Barbara

"The Melancholic Auteur: Ritwik Ghatak and the Partition of Bengal"

In this paper, I offer two interrelated readings of the so-called Partition trilogy of Bengali filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak from the early 1960s. Drawing on Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia, I propose that Ghatak's obsessive engagement with Partition was driven by a profound sense of loss: the truncation of Bengal produced a debilitating crisis of being, a crisis that he sought to come to terms with—and overcome—through his creative work. At the same time, his insistence on returning to that traumatic event must be understood as a critical stance: in an era of high nationalism, Ghatak held on to what, in Walter Benjamin's words, was "a moment of danger," thus revealing the contradictions at the heart of India's project of nationhood. His insistent engagement with a disruptive phase of national history—through the dialogic articulation
of wildly disparate elements (Kalidasa, Tagore, Eisenstein, Marx and Jung)—constituted an avant garde moment in the cultural field of postcolonial India.

Mahua Sarkar, SUNY Binghamton

The Practice of Memory as Alternate History

Muslim women have been mostly invisible within a Hindu-dominated nationalist historiography in both pre- and post-Independence India. When they have appeared, they have been overwhelmingly portrayed as backward and victimized. Until recently even feminist scholarship has followed the general trend within Indian historiography in focusing mostly on Hindu women; Muslim women have remained mostly ignored in the narratives of women’s “progress/emancipation” in late colonial India. History, however, is not produced only through official, public representations; it is also constructed and nurtured in popular memory. This paper turns to this realm of popular memory in order to investigate ways in which Muslims in colonial Bengal negotiated dominant structures of representations—both colonial and Hindu nationalist—in their efforts to forge their own identities, and construct alternate histories. Specifically, it uses oral histories collected from Muslim and Hindu women to tease out the relationship between dominant constructions of “ideal Indian” (read: Hindu upper caste/middle class) and “other” ideas of womanhood, and Muslim women’s own perceptions of themselves. Popular memory is often thought of simply as sites of resistance to normative history. This paper, however, is interested in registering not just resistance, but also the deep inroads made by dominant discursive formations into this “repository” of different memories. The paper thus resists any easy recovery of unmediated, pure, subaltern voices. The oral histories used in this paper were collected from Muslim women who were born and/or lived in Calcutta or Dhaka—the two most important urban centers of colonial Bengal—between 1810 and 1950.

Martha Ann Selby, University of Texas at Austin

The Seasons, Sexuality, and Aesthetic Representation in Early Indian Poetry

The theme of the six seasons was a great favorite of poets who composed verse in what we consider to be the primary languages of classical India for poetic production: Sanskrit, Prakrit and Old Tamil. Many of the poets who worked with this genre dealt directly or indirectly with the subject of love, using the changing times of the year as sensual backdrops for romantic situations and as inotlers and developers of great emotional feeling and depth. I argue that these categories, generically tidy though they may seem, reflect specific cultural practices that are tied to seasonal change. For example, in first- and second-century Sanskrit texts on Ayurveda, we find early medical ideas concerning sexual and dietary behavior that are driven by yearly cycles, geographical locale, and climatic change. These ideas are quite clearly reflected in much of the poetry. I will situate this very specific generic theme of composing poems on the seasons within broader cultural and historical contexts, thereby imparting a sense of how this specific and very popular mode of literary expression is actually an aesthetic manifestation of deeper cultural and behavioral attitudes toward seasonal cycles and how they operated in and structured human existence and behavior.

Satadru Sen, Purdue University

Playing With Color: Ranji, Race, and Princely Politics

Scholars of nineteenth-century India have frequently observed how the colonial discourses of race and gender served the political interests of the colonizers. A process that has received comparatively less attention is the manipulation of these discourses by colonized groups and
individuals. One such individual was K.S. Ranjitsinhji ("Ranji"), who, in the 1890's, became one of the best-known athletes in the British Empire. Within a decade, Ranjitsinhji was able to use his popularity, and a skillfully managed racial and gendered identity, to acquire a moderately prestigious position in the political hierarchy of colonial India. This paper examines the linkages between his racial self-representation and his political status. I argue that Ranjitsinhji strategically - and quite successfully - utilized two set of cultural and political resources. One included the ambiguities in his experience as an Indian athlete in Edwardian England. The other included fragments of multiple and contradictory colonial discourses: that of the delicate Indian man as well as that of the Rajput warrior, that of the English gentleman as well as that of the Oriental prince, that of the loyal servant of the Empire as well as that of a disgruntled colonial subject.

Purnima Shah, University of California-Riverside

Dancing for Gods and Tourists: the interplay of the local and global in the Khajuraho Festival

Early 20th century Indian nationalism propagated a reassertion of traditional values, and the awakening of an awareness for the rich cultural heritage in a conscious attempt to re-establish national pride. A series of nationalist events became sites of a paradoxical concurrence of pro-western and anti-western currents from which emerged new and altered histories, new traditions, new perspectives of the past, new trends and revived genres of art, all of which contributed to the diversity and plurality of a 'national' Indian culture. Consequently, the Indian Government sponsored national performing arts festivals at historic sites all over the country. Artists, performers, organizers, bureaucrats, cultural advisors, were all involved in the cosmopolitan culture-making employing national traditions, symbols, ceremonies including dance festivals, such that their national, trans-local image comprised of a renewed collective of traditional and regional identities.

In this paper I present Khajuraho Dance festival as an exemplary site of national cultural production, illustrating the dichotomy of the state's promotion of classical traditions on the one hand and its persuasive attempts to use these emblematic traditions as cultural devices to lure international tourism on the other. The Khajuraho Dance Festival provides a glimpse of a developing public culture within the artistic field of Indian dance evocating the past within a lived present and exemplifying the dynamics of interplay between the religious and the secular, the sacred and profane in the wake of trans-global flows of tourism where traditions and culture are neatly packaged for consumption.

