Single Paper and Individual Panel Abstracts

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Refashioning Community: The Role of Violence in Redefining Political Society in Pakistan

The history of sectarian conflict in Muslim communities in Pakistan goes back to the early days of national independence. The growing presence of extremist Sunni and Shi’a sectarian groups who are advocating for an Islamist State fashioned around their interpretation of Islam has resulted in an escalating wave of violence in the form of targeted killings of activists, religious clerics, Shi’a doctors, professionals and the most recent trend of suicide attacks targeting ordinary civilians.

This paper will focus on the rise of sectarian tensions in Pakistan in relation to the changing character of Pakistani State in the Neo-Liberal era. Some of the questions that will be addressed are: What kinds of sectarian subjectivities are being shaped by the migration to the urban and peri-urban centers of Pakistan? What are the ways in which socio-economic grievances are reconfigured in sectarian terms? What are the ways in which violence shapes or politicizes …

Reflecting in Grief: Yudhishthira, Karna, and the Construction of Character

This paper examines the construction of character in the "Mahabharata" through crystalline parallels and mirrorings (described by Ramanujan 1991). Taking Yudhishthira and Karna as an example, we learn much about Karna from the parallel between Karna's dharmic tests and Yudhishthira's on the way to heaven; and several aspects of Yudhishthira's personality (his blinding hatred, his adherence to his worldview) come to the fore in the context of his hatred of and grief over Karna.

In fact, learning about a character through other characters is one of the framing devices of the epic: near the beginning, Janamejaya questions Vaishampayana about his Pandava ancestors. Analogously, the epic authors construct each character's identity not solely through that character's narrative but through that character's 'thematic relatives.' Indeed the identity of the epic itself can be construed through just that net of structural and narrative bhandhus (relationships).

The Arya Samaj and the Sacred Cow

Whereas current scholarly understanding of the cow protection movement in colonial north India (1880-1920) subordinates the widespread “economic” argument for cow protection to a purported Hindu religious preoccupation with the “sacred cow,” this paper interrogates the importance given to the “economic” argument particularly in Arya Samaj literature. I argue that the representation of cow protection in terms of the “economic” defined it as a matter of civil concern for a government by principle excluded from legitimate intervention on behalf of “religious” values or concerns. Arya Samajists spoke, in a language of material facticity, to questions of agricultural prosperity, health and wealth in order to define cow protection as relevant to a state concerned with a “common good” calculable in empirical terms.

I also argue however that the “economic” cannot be construed as superficial to Arya Samaj preoccupation with the cow. My analysis questions the adequacy of the terms, “economy” and “religion,” …

Constructing “Treachery”: Law and War in British India’s North-West Frontier

On 10th June 1897 a British military party was suddenly attacked in Maizar, North Waziristan. This attack was considered by the British to have signaled the great tribal revolt in the North-West Frontier of India—one of the most formidable revolts faced by them in the sub-continent. Official accounts and contemporary historiography described the attack as treacherous—“contrary to all Pathan codes of honour.” After sanctioning a punitive expedition against the Wazirs, a military tribunal was assembled to ascertain the causes of the attack and preside over the trial of the accused tribesmen. Challenging the official narrative this paper brings forth the findings of the military tribunal and in the process seeks to examine the disjunct between truth and colonial justice and the construction of an official narrative that sought to hide British military failures on the Frontier.
Ahmad, Hena, Truman State University

Cross-Cultural Literary Hybridization: Agha Shahid Ali's Ghazals in English

The Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali's ghazal in English is a cross-cultural literary hybridization. The first collection of poems written entirely in the ghazal form, Call Me Ishmael Tonight (2003), weaves into the ghazal form the English literary idiom. This paper will analyze how questions of home, exile and loss that permeate his verse are colored by the lens of a memory that encompasses the multiplicity of literary backgrounds and cross-cultural influences, and how the ghazals, informed by the contemporary political context, give a sense of history of the particular period Ali lived in. I will further examine how as Ali infuses the aesthetics of the Urdu ghazal into contemporary American poetic culture and brings American poetry into the ghazal, we see the creation of an intense and complex artistic vision.