Svati Shah, Columbia University

"Everything's Been Arranged": Hindu Marriage, Sexuality, and the Politics of Representation

This paper will explore the ways in which the politics of Hindu nationalism intersect with rhetorics of anti-assimilationism through public discourse on Hindu arranged marriage in the U.S. Advertisements for Hindu arranged marriages have been a common feature of the Indian-American press since the 1970s. More recently, the social performance of diasporic Indian marriage customs in general, and arranged marriages in particular, have been increasingly covered in such venues as New York Magazine, the New Yorker, and the New York Times. Such mainstream publications, whose stories are clearly intended for non-South Asian audiences, include lush descriptions of Americanized Hindu weddings and bold statements from South Asian youth on the merits of arranged marriage. Reading representations of arranged marriage in the Indian-American and mainstream U.S. press over the past two years, I argue that the diasporic interpretation of arranged marriage is an important avenue for the reinscription of "traditional" gender roles in Indian communities. The ground on which these roles are inscribed is necessarily
defined in opposition to other marriage practices in non-Hindu South Asian communities, and in opposition to South Asians who do not conform to dominant sexual or familial norms. I also argue that, in the mainstream press, the outlines of a "traditional" practice as existing despite the "pull" toward Americanization among immigrant youth rests as a powerful metaphor for resistance to dominant cultural norms of heterosexual dating and marriage.

Shalini Shankar, New York University

Taal se Taal Mila? Performing "Multicultural Day" Desi Style in Silicon Valley High Schools

In several Northern Californian High Schools, events such as "Multicultural Day," "International Night," and "Asian Day" are the focus of intense student effort and attention. South Asian teenagers are especially active in these celebrations, as self-selected youth spend their leisure time and resources choreographing, practicing and outfitting dances for performance. Although these events are designed to celebrate ethnic diversity among students, they often fuel the very tensions around representation and sovereignty they seek to dissipate. In this paper I will present several examples of this contestation, ranging from publicly voiced discontent by ethnic groups who were not selected to perform in programs, to factions that developed within a group of participants over notions of tradition and comportment for female dancers.

The paper draws on ethnographic research at three socioeconomically diverse high schools with large Desi presences, and examines these performances from early practices to their moments on stage. Presenting video footage of the events, it foregrounds Desi youth opinions and perspectives on the process, as these performances provide a creative space for youth by enabling them to craft public displays of ethnicity and represent themselves to peers and faculty. Focusing on the specific contexts of gender, class and ethnicity by which they are created, I will analyze how these performances contribute to and reinforce existing dynamics between ethnic groups, how they enable school administrations to manage ethnicity by packaging it for consumption during designated days, and their role in positioning Desi youth in discourses of multiculturalism in America.

Nitasha Sharma, University California-Santa Barbara

"I Ain't Down With It": Contesting "Ethnic Pride" through the Formation of Second Generation Racialized Identities

Indians who immigrated to the U.S. after 1965 often look to South Asia for their identity and remain involved in homeland politics. For many of these professionals, difference is understood in cultural and ethnic terms. As a result, they often encourage their children to maintain a sense of ethnic pride and enroll them in a number of cultural activities. In addition, maintaining an ethnic identity based on national affiliations allows Indians to remain disengaged with U.S. racial politics and allows them to maintain a distance from other U.S. minorities and working class Indians. Young second generation Indians express a range of identities which often reinforce first generation ideas of an essentialized "Indianess." For some U.S.-born youth, however, raised in a context of discrimination and racial categorization, an understanding of difference based on ethnicity may not accurately reflect or help to explain their experiences. Using ethnographic data on Indians in Northern California, I will explore how some second generation Indian Americans form explicitly racial identities through their relations with African Americans and black popular culture. I will then interrogate how these racialized identities challenge hegemonic notions of Indian American identity.
Ganesh P. Shivakoti and Surendra B. Thapa, Asian Institute of Technology

Factors Influencing the Transformation of Agriculture in the Mid-hills of Nepal

In the mid-hills of Nepal, as in many developing countries, increased demand for agricultural produce due to population growth and to earlier development activities have induced farmers to re-orient their traditional subsistence farming to systems growing crops to be sold on markets. Based on household surveys and group discussions with key informants, we found that in areas where rapid change in farming systems is occurring, farmers are expanding their private landholdings and increasing their market participation irrespective of caste, which is often considered a social barrier to development. Off-farm wage labor has also increased to the point where it contributes up to one-half of total household income. Traditional farming systems of local rice varieties and maize have been replaced by a system growing vegetables and improved varieties of rice. Income from selling dairy products and vegetables have become the largest source of household income. We also found that the participation of community based organizations facilitated this transformation, while the efforts of external agency-induced organizations had little success. Multiple regression identified income from different farm enterprises, land under cash crops, and the ratio of improved to local crop species as important variables in determining the level of commercialization.

Mohammad Siddiqi, Western Illinois University

Indian National Identity: A Muslim Perspective

Since independence and the creation of Muslim Pakistan, the issue of the proper relationship between Muslims and Hindus (and the other religious communities) in India has not declined in intensity or importance. Pakistan was created in the first place in part because Muslims feared their rights would be denied in a Hindu-dominated land, and yet the Muslim community survives and indeed thrives in India. Still, the place of this very large and powerful minority in the ongoing evolution of Indian culture remains unsettled. For one thing, their resistance to the creation of a uniform civil code is a reflection of the continuation of Muslim uneasiness about full equality in an Indian society where the vast majority are Hindus, an uneasiness accentuated by the recent rise of several forms of Hindu fundamentalism. In addition, the never-ending troubles on the India-Pakistan border do not help. Still, Muslims in India are Indian, and, as such, the issue of Indian national identity is a vital concern. This paper explores solutions to their dilemma.

Beth Lee Simon, Indiana University Purdue University

Here We Do Not Speak Bhojpuri: The Speech Acts of Self and Other

Linguistic pluralism is a primary cultural idiom in India. In this paper, I present conversations taped in Banaras (Varanasi) in which participants perform constitutive speech acts dependent on shared definitions of the social boundaries of language and religious identities. In conversation, speakers repeatedly refuse or negate politicized social identities, at the same time, using those very refusals or negations to assert other politicized identities. Analysis reveals not only the complex interconnections between negotiated individual identity and the construction of overlapping communal identities, but also the ideologies fueling the acts of construction themselves. This analysis provides insights into a set of theoretical questions concerning the formation of social identity and the demarcation of social group boundaries. How does culturally resonant discourse regarding language (Hindi, Urdu, Bhojpuri) create intragroup cohesion? How does it symbolize group distinctions and establish social boundaries? It is within conversation that residents participate in the Indian dialectic between national, intermediate, and localized categories of social division; it is within the conversation where identities are constructed, social boundaries re/established, and social cleavages articulated and justified.
Amita Sinha, Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Identity in Colonial and Postcolonial Architecture Discourse

Art and Architecture are primary expressions of cultural identity, shaping emerging and changing beliefs that, in turn, shape identity. Postcolonial Indian architecture, such as the works of Charles Correa, Balkrishna Doshi, and Romi Khosla, expresses an emerging identity that looks for its roots in Vedic notions and timeless folk cultural archetypes. Yet, contemporary architectural education and practice are influenced by 19th-century colonial institutions and conventions which stand in diametric contrast to traditional vaastu shastra principles and architectural practice.

Of particular interest are architectural histories of E.B. Havell, James Fergusson, and Percy Brown written at the turn of the nineteenth century, reprinted repeatedly and widely read by design students to this day. I examine the explicit or implicit racial theories, taxonomies, and other cultural assumptions of these authors. Comparison with new textbooks written by Christopher Tadgell, Jon Lang et al., Satish Grover, and George Michell in the late twentieth century highlight revisionist and postcolonial notions about Indian architecture and their role in the expression of identity.

Aseema Sinha, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Federalism and Economic Policy in India: A Paradigm Shift?

The most common approach in the literature on the politics of liberalization is to focus on interest groups. The underlying model is the following: policy reform has distributive consequences for different groups, which organize to protect themselves. Politicians respond to constituent pressures and they "exchange policy distortions in exchange for political support." Thus the pace and future of any reform effort hinges on the political balance of power between the winners and losers and their ability to solve their collective action problems in the pursuit of their interests. This literature, while paying attention to the political incentives of reformers fails to ask: how does the political structure influence those incentives and hence the process of liberalization? Thus, while the most common approach in studies of liberalization is to focus on interest groups, this fails to acknowledge that institutional characteristics like federalism shape the effects of interest groups. The study of institutions such as federalism and their impact on liberalization needs further research.

This paper will address how federalism affects economic reform in India. Economic reform has proceeded at an irregular but continuous pace since 1991 despite the potential obstacles provided by powerful groups such as public-sector trade unions, big business, bureaucrats and nationalist parties. Why, then, have reforms become irreversible? I will argue that the political structure of federalism mediates the relationship between the global and the local and creates supporting coalitions for the reform process. This paper suggests that the political structure of federalism spatially distributes the politics of liberalization in India. This argument will enable me reassess the existing theoretical debates on the relationship between federalism and economic policy.

Mrinalini Sinha, Southern Illinois University

The Evidence of History: Historical Narratives of the Women's Movement in Late Colonial India

This paper is concerned most broadly with the relation between historical narratives and collective memory. Its particular focus is on the role of historical narratives of the women's
movement in late colonial India in constructing a collective memory of the Indian feminist past. My paper will bring together different historiographical traditions that often themselves rely on feminist autobiographies and memoirs about the period with my own reading of feminist interventions from the past. My aim is not to assert the "truth-value" of the one over the other. It is rather to demonstrate how memory, no less than history, is mediated by scripts emanating from the outcome of specific historical struggles. It is thus that I argue that historical narratives as well as individual recollections have worked together in producing a collective memory of the Indian feminist past. What this demonstrates, I suggest, is precisely the intersection between the domains of memory and of history.

Davesh Soneji, McGill University

Female Impersonation, Female Participation: The Conflation of Multiple Performance Genres and the Construction of Kuchipudi, ca. 1925-1960

Traditions of dance in Andhra Pradesh can be divided into two broad categories: nattuva melam (the solo female dance of the sanis or devadasis) and natya melam (the group dance-drama performed exclusively by Brahmin men). In the twentieth century, the movement to intentionally disassociate dance culture from its devadasi practitioners found comfort in the "clean" Brahmin tradition of dance-drama from Kuchipudi village in the Krishna district. Nationalist patrons and scholars attempted to demonstrate the hegemony of the Sanskritic male Brahmin tradition at Kuchipudi village over other traditions of performance in Andhra. Devadasi culture receded to the background, while Kuchipudi village, once hardly known outside the Krishna district, became a "cultural symbol of national importance". However, many of the distinguishing characteristics of modern Kuchipudi in fact do not stem from Kuchipudi village nor from the male performance traditions. They were consciously borrowed from the devadasi traditions in the early part of the twentieth century. This process of re-creation grouped together texts and technique from the Brahmin traditions of dance-drama and the solo repertoire of the devadasis under the umbrella term "Kuchipudi". This paper examines the construction of modern Kuchipudi and the selective silencing of devadasi genres of performance in this process.