Ahmad, Mumtaz, Hampton University

Radical Islamic Political Forces in Pakistan

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that although the radical Islamic forces have grown in recent years, they do not have the power to overwhelm, or completely destabilize Pakistan, largely because of the distinct environment there. This paper will offer five factors that render Pakistan as uniquely different from other Islamic polities. It will do so by examining the objectives of Islamic political forces in Pakistan by classifying them into six different analytical categories. This paper will also shed light on the reasons behind the recent radicalization of religious forces in Pakistan.

Ahmed, Asad, University of Chicago

Secular Laws, Indigenous Agency and Religious Subjects

Pakistan’s infamous ‘blasphemy laws’ have been criticized for their loose legal drafting that renders blasphemy ‘vague’ as a legal offence. Further, the laws are regarded as anomalous in that they emphasize the pragmatic consequences of a blasphemous offence rather than the intentionality of the actor. This, it is argued, has expanded the scope of blasphemy and enabled malicious prosecutions. I argue these laws can only be understood by locating them historically and theoretically within the larger project of colonial legal codification. Accordingly, I examine the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and especially Chapter XV ‘Of Offences against Religion’ as the entextualization of a European philosophy of language, British legal history and colonial imaginations of India, and of Indian difference. I suggest that ‘vagueness’ is structurally characteristic of the code - particularly of other linguistic offences such as sedition and libel – and needs to be understood within the framework of colonial governmentality.

Ahmed, Fauzia, Resident Scholar, Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University

Redefining Manhood: Gender Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation, and Masculinity

This study researches ways in which low-income men can become stakeholders in gender empowerment programs in rural Bangladesh and how notions of masculinity impact poverty alleviation strategies. The specific objectives of this qualitative field study are: 1) villagers’ perspectives on gender roles and practices and 2) pathways to empowerment for men and women. Interviewees comprise seventy-three female Grameen Bank loanees and their male relatives. Villagers define empowerment outcomes as financial security, individual dignity, peace in the household, and justice in rural institutions. They use five pathways to attain these outcomes: 1) reframing masculinity; 2) leveraging kinship; 3) uniting women; 4) joining village institutions; and 5) earning income through micro-credit. Men who challenge oppressive notions of masculinity are more empowered; they can also act as social change agents. Policy recommendations emphasize how the state, micro-credit institutions, and women’s movement can work together to include men in gender and development programs.
Ahmed, Manan, University of Chicago

Rebels and Insurgents: Crisis of the Mughal Empire in 17th Century Sindh

This paper examines the peasant protest movements in 17th century Mughal Sindh. The decline in Mughal military presence, the rise in burdensome taxes and oppressive jagirdars caused the “criminal” elements in the society to wreak havoc. Lacking any venues of redress, the peasants of Sihwan chose resistance and flight in equal measure.

Some collaborated with the erstwhile rebellious clans of the region to rise against the Mughals while others sought easier terrain in Punjab. The result was that by the beginning of 18th century the Mughals had ceded control of Sindh to the local Kalhora dynasty. Instead of focusing on the machinations of the Mughal administration or the power struggle between local zamindars, this paper highlights the local tribes of Sindh who resisted Mughal control over their lands and examines the survival of their mythos in local Sindhi histories and poems.

Aithal, Vathsala, University of Frankfurt on Main

Can We Learn from the Subaltern? Women in India in Struggle for Water and Social Transformation

In the light of the environmental and social crisis in India there is an increasing uprising by marginalized people marked by subalternity. The resistance of the subaltern aims not only at environmental justice, but also gender justice and social justice. Given the negative effects of globalization, their action could gain importance in a large scale. At the level of theory the discourse on subalternity has focussed on the impossibility of the articulation of the subaltern. The question is: if the subaltern cannot speak, is it possible for us to learn from her? What are the problems, limitations and barriers that prevent us from doing so? When we conceptualize “woman”, “water” and “learning” which are the orientalisms that are deeply rooted in the sciences themselves? The paper analyzes the act of resistance of three women’s groups at the grass-roots in arid and semi-arid regions of Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh that struggle not only for water but also social transformation.

Ali, Daud, School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London

The Spread of Court Culture in Early Medieval India

The period of the fourth to seventh centuries CE saw the crystallization of existing trends into a distinct political and cultural order which may be rightfully called courtly. Partly under the aegis of the Guptas and partly their successors, it is possible to trace the emergence of a distinct political style emerging with increasing clarity and homogeneity throughout all major regions of the subcontinent. This political order, centered around the aristocratic household, entailed not only new literary genres documented by recent scholarship, but new vocabularies of title, rank and affiliation, new symbols and emblems of status, and new affective codes and bodily protocols. Using epigraphy and to a lesser extent literary and normative texts, this paper will explore the role of this cultural ‘figuration’ in the making of medieval India—in its interaction with and transformation of local and non-courtly cultures—in light of different theories of acculturation.