Selma K. Sonntag, Humboldt State University

Language Politics in Nepal and South Africa

This paper is a comparative study of recent language politics in Nepal and South Africa. In the past, both states had attempted to contain subnational forces, albeit in very different ways. The apartheid regime in South Africa encouraged local linguistic fragmentation as a divide-and-rule policy. The monarchy in Nepal suppressed all languages other than Nepali. Both of these archaic regimes were swept away in the global tide of political change in the early 1990s. Both adopted new and more democratic language policies, in response to demands of mobilized subnational groups. What was the interface in these two cases between subnational linguistic demands and the global rhetoric, predominantly in English, of democratization? Although the global-local interaction and timing of these two cases may be similar, the role of English in the two countries differs. English competed with Afrikaans in South Africa, with tragic consequences such as the Soweto riots of the mid-70s. By contrast, in Nepal, English remained a foreign language, never competing with Nepali as a viable lingua franca. This variation in the role of (global) English, but relative similarity in terms of the state adopting a multilingual language policy because of local linguistic demands, provides for a provocative comparative analysis.
Sujatha Sosale, Georgia State University

Postcolonial Theory and the Media: Some Conceptual Possibilities

In this paper, I would like to explore ways of thinking about transnational media studies conceptually within a postcolonial framework. Scholars of the Indian diaspora have played a key role in the articulation of postcolonial theory, with India serving as their main geocultural and geopolitical reference point. Proceeding from works by some of these postcolonial theorists, and research and writing primarily on the Indian media, I would like to address various aspects of media studies such as media technology, media representation, and active audiences from 'postcolonial' attempts at 'a different way of knowing.'

Some productive questions that might emerge from a postcolonial approach to media studies include the following. How does a former colony negotiate with modern media of communications and affect a 'hybrid' media discourse and practices marked by its own histories and identities? How do globalization and new media technologies play into these negotiations? What are the postcolonial images available in media texts and what are the implications of (national) modern media's unique 'publicness' for these images? While answers to these questions require independent inquiry, as a start, this paper offers some frameworks to think about the media along these lines.

Oliver Springate-Baginski, University of Leeds Environment Centre

Community Forestry Policy in Nepal: Progress and Potentials

Since the HMGN 1993 Forest Act provided the legal basis for Community Forestry (or CF), there has been rapid implementation of CF throughout the mid-hills of Nepal. This has occurred through the formation and support (by the Department of Forestry) of legally-independent Forest User Groups (or FUGs), who are given responsibility for management of forests handed to them. This work has been supported in many areas from bilateral donor programmes. Since the inception period however there have been few extensive or rigorous studies considering the actual impacts of the policy on the ground. Research recently completed at the Leeds University Environment Centre, in collaboration with the Nepal UK Community Forestry Project, assessed the impacts of Community Forestry, in terms of: the forest resource the local FUG institution the livelihoods of the different forest users.

The 3-year project employed an intensive and iterative Participatory Action Research method in conjunction with traditional household and resource survey, across a spectrum of FUGs. Findings of the research will be presented.

Lakshmi Srinivas, UCLA

Non-Sense as Sense Making: Popular Indian Cinema and Cultural Globalisation

Indian cinema has been enthralling audiences for the past nine decades. With their melodramatic themes, fantastic song and dance sequences and improbable but predictable happy endings, the films are commonly thought of as non-sense narratives and have been described as escapist fiction for the masses. Over the years Indian films have metamorphosed to keep up with the changing social reality encountered by their audiences. Most recently, the movies address the subject of cultural globalisation continuing an ongoing dialogue with audiences who are increasingly exposed to satellite television, Hollywood movies and a globalizing economy.

Consequently, films made in the last five years have more locations outside India, characters use English phrases and cell phones, celebrate Valentine’s Day and are seen spending time in
exercise clubs and shopping malls. The non-resident Indian or NRI is now a character in most Indian films and portrayed as part of the social circle of middle-class families. This paper examines the ways in which the Indian film represents and interprets cultural globalisation as a phenomenon that shapes everyday life for its audiences both within India and outside of it. It investigates the cultural translations involved in such representations.

Smriti Srinivas, Ohio State University

Sant, Guru and Avatar: Iconic Representations and the Politics of Modernity in the Sai Baba Movement.

The Sai Baba Movement is historically associated with the figure of Sai Bab of Shirdi, a Maharashtrian Saint closely identified with both the Pandarpur tradition of devotion and sufi genealogies. After the passing away of Shirdi Sai Baba in 1918 there appeared to be at least four strands in the transmission of his charisma in a pan-Indian context linked with emergent cultural pathways. These include the growth of Shirdi as a pilgrimage site, figures such as Upasini Maharaj and Meher Baba, the establishment of temples dedicated to Shirdi Baba in various urban centres, as well as the self-declared "avatar" of Shirdi Baba, Satya Sai Baba. Underlying these strands are three types of iconic representations - sant, guru and avatar - which emerge in the history and hagiography of the Sai Baba movement. While the icon of the holy mendicant/saint (fakir/sant) is associated largely with non-Urban locations, the representation of the spiritual guide (guru) and, in later years, the incarnation (avatar) is to be found associated with suburban and urban sites. These pathways and hagiographic constructions thus have complex intersections with spatiality but are also linked to the politics of modern South-Asia, whether the movement from a regional to a national/global economy or the reconfigurations of the relationship between religion, the state and civil society. This paper will explore the relationship between hagiographic representations and the politics of modernity in South-Asia in the Sai Baba movement.

Tulasi Srinivas, Boston University

Burgers, Bondas, and Gobi Manchurian: Consuming and Digesting Globalisation

This paper examines the food industry in India in the wake of economic liberalisation and globalisation. Regional, and local food in India covers an array of ingredients and tastes, as the identity of ethnic and religious sub-groups seem to be vested in their food and its cooking. Therefore Indians are educated consumers of food specialities, such as pav bhaji in Bombay, chaat in Delhi and dosas in Bangalore, and there is no pan-Indian cuisine to speak of.

Currently there are not one, but two, food booms that are taking place in India simultaneously—the boom in multinational 'brand name' food, and the indigenous food boom. The entry of multinational food companies has been widely reported by the media, but the simultaneous boom in local foods and indigenous cuisine has been ignored. In reality, McDonalds and KFC have not been successful in penetrating the Indian market, but the local Chinese-Indian restaurant has been far more successful in gaining access to a market share. This paper analyses the complex relationship between 'brand name' food and the expectations of the Indian consumer and explores the cultural freight that food may or may not carry.

Sanjay Srivastava, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

Hakim Harkishanlal's Modernity: Love, Sex, Anxiety, and the Sex-Clinics of Delhi

This paper is based on 'field-work' at the 'sex-clinics' of Delhi and is a preliminary exploration of the forum of discussion and debate that gathers around these and Hindi language 'foot-path
pornography'. It outlines a series of contexts for the study of non-middle class sexual and masculine cultures in India. Here, the engagement with modernity is, in turns, earnest, dogged, and precarious. The factors that go towards the formation of these contexts include a new commodity culture, masculine anxiety and conjugal love, the marginalised position of 'traditional' medicine, a sexualisation of political economy, and an urban sensibility that is formed by but not reducible to the processes of globalisation. My discussion will move between the 'sex-clinics' and foot-path pornography, for the two are linked, both in the sense that many sex-clinics operators publish the latter, and that the clientele for the two is often the same. The important thing is that they are both part of a site for the discussion of many aspects of modern subjectivity in India. In sum, I explore the processes of 'formal' and 'informal' modernity, and the formation of an 'subterranean' civil society organised around sexuality and its 'fulfillment'.

Linda Stalker Prokopy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

"Determinants of Project Success: Evidence from Two Rural Water Supply Projects in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh"

There have been several notable changes in the past decade in the planning and implementation of rural water supply projects in India. Most notably, many projects are requiring that communities help contribute towards the capital cost of the scheme, and that communities be fully responsible for all operation and maintenance costs. Towards this end, communities are becoming more actively involved in all stages of projects with the assistance of village committees. However, there is little evidence about whether these committees actually enhance participation, and particularly which features of the committees (such as transparency, regular meetings, inclusive membership, etc.) improve project performance.

This study examines the experiences of two World Bank assisted projects in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. A random selection of 45 project villages was selected from the schemes, and the study covers several geographic regions. Data was collected from many sources, including approximately 35 households per village, focus groups, committee meetings, interviews with committee members and direct observations. The study explores the role of participation by different groups (most notably the poor and women), the importance of capital cost contribution, cultural differences, and how well the committees are functioning. Using regression models, determinants of project effectiveness are developed.

Heather Streets, Washington State University

"A Fine and Brave People": Political Strategy and the Language of Masculinity in the Post-1857 Indian Army

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a turning point around which future attitudes - both public and official - about empire, race, and masculinity bent. This paper will discuss the crisis that the Rebellion produced within the Indian army, and the ways in which British officers used the language of masculinity to disguise their overtly political and strategic responses to it. In particular, officers rendered the actions of rebelling sepoys as representative of a depraved and cowardly masculinity, thereby obscuring the real grievances of the sepoys with images of masculine honor and dishonor. At the same time, British officers praised the loyalty of previously marginal Indian soldiers in expressly masculine terms, as reflective of true manliness rather than the economic or political issues that determined patterns of loyalty.

Faced with the need to restructure most of the Bengal army, British officers and administrators increasingly fused notions of 'true' masculinity and loyalty during the rebellion with racial superiority. Moreover, this biological strategy of military inclusion/exclusion shaped British military policy in India through 1918, and provided the anecdotal and statistical basis for the policy of
recruiting from only the 'martial races.' Through this paper, I hope to contribute to an understanding of the Indian army as an institution whose rationale was, in many ways, shaped by the imperatives and language of gender.

David Stulgross, University of California, Berkeley

Ethnic Diversities, Constitutional Designs, and Public Policies in India

This paper deals with how India's constitutional provisions and public policies have dealt with the nation's ethnic diversities. I concentrate on four such diversities, viewed as critical to nation building in India: religion, language, caste, and tribe. This paper asks the following three questions: a) how did India's constitution-makers and founding fathers propose to deal with the problems of each category, as they went about building a nation? b) what has been the impact of such constitutional provisions, institutional frames and public policies? and c) could constitutional and public policy engineering have achieved its objectives, or have some other factors crucially intervened in the processes that generate the outcomes we observe? My argument is that on linguistic diversity, India's institutional design has been a great success, but on all other ethnic categories, the record is mixed. I define success to mean the realization of outcomes that the institutional designs set out to achieve. I would also like to argue that it could not but have been otherwise. While institutional designs are important, they do not entirely determine the outcomes we observe, at least in India. Political and social contexts have a great deal to do with the actual consequences of institutional designs. To resolve political problems associated with ethnic diversity, we should indeed seriously consider the appropriate institutional designs as we step into the next millennium, but we should see them one of several important variables determining the outcome we seek to achieve.

Pavitra Sundar, University of Michigan

Nationalism and Religious Politics in the Music of A. R. Rahman

This paper explores the tortured relationship between religion and nationalism in the recent work of the music director A. R. Rahman. Rahman's "pop-patriotic" tunes -- especially the tracks of his '97 album Vande Mataram -- were immensely popular among middle- and upper-class urban youth in India. This particular brand of nationalism is a curious mélange of the Gandhian and Nehruvian visions for India, but it also bears striking similarities with the ideology of the Hindu right. This is especially interesting given the distinctly Islamic thrust of the music. Rahman's religious beliefs and previous work in films that explicitly critique the Hindu right place him in a rather precarious relationship to the ruling political parties. This tension is masked behind the invocation of a broader, humanitarian ideal - one that transcends religion and partisan politics. I argue here that the production and circulation of this secular-yet-religious, hybrid, aggressive nationalism is a reflection of the dilemmas facing today's urban youth. Forced out of their apathy by recent political developments - the rise to power of the BJP and its allies, the devastating Ramjanamabhoomi-Babri masjid riots, the heightened tension between India and Pakistan -- these youngsters find in the figure of Rahman a model citizen and human being. It is through him and through his music that they attempt to negotiate the conflicts and tensions in their own lives. What is disturbing is that, though the figure of Bharat Mata takes on new meanings in this modern context, it still remains situated within an explicitly heterosexual framework. The model of masculinity being performed in Rahman's music further serves to reinforce this sexist and heterosexist worldview. Keywords: A. R. Rahman, music, nationalism, post-colonial studies, religion.
Mukta Tamang, Cornell University