Ali, Nosheen, Cornell University

“Frontier Undefined”: Mapping and Marginality in the Northern Areas of Pakistan

This paper examines the relationship between cartographic representation and marginality in the context of the “Northern Areas of Pakistan”. These areas comprise rural, mountainous regions that are directly controlled by the Pakistan state, but claimed by both India and Pakistan as part of the disputed territory of Kashmir. I use contemporary maps (circulated in texts such as census reports, school textbooks, and travel guides) as a lens to explore the liminal status and construction of the Northern Areas within the Pakistani nation and state. By analyzing the ambiguous, contradictory, and exclusionary ways in which the Northern Areas are mapped, I argue that far from making the region legible, cartographic representations serve to mystify the regional identity of the Northern Areas, and contribute to its marginalization within nationalist imaginings, as well as within discourses of the “Kashmir issue”.
Amrith, Sunil, University of Cambridge

Being developed, being well: Health and international responsibility in 1950s India

International health in the 1950s is often associated with dramatic campaigns of disease eradication. My paper suggests that the quieter ambitions of social medicine, espoused by the League of Nations in the 1930s and in the discourse of missionary and voluntary medicine, persisted after 1945. India was a particular focus of efforts, led by the WHO, to understand the social and cultural forces governing the behaviour of the nascent Third World citizen. This brought colonial categories for understanding health and patterns of disease—often based on a discourse of race—into dialogue with modernization theory, the idea of rational choice, and the models of quantitative social science. Using the example of a WHO/Indian Government project to bring chemotherapy to poor urban tuberculosis patients in South India (c.1955-1963), I suggest that changing international medical technology led to the need for new and more complex forms of control over the bodies and…

Anand, Nikhil, University of California Berkeley

Reconfiguring Biodiversity: Imagining people in India’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

In 1999, the Government of India accessed funding from the GEF and the UNDP, to effect a decentralized planning process for biodiversity conservation as required by the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. The planning process manifests a tension between expanding regimes of global governance and the increasing popularity of certain forms of decentralization. As such, it reveals particular ways in which the discourses of biodiversity are shaped and contested at multiple locations. In Uttarakhand India, NGOs working on these plans engaged in acts of statemaking- they suggested expanded state regimes of conservation beyond forests to wetlands, grasslands and fisheries. At the same time by mixing discourses of 'peasant' seed development and 'indigenous' environmental protection, NGOs blur the divides between nature and culture to consider the creative roles of farmers in biodiversity conservation. These narratives of peasant conservation are used by the Indian state to argue for rights and benefits in global fora.

Apple, James, University of Alberta

The Stone Mandalas of Bodh Gaya

Mandalas are generally understood to be spheres, circles, or what recent scholarship has classified as geometric psychocosmograms. Mandalas are also considered to have psychological and/or soteriological significance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist culture. This paper represents an initial analysis of perhaps the earliest extant Indian mandalas, in this instance monuments made of stone, located in Bodh Gaya, India, the ancient site recognized as the place of the historical Buddha’s Enlightenment. The paper presents a hypothesis for the stone mandalas’ identification and history based on their iconography and known documentation recorded in Tibetan pilgrim accounts. The function of these stones is presumably to have marked political territory as well as provide a focal point for religious rituals. The paper also discusses the potential relevance these stones have as exemplars for studying religion in a culture context, particularly the ways in which differing groups, such as Hindus and Buddhists, use cultural artifacts.