Searching for Democracy and Cultural Diversity: Janajati Movements and Decentralization Rhetoric

In the aftermath of the people's movement, what constitutes democracy has remained a central site of contestation. In order to participate in this contest over the meaning of democracy and as a way of envisioning the future of democracy, the Janajati movement has reworked collective identities so that they converge around ethnic and class categories. While Janajati movements in Nepal started with issues of language and culture, they have more recently embraced self-determination and autonomy of governance to secure cultural diversity and social justice. Janajati activists and organizations have proposed various new terms of democratic rule and participation in public spheres in Nepal through their activism and social construction of reality. The government has also reformulated its rhetoric of people's participation in nation building during the last decade, for example through legal provisions for decentralized local governance. This paper argues that the Janajati movement's discourse on the right to self-determination and the government's rhetoric of decentralization and local autonomy have shaped each other in varying degrees. The Janajati movement has gradually become a major force in Nepali socio-polity in search of democracy and cultural diversity.

Sirpa Tenhumen, Helsinki University

Place of Love in Social Hierarchy and Change

This paper looks at the controversy over a new phenomenon, love marriages, in a village in West Bengal, India. By looking at women's ideas of romantic love, their relationships, conspiracies, and the disputes over them as well as marriage negotiations they lead into, I examine how the idea of romantic love exists within the local hierarchies which are reproduced through the predominant marriage form, arranged marriages. Although love relationships are generally publicly disapproved of and considered as disruptive, the idea is not a complete departure from dominant cultural structures and discourses. Women's song tradition gives evidence of a long history of romantic love in the village, and the growing approval of love marriages does not mean giving up the ideas of honor and caste purity. All love marriages in the village took place within the caste, and the guardians of the couple finalized the matches. Love was considered as a force of destiny which made the liaisons honorable. I argue that love cannot be equated with individualism and fluidity of modern social systems in contrast to the unchanging nature of traditions and hierarchy.

Raju Thomas, Marquette University

India's Search for Security: Relating Doctrines to Threats and War Fighting Capabilities

In August 1999, India's National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) issued a draft statement on India's nuclear doctrine. Key members of the NSAB emphasized that it was merely a proposal for discussion, not an adopted policy. The draft was received with hostility in Pakistan as a direct threat to its security, and was subject to severe criticism and ridicule in the West, especially the United States. In particular, Washington was concerned that if the Indian government accepted the NSAB's proposed draft doctrine it would imply that India had irrevocably committed itself to a nuclear deterrent posture.

The draft nuclear doctrine does not explain how an independent Indian nuclear deterrent resolves threats from the enemies' conventional forces, and the resort to insurgency and terrorism within India aided and abetted from outside. Such security problems are more serious and pressing for India than hypothetical and distant nuclear threats, with the exception of Pakistan. A nuclear doctrine without reference to its impact on other forms of security may conceal some serious
shortcomings in the logic of an independent nuclear deterrent. After all, the most likely scenario of war in South Asia involves an escalation from terrorism and insurgency in Kashmir aided by Pakistan and Islamic fighters from other countries, to an Indo-Pakistani conventional war, and then to nuclear war. The possession of nuclear weapons may complicate India’s conventional defense strategies, counter-insurgency measures, and anti-terrorist tactics. An Indian nuclear doctrine needs to be tied to a broader and coordinated Indian security policy agenda.

The different types and levels of Indian security, the linkages among them, and the patterns of Indian security policy responses, are addressed in this paper.

Martijn van Beek, Aarhus University

Unmonkly business? The Role of Buddhist Monks in Modern Ladakhi Politics

At the time of the granting of regional autonomy to the district of Leh in 1995, considerable debate took place over the future role of religious figures in local government and decision making. While monks historically did not play formally as significant a role in secular affairs in Ladakh as in Tibet before its occupation, they have played a prominent role in different political agitations, have contested elections, and have held ministerial and other political and administrative posts at the regional, state, and central level. The continued prominence of the clergy both expresses and reinforces Buddhism as a central feature of identity and politics in the region. Part of ongoing research building on field research conducted since 1985, the paper draws on archival and other written sources, as well as interviews with religious figures, secular politicians, and common people. In addition to describing religious leaders' involvement in a 'modernizing' political and socio-economic environment, the paper contributes to the historiography of Ladakhi politics, and represents and analyzes local views and perceptions regarding the proper role of religious leaders in secular political affairs. The accounts also illustrate the dilemmas and contradictions caused by the encounter of religious authority and ideals of monkhood and 'Realpolitik', and the different ways in which people manage them.

Ruth Vanita, University of Montana

"Dosti to Tamanna: Same-Sex Love in Hindi Cinema"

In this essay I briefly examine the depiction of romantic friendship, especially between men, in Hindi cinema, connecting it to earlier literary depictions of love between men in such genres as the Urdu ghazal. I then examine Dosti and Tamanna in some depth. In Dosti (1964) the romantic friendship and love between two men is primary and there is no competing heterosexual romance. Females appear only as mothers, sisters and friends. The physical disabilities of the two young men can be read in several different ways. The film charts the progress of their relationship following the conventions of romantic narrative (tests, ordeals, separations, sacrifices, and final reunion blessed by an older mother figure etc). Tamanna, (1997), made by a director with a history of making films on gender issues and a controversial but liberatory stand on pornography, is a more sophisticated film, which draws on several different conventions to simultaneously address different audiences. I argue that although the main figure is a hījra, he is presented primarily as a nonheterosexual man with a male partner and as a coparent of two adopted children. I also refer to a recent TV serial in Hindi that explicitly and nonjudgmentally depicted a gay male couple. Despite Tamanna's potentially explosive critique of "Hindu" normative masculinity and celebration of an alternatively gendered Muslim family, it was not attacked by those who attacked Fire and Bombay. I argue that this is because Tamanna couches its criticism in widely acceptable and longstanding conventions of Hindi cinema, that draw on nationalist and older literary rhetoric.
Sylvia Vatuk, University of Illinois at Chicago