Arnold, Caroline, University of California, Berkeley

The Regional Foundations of the Indian National Market: Industry and Labor Recruitment in Historical Perspective

This paper explains the varied mechanisms employed by businesses and the state in attempting to stabilize local labor markets in Bengal and Bihar between 1900 and 1967. The provision of shelter or land were oft-used methods of recruiting workers at the turn of the century, particularly in the coal industry where labor recruitment was particularly difficult. Such strategies were dramatically extended in the form of public sector "company towns" in the first decades after Independence; the prioritization of industrialization accorded the region's coal and steel industries crucial importance. However, after the state adopted state production as a regulatory "shortcut" to the difficulties of regulating private industry, the state became responsible for constituting public sector enterprises' labor supplies. This paper argues that the form of the state's expanded provision of services commonly termed "social welfare" emerged as responses to the difficulties encountered in constructing a national market and its local foundations.
Arondekar, Anjali, University of California-Santa Cruz

Without a Trace: Sexuality Studies and the Colonial Archive

This paper attempts to bridge the gap between studies of South Asia and more recent work in queer studies that bring into question received notions of proof, evidence and argumentation in the field of sexuality. The past few decades of scholarship have benefited from the expansion of the imperial archive, leading to a proliferation of studies on the constitutive role of sexuality in matters of colonial governance and rule. These studies have decisively intervened in projects of colonial historiography, decentering not just the idea of a coherent and desirable imperial archive, but also forcing us to rethink colonial methodologies and the relations between theories, methods and the historical conditions that produce them. Uninterrogated, however, is the implicit assumption that the archive, in all its multiple avatars, is still the source of knowledge about the colonial past. The inclusion of oral histories, ethnographic data, popular culture, performances, may all disrupt conventional…

Asher, Thomas, University of Chicago

What constitutes politics in political society?

Examining efforts by agents of the colonial state as well as agents of industry to control the comportment of laborers in the Bombay cotton mills in the period between the world wars, I trace the emergence of a variety of models of society. By scrutinizing the different models of the social that emerge over time and which carry embedded within them contrasting ideas of obligation and rights, I attempt to interrogate normative models of politics that lean heavily on a distinction between civil society and political society. I propose that the discourse of the confrontation between mill workers, mill owners, and the colonial state offers new terrain for considering the place of politics in colonial India as well as critical purchase on the limits of a distinction between political and civil society.

Ashraf, Kazi, University of Hawai‘I

The Horizon of Hometown

This paper explores the conceptual challenge of the notion of hometown. Although part of a lived experience and a personal and public imaginary, hometown is yet to be located within a materialist, existential, or phenomenological framework. Although addressed allusively in literary form from "The Shadow Line" to "Brick Lane," in cinematic narratives from "36 Chowringhee Lane" to "Monsoon Wedding," hometown has not received a more careful study from a sociological, anthropological, or urban perspective. The purpose of this paper, then, is to map the horizon of hometown, to establish the major conceptual dimensions implicated there. Can there be an epistemology of hometown, what is its disciplinary provenance, and what are its key thematics are some of the questions taken up in this presentation. By selectively engaging literatures and narratives on affiliation to place and city, on “home” and belonging, and on mobility and migration, the presentation addresses the aspects that …

Ashutosh, Ishan, Syracuse University

Transnationalism on Chicago's Devon Avenue

As a result of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, Chicago’s Roger’s Park changed from an Eastern European Jewish neighborhood to one of the largest South Asian business districts outside South Asia. As a result of selective immigration policies, Devon Avenue acts as a unique model of an ethnic neighborhood, as it largely serves South Asian immigrants attracted by the nostalgia recreated of their native land. Thus, Devon Avenue allows Indians residing in the different parts of the city—as well as members of the diaspora at large—to negotiate, remember, and promote their “Indian-ness.” My paper widens the scope of transnationalism by examining how Devon Avenue maintains links to both South Asian immigrants and South Asian diasporic communities overall through the products sold in stores, how they are advertised, and by the consumers who shop at these businesses.
**Asthana, Sanjay**, Middle Tennessee State University

*Power and Representation: Nationalism, Globalization and Media Legislation in Postcolonial India*

The discourses of nationalism and globalization in broadcast policies in India reveal a series of contradictory articulations of power and representation through state ideologies of citizenship, community, secularism, and sovereignty. As an index of the hegemonic movement of the postcolonial Indian state, these ideologies constitute part of a larger problematic: the crisis of the nation-state. Liberalization in India has led to major changes in the way law is being formulated by the nation-state against the backdrop of forces of privatization. It also indicates the procedures through which particular meanings of national and global are invoked via media legislations. The domain of media law provides a useful point of entry for exploring the epistemological underpinnings of the “national” and “global” in postcolonial India.

This paper focuses upon a set of inter-related themes built around the national-global articulations in media policies. It examines the mutually constitutive effects of the national and global …

**Ayyangar, Srikrishna**, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

*Who Uses Microcredit? Comparing Membership and Lending Patterns in South India*

Microcredit programs, ostensibly, aim to change the status of women and reduce inequalities between families by providing the former with access to immediate credit and capital loans. The Andhra Pradesh government has created the highest number of self help groups by any state or organisation in the country. This paper shall explore who is included and how benefits are distributed amongst microcredit self help groups in the state. It shall examine how rural women have been included into the groups, and examine if and why benefits are distributed unevenly after they join the group. Against the backdrop of self help groups in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, the paper shall compare the significance of implementing institutions in fostering participation and distributing benefits equitably.

**Babbili, Anantha**, Middle Tennessee State University

*Representation and Self-representation in Journalistic Discourse: An Indian Trajectory*

Located within the metamorphism of identity, personal and intellectual travel, and limits of self-aware criticism, this paper explores the parameters of public inquiry and journalistic discourse in the context of professional culture that exists today in the construction of reality. In the process of exploring the ethical limits of Western journalistic enterprise -- relating specifically to the East-West flow of mediated realities -- and their consequences on public discourse, the author draws from a personal narrative embedded in his family origins in rural Hindu India and the process of Anglicization that ensued.

Drawing from the academic discipline in formal press criticism that is at least a century old now, the paper questions the rarely introspected arena of news and journalistic values of the West, the imitation of these values in India and other Commonwealth nations, the imposition of these values on nations that are inexperienced in Western journalism and the …

**Banerjea, Niharika**, University at Buffalo, State University of New York

*Volunteering Practices and a Process of Politicization in a Slum in Calcutta, India*

This paper is based on my ethnographic study of volunteering practices in a slum in Calcutta, India. In particular, I focus on the process of politicization among a cohort of ‘bustee women’ who volunteer for a NGO working to improve women’s and children’s health among the urban poor. By politicization, I mean the process by which individuals construct themselves as political agents at the site of some newly encountered activities, i.e. NGO intervention in slum improvement. In this essay, I focus on the women’s experiences, in order to ascertain the process of meaning-making that the volunteers engage in. I demonstrate that initially located in their familiar role contexts of class and gender, the volunteers gradually identify themselves as ‘workers’ and put forward certain demands to the NGO. This I argue becomes political, as the identification simultaneously starts engaging with the meaning of volunteering in urban slums.
Banerjee, Mallika, Illinois State University

West Bengal ‘Panchayats’ at Work: What Participatory Development Means for the Underprivileged?

Over the years the development literature has traversed a tortuous path from the modernization paradigm to a currently popular concept of participatory development. The idea of participatory development emphasizes people’s effective participation in decision making as a necessary framework for human welfare. The present paper looks at the efficacy of this new concept by investigating the role of a democratically elected decentralized administrative structure ('Panchayati Raj') in improving the living standard of the rural poor in West Bengal, one of the poorest states of the Indian union. Through an examination of the ‘Panchayati Raj’ since 1977, the year a Marxist alliance is elected to power, the paper maintains that the Communists have failed to address other social and economic inequities in rural Bengal, such as discriminations against women and poor standard of health and literacy in the countryside. Moving beyond a simple partisan account in favor or against the Bengal Marxists, …

Banerjee, Payal, Syracuse University

Subsidizing corporate and state responsibilities in global restructuring: Immigrants' dependence on social networks in the U.S.

The literature on immigration illustrates how social networks play a substantial role in immigrants’ economic and social survival in the U.S. This literature, however, omits how these networks subsidize the responsibility of the state or corporate sectors, which are accountable for inducting immigrants to the U.S. Based on interviews with Indian immigrant information technology (IT) workers on specialty work-visas in the U.S., I examine the significance of social relationships and demonstrate how they serve as crucial substitutes for institutional or professional support systems for immigrants for such issues as: housing, transportation, emergency loans, health care, banking. Thus any study of immigrant networks must reckon with these critical intersections. This paper examines how the larger institutional apparatus of the state and the corporate sector has "privatized" and downsized its accountability for ensuring access to essential services by relegating this task to the private domain of immigrants' individual personal networks.