"Family" as a Contested Concept in Early Nineteenth Century Madras

Between 1801, when the British annexed the Carnatic territory, and 1855, when the Carnatic Nawwabi was abolished upon the death without heirs of Nawwab Ghulam Ghaus Khan, the relationship between the British colonial authorities and successive Nawwabs was an uneasy one. Issues related to the management of stipends allotted for the relatives and descendants of the last semi-independent Nawwab in the treaty of annexation formed a major part of the responsibility of the British Agent to the Nawwab, in his additional capacity as Paymaster of Carnatic Stipends. Upon the death of a stipendiary or as an outcome of disputes among stipendiaries or between the Nawwab and one of his relatives, negotiations took place in which the proper definition of the concept of "family" was frequently hotly contested by the various parties: the British authorities, the Nawwab, and individual members of the Nawwab’s kin group and retinue. The terms in which this contestation was framed reveals fundamental cultural differences between the British and the Muslim former rulers of the region in terms of what this concept meant to them, as well as the manner in which the various parties involved sought to strategically deploy these differences in order to attain their own ends in the context of a struggle that was both personal and political.

Latha Varadarajan, University of Minnesota-Minneapolis

From "brain drain" to a "brain trust": The Non-Resident Indian and the Indian State

q May 1998: India conducts a series of underground nuclear tests. The Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee announces the successful conduct of the tests with the assurance that he had "spoken to Indians abroad" and that they had indicated their strong support for the tests. Soon after, even as economic sanctions are imposed on India, the Indian government issues the 'Resurgent India' bonds. The total worth of the bonds purchased by Non-Resident Indians (NRI's) amounts to $4.15 billion. q August 1998: While reiterating the end of government support for the highly regarded Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), the Indian state appeals to 'Indians abroad' to raise a billion dollars to maintain the high academic standards of these institutes. The appeal leads to a spurt of donations and fellowship funds from ex-IIT graduates settled in the Silicon Valley. q November 1998: The BJP-led government announces a scheme to issue "Person of Indian Origin" cards to 'Indians' living abroad. The cards would provide PIO's the same benefits as NRI's - they would be able to travel to India without a visa; "acquire, hold, transfer and dispose of immovable property in India;" send children to educational institutions in India and avail of various housing schemes. In May 1999, the "Orange card" (for the PIO's) is made available in all Indian embassies and consulates. In each of the cases mentioned above, the Indian state made an appeal to a 'community' of 'Indians abroad' - an appeal that was met with a considerable response from this 'community'. The response of the 'NRI's', 'PIO's' and 'Indians abroad' seems to fit with a pattern that is becoming increasingly common - of certain sections of diasporic communities becoming involved in the politics of their 'imagined homelands' and responding to overtures made by the perceived originary nation-states. My paper will explore the significance of these responses for conceptualizing the nature, meaning, and role of the nation-state in an era of globalization. I will focus particularly on the manner in which the role of the 'non-resident Indian' has shifted within the official discourse of the Indian state. I argue that this reconceptualization of certain sections of the Indian diaspora -from a 'brain drain' to a 'brain trust' for the nation- has to be understood within the broader context of globalization.
Archana Venkatesan, University of California, Berkeley


This paper will explore the intersection of hagiology and iconography with respect to the 9th century Vaisnava, mystic, woman-saint, Antal. The sole woman amidst the canonized 12 vaishnava saints, the alvars, her voice rings out stridently in the collective of a male chorus - a bride, young, willful, detailing the experience of divine love and the anguish of separation. When the alvars are grouped and canonized in the early 10th century by the emerging vaishnava sect, alongside written commentaries, hagiographies, performance tradition and bronzes also develop as part and parcel of a burgeoning temple culture. Incorporated into worship most tangibly through these moveable images, the 12 alvars have distinctive iconographic features that correspond in some way to their hagiographies. However, in the case of Antal, who is distinctive as the sole woman figure in the company of eleven men, her bronzes actually become her hagiography. This is accomplished by collapsing her with the figure of Bhudevi, the Goddess Earth, and Visnu's secondary consort. Antal is thus assigned a liminal space within the vaishnava canon - removed from the realm of saithood and promoted to that of the goddess. This process in effect renders every image of Antal, in the eyes of the vaishnava community, an image of Bhudevi - an md renders every image of Bhudevi into that of Antal.

My paper is concerned with the particular canonizing project that the members of the vaishnava sects had in canonizing Antal - and how this project is reflected in the appropriation of bronze images in ritual performance and worship. Finally, I will discuss how the case of Antal is emblematic of the way in which images of women and female deities - whether matrikas, yoginis, or various manifestations of Shakti - are interchangeable and in this manner indistinct.

Jyotika Virdi, University of Windsor


After two decades of action driven violent films in the 70s and 80s, Hindi cinema's blockbuster success of "romance films" in the 90s was met with consternation by critics. Romance was generally featured in the Nehruvian era's Hindi cinema as a narrative subplot along with other devices to explore the cartography of social tensions. The 90s' romance film was conditioned by a new factor -- economic liberalization. Its impact on Hindi cinema, particularly the revival of romance is startling, especially if we compare it to its rare precedents, for example, Raj Kapoor's 1970 film, Bobby. I examine several popular 90s' romance films to map these changes. While heterosexual romance in these latter day films continues to serve as a register to explore social tensions and conflicts amidst signs of a proliferating commodity culture, it happens at the cost of giving up another political agenda. That difference I argue, marks these films as inaugurating an era distinct from the Nehruvian one.

Kamala Viswaswaran, University of Texas - Austin

Women, Religion, and Community: Situating the Contradictions in South Asian Human Rights Work

This paper names a crisis emerging at the intersection of feminist theory and area studies; where the critique of gender essentialism meets the construction of South Asia as an area of human rights work. Through an examination of recent gender asylum cases filed in the U.S., it explores how crimes against women have often come to be seen as emblematic of a community's religious persecution. While different South Asian states pose the question of religion differently (according to whether they are secular, democratic, theocratic, or military regimes), the tactics of description
surrounding sexual violence as a condition of asylum, typically collapse religion/culture and state, creating new contradictions and challenges for feminist and human rights groups in South Asia and in diaspora.