Banerjee, Sukanya, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Bodily Economies and the Body-Politic: Dadabhai Naoroji's Poverty and Un-British Rule in India

This paper examines Dadabhai Naoroji's monumental economic treatise, "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India" (1901), which emerged from a series of papers presented both in Bombay and London over the course of the late nineteenth century. Long designated as a key text of Indian economic history, Naoroji's work has attracted surprisingly little attention in cultural exegeses of nationalism. This paper examines how the narrative logic underlying Naoroji's statistical computations constitutes an Indian body-politic by appealing to late-Victorian anxieties of corporeality and bodily economy, which also formed a vector, as it does in Naoroji's work, for articulating Indian demands of citizenship, political representation, and most important, ideas of national identity. Addressing an audience that was purportedly English, Indian, and Anglo-Indian, "Poverty and Un-British Rule" in fact gestures to the more expansive geopolitical imaginary that Naoroji was invested in constituting, one that interpellated Indians and Britons, while also reconstituting what those identities …

Banerjee, Swapna, University of Florida

Gender and Genre in Children's Literature of Colonial Bengal

Krishna Kumar, a leading scholar, asserted with regard to children's education in colonial times that a "more vital education, as a process of reconstructing worthwhile knowledge and disseminating it, was taking place under the auspices of magazines and literature" (1991). This is indeed true if we look at the Bibliography compiled by the National Library of India on children's literature in Bengali (1962) that listed 5060 books and 133 periodicals that were published between 1818-1962. This Bibliography undoubtedly reflects the works of the "respectable" Bengali middle class (bhadralok) that envisioned a reformed family, an ideal woman, and a "perfect" child. The child occupied the center stage in colonial Bengali literature as the future citizen. Based on this Bibliography my paper attempts to historicize some of the relevant documents and relate them to the changing mental, social, cultural, and political dynamics of the period. It proposes to identify the various …
Barrett, Ronald, Stanford University

Fire in the Well: The Solar Influence Upon Aghori Healing Practices

This paper examines the historical influence of Surya upon the ritual healing practices of the Kina Ram Aghori in Banaras. The Aghori have a reputation as powerful healers, in addition to their notorious associations with ritual pollution and death. Throughout the year, thousands of people seek healing at the Kina Ashram by bathing in its sacred tank and receiving the blessings and advice of Aghori ascetics. I present evidence to suggest that this tank, Krim Kund, was originally a solar tank that was closely related to the nearby Lolarka Kund. This solar influence partly explains why Aghori healing is thought to be particularly efficacious for skin disorders, infertility, and diseases of early childhood.

Barton, Patricia, University of Strathclyde

'Medical Murders': Safeguarding the Medicinal Market in British India, c. 1900-1940

While authorities in India in this period became increasingly caught up with narcotics and their users, there was little concern to criminalise the adulteration of prescription drugs. In the medicinal market the authorities were instead firmly focussed on patent and indigenous drugs sold in the bazaar. It took decades of dedicated work by a few dedicated pharmacologists and chemists to raise awareness of the adulteration of prescription drugs. The problem was exacerbated by inter-governmental problems of the era, responsibility for drug safety being passed onto Provincial Governments which constantly struggled against financial constraints and the lack of trained personnel. Racial issues were also prominent, with less concern shown for remedies produced by 'legitimate European companies' than those of indigenous manufacturers. Using the market for anti-malarial drugs as a case study, this paper will analyse the different perceptions of the market for medicines in British India and the often flawed …

Basu, Anustup, University of Pittsburgh

Private Perversions and Public Cinema: Homosexuality and Hindi Cinema

The objective of this paper will be to examine 'homosexuality' in the context of popular Hindi cinema. I will take up a few of the many instances that may be pertinent to such a discussion: the male-male bonding (with the woman as gift that is passed on) in Sangam or Silsila, the two agrarian patriarchs who bring up baby in Dhan Daulat, the lesbian kiss in Razia Sultan, the queer villains in Mast Kalander and Sadak, and of course metropolitan lifestyles and jokes in recent films like Rules and Kal Ho Na Ho. The task will be to understand the ways in which energies of love, affection, and desire are cinematically attached to propositional and ethical statements regarding life, relations, and property. In other words, I do not intend to ‘discover’, as a retrospective act, the universal, 'always there' figure of the homosexual in the annals of Hindi cinema. …

Basu, Subho, Illinois State University

Frontiers of rural India: Visiting urbanization through the portal of a rural market town

This paper examines the case of rural market town in India, focusing primarily on a town in the state of West Bengal. It explains how Bolpur emerged as a rural market between c. 1858 and 1992, from the epoch of introduction of railways to the adoption of liberal economic policies by the Indian state. The paper argues that the expansion of such small towns is contingent upon railway-induced commercial activities and agrarian growth on the one hand, and the proliferation of bureaucratic structures of the developmental state on the other. It further demonstrates that these linkages with national market grid and administrative structure of the Indian state crucially shape the social and economic structure of such towns, distinguishing them from rural India and marking them as the transitional zone to wider urban networks.

Bedi, Tarini, University of Illinois-Chicago

Make Way for the “Mumbaikar”: Shiv Sena Women and the Politics of Urban Identity

This paper explores the ways in which the Shiv Sena’s rhetoric of “who” may lay legitimate claim to the city of Mumbai becomes a vehicle for the construction of class and gendered subjects among the active participants in the party’s women’s
wing. Using Henri Lefèvre’s critical theory of the capitalist city to assess ethnographic data collected on the Shiv Sena’s Mahila Aghadi, it looks at the ways in which the Shiv Sena’s militant right-wing action promises complex class and citizenship incentives to its women, which continue to get reformed and recast within the increasingly profit-driven urban centers in India. It suggests that local performances of class and gender, within the context of an overtly “Hindu” rhetoric, contribute significantly to both local boundaries of urban community (the claim to the title of Mumbaikar) as well as to the larger discourse of citizenship in the Indian nation.

**Bednar, Michael**, University of Texas at Austin

Reading Rajput in Pre-Mughal Texts

The remnants of Rajput rule exist today in the imposing and magnificent palaces of Rajasthan as well as the bardic tales, legends and literature popular throughout the state. In palace murals and popular stories, Rajputs identify themselves as Hindu warriors and rulers who resisted Muslim rule. Nineteenth-century scholars and administrators surrounded by Mughal histories, images, and legends of Rajput battles categorized the Rajputs as a martial race and promoted this warrior identity as historical fact. This paper will examine the categories of rajput, rajaputra, rauta, and thakkura in pre-Mughal inscriptions, memorial stones, and select texts to determine the meaning and development of these terms before the fifteenth-century.

**Begrich, Roger**, Johns Hopkins University

Legally Intoxicated. Stigma and Conspiracy in Jharkhand

The stigma of the drunkard defines much of the popular opinions on Adivasis. It marks ‘the tribal’ in the Indian social imaginary and determines relationships of Adivasis to the state, or corporate capital. This stigma is also internalized, but the habit of drinking is nevertheless defined by ambiguities and contradictions. It does not only exemplify their suffering, but also religious traditions, and is tied in with what it means to be Adivasi. A frequent topic of conversations in Jharkhand is that of a conspiracy aimed at annihilating Adivasis. Among the weapons used by settlers, as well as the state in its multifarious manifestations, accordingly, is alcohol.

I will use conspiracy theories to reflect on the relationships between indigenous communities and sovereignty. Conspiracy theories are neither true nor false, but, as over-determinations of the commonsensical, indicators for the paranoid subjectivities cultivated by the subjects and the circumstances under which they live.

**Bello, David**, Southern Connecticut State University

Opium Sovereignties: Empires and Peripheries in Conflict across South and East Asia, 1757-1876.

The interstate drug traffic of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries linked the poppy producers and opium smugglers of East India Company Bengal (1757-1857) with the Chinese smokers of the Qing empire in China and Inner Asia (1644-1911). This trade is conventionally studied from the perspectives of economics and international relations and by focusing on the coastal smuggling traffic in China. This paper will instead examine the futile attempts by the Chinese and East India Company imperial states to assert sovereign control over the drugs trade. The East India Company was unsuccessful in its attempt to protect its own monopoly of Patna opium from competition from Malwa opium while the efforts of Qing China to stop South and Inner Asian smugglers operating from the neighboring Khanate of Kokand (1710-1876) were equally ineffective. The paper shows that the ethnic and geographic diversity of the drug’s production and distribution networks made …

**Bhattacharya, Nandini**, University of Toledo

Queer behavioral aesthetic in Hindi Films

A queer behavioral aesthetic has long been a representational dilemma.