Susan S. Wadley, Syracuse University

The Hindu Jajmani System in the late 1990s

In the village Karimpur, whose system of patron-client relationships known as the jajmani system was first described by William Wiser in the 1920s, the forces of migration, changing occupations, technology, and globalization led to the loss of almost all jajmani relationships by the 1990s. This paper briefly summarizes the status of jajmani at three periods: the 1920s, the 1980s, and the late 1990s. It examines the roles of both men and women within the jajmani system, and the critical role played by women workers as supporters of the purdah system enforced for higher caste women. Linking almost every family in the village in the 1920s, by the 1980s jajmani relationships supported women's seclusion and ritual functions, with most male-to-male transactions replaced by cash hiring. By the late 1990s, jajmani was called upon primarily for ritual observances, and here too traditional hereditary ties were being replaced by temporary relationships.

Christopher Walker, University of Chicago

Electric Brains Go to School: Lhasa and Computer Education

The capital city of the Tibetan Autonomous Region has undergone a rapid shift toward computer-mediated communication, education, and game recreation. This computerization process follows more than just market and governmental directives—the localization of new technology follows regional understandings of the relationship of technology to Tibetan culture. This paper examines the construction of an educational multimedia section of Tibet University's new computer department and the establishment of a computer curriculum. Local understanding of this change is situated in the drive to modernize minority areas in terms of information technology and the drive to curtail forces undermining national sovereignty.

Amanda Weldman, Columbia University

In Search of the Guru: Technology and Authenticity in Karnatic Music

This paper traces the effects of recording and radio broadcasting technologies on ideas about tradition and authenticity in Carnatic music. In particular, I examine several moments in the period between 1900 and 1940 when, in coincidence with these technologies, music began to be heard in a different way, when the act and meaning of performing and listening seem to have changed. Using materials such as memoirs, music reviews, and essays written in Tamil and English at the time, I document the emergence of a kind of listening thought to be authentic because of its separation from the act of performance. Perhaps most at stake in the encounter of Carnatic music and musicians with these technologies was the notion of "gurukulavasam," often described as the pre-modern, "traditional" method of face-to-face teaching by a guru. Here I show how the discourse about gurukulavasam during this period, even while it claimed gurukulavasam as a sign of pre-modern authenticity, operated with a notion of authenticity that was profoundly affected by the "modern" technologies of gramophone recording and radio. Thus, instead of narrating the takeover of "tradition" by "modern" technologies, I show how ideas about musicality, discipline, repetition, learning by ear, authenticity, and even "tradition" itself were formed in the encounter with such technologies.
Boyd Wilson, Hope College

Indian National Identity: An Indian-Christian Perspective

Is it a contradiction in terms to speak of an "Indian Christian"? Can an Indian truly be a Christian? Can a Christian truly be an Indian? This paper explores the ramifications of these questions and the implications of some of the answers, for the enmity of two that foreign origin continues to plague Christianity and its adherents in the 21st century. As many factions of the burgeoning "Hindu fundamentalist" movement in India foster resentment against Christianity and Christians, is a growing voice in the Christian community that proclaims the Indian roots of Christianity. This voice insists that the Indian who is Christian is no less Indian than the Hindu or Muslim. The issue revolves around the analysis of culture and religion: is Christianity a participant in and contributor to Indian culture? The Christian church in all its many manifestations wishes to be recognized as Indian, not foreign, and an integral part of the glorious mix of fibers that form the fabric of Indian culture.

Maya Yajnik, Indiana University

Technological Policies and Possibilities: The Case of the Indian Internet

The dramatic transformation of the Indian Internet is taking place in the context of deliberate policy choices. Based on an in-depth study of the information technology infrastructure and the series of government policy initiatives over the past several years, this paper seeks to explore the trajectory of choices deployed by policy makers, the resulting change of ownership, the impact on the digital divide, and the community organizing around this issue. The Gateway Internet Access Service (GIAS) offered by VSNL and DOT (Department of Telecommunications), the ERNET (Education and Research Network) project and the NICNET network setup by National Informatics Centre have been responsible for building Internet services in India through extensive use of satellite, radio and telephone connectivity. Since 1996 however, private companies like Satyam Infoway have been issued licenses by the DOT, leading to the growth of private Internet Service Providers. While this has resulted in enhanced service and choice for the middle and upper class consumer, it has also set in motion a process that has adverse consequences for another segment of the population. This paper uses case studies to examine the growing emphasis on internet privatization, the selective deployment of resources, and its effect on the digital divide, while paying specific attention to community organizing efforts around these issues. It also seeks to build on the coalition building between organizations that are dealing with similar problems in India and in the U.S.

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Agrarian Struggle and Mythic Metaphor: Balli's Rural Kingship in Maharashtra

Balliraja, a mythological demon king deposed by the Vamana avatar of Lord Vishnu, has been a folk hero of Maharashtra's agriculturists for centuries. Although the figure of Balliraja has been historically sidelined and maligned within privileged discourses drawing upon textual Hinduisms, recent efforts among politically mobilized farmers to recenter and redefine Balliraja folk narrative have contributed to the rise of new expressive idioms and ritual practices in several areas of the state. For many agriculturists, particularly many of those who identify with the regional farmers' movement known as the Shetkari Sanghatana, the mythic conflict between Balli and Vamana is metaphor of an agrarian caste struggle for economic parity, political representation, and the curtailment of urban hegemony. In this new complex of deeply rooted symbols and emergent meanings, an idealized "restoration" of the administration of king Balli signifies the realization of a new and promising agrarian political economy characterized by caste, communal and gender equality, free participation in the local, national and global economies, and
minimal government intervention. This paper will examine influential political, economic and social forces shaping recent innovations of meaning within the Baliraja narrative, as well as its deep historical continuities.