In contexts where the figure of subalternity has been a dominant mode of critical, anti-imperialist discourse, subalternity's intersections with queerness (also as a form of disability) raises further questions about representational logics of disempowerment in the decolonized world. Further, parodies of queerness (as a socially disabling phenomenon) also raise
questions about the potency of gender constructs in shoring up or dismantling questions of subalternity and its efficacy as an oppositional identity within postcolonial culture and discourse. In this context, when subalternity is figured in popular culture -- as in Hindi popular cinema -- through a constellation of images and icons reinforced by parodistic images of sexual and gender ambiguity, it becomes imperative to demand of such representations their logic of "passing," as in substituting or translating one disempowerment for another. For instance, it becomes necessary to explore whether subalternity "passes" …

Bokhari, Kamranm, Howard University

Locating Moderate Islamism in Afghanistan & Pakistan

Nowadays, when the area along the Afghanistan-Pakistan frontier is believed to be the headquarters of al-Qaeda, the leading transnational militant Islamist force and both countries in their own respective ways are experiencing an upsurge in radical Islamist groups, there is significant demand for voices of moderation to stem the tide of extremist actors. The purpose of this paper is to examine the prospects for the emergence of authentic moderate Islamist groups, which do not suffer from the crisis of delegitimation, and can act as formidable ideological counter-weights to jihadism. It will try to ascertain the future of democratization in keeping with the underlying Islamic ethos of both countries. This will be done by an examination of the Pakistani Islamist alliance, the Mutahiddah Majlis-i-Amal, which not only governs two of the country’s four provinces, but is also the largest opposition bloc in parliament, and the sundry Afghan Islamist leaning political forces …

Bose, Neilesh, Tufts University

Diasporic Identity and Post-Antiapartheid Politics: The Past and Present of Indian South African Theatre

This paper will discuss Indian diaspora theatre in South Africa during and after the period of apartheid. It will consider the place of the Indian community and its theatre in the complex political and cultural map of South Africa since the mid-20th century, and the effects on both of the end of the apartheid era.

Chadha, Kalyani, University of Maryland - College Park

The Muslim as Other in Hindi Cinema: Exoticized, Marginalized and Demonized

While Indian society has been the site of frequent communal differences and violence, Hindi cinema, one of its principal cultural forces, has traditionally appeared to be a "cultural-industrial structure that has resisted Hindu-Muslim separatism," in the words of noted film critic Iqbal Masud. However, while presence of Muslim artists in the Hindi film industry has been widely invoked as evidence of its diversity (Tharoor, 2002),

the representation of Muslims in Hindi films has received comparatively little attention. Focusing on this issue, this paper traces the portrayal of Muslims within mainstream Hindi films from the 1950s to the current period, and finds that Muslims have been variously "Othered", whether through their "exoticization" in the Muslim socials of the 1950s and 1960s, their growing "marginalization in the multi-starrers of the 1970s and 1980s and finally their demonization in many recent films and attempts to link such portrayals to the changing identity politics of India.

Chakravartty, Paula, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

India's Shining Diaspora: High-Tech NRIs and the Translocal Imagination

In the last decade, the Indian state has strategically pursued new networks with specific sections of the global Indian Diaspora with direct political consequences. The new ties with "high-skilled" and economically successful NRIs (Non Resident Indians) in the US, for example, have raised concerns about the support for the Hindu Right, in both India and the US. In this paper, I examine how a specific group of high-skilled migrants on temporary H-1B visas working in the information technology sector in the US between 2001-2003, make sense of their ties to “home” and community in the shadow of September 11th and the violence in Gujarat. Based primarily on interviews with over 100 Indian H1-B workers, I show how the intersecting logics of region, caste, race, class and gender inform the ways in which these workers “adjust” to contemporary American life. Moreover, I argue that ties to “home” by individual workers are …
**Chandra, Shefali**, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

**English as the Language of Desire**

This paper will examine the structures of ambivalence and desire that sustained the introduction of English education to colonial India. Situated specifically in the western Indian cities of Bombay and Poona, it will examine the process by which some of the first English educated “native” men sought to teach English to their wives and daughters at home. Initiating the pedagogic transfer at home involved bringing the language of colonial mastery and public commercial authority into the newly fashioned space of bourgeois domesticity and privacy. Invariably in fact, the home schooling of Indian women took place not only at home, but also at night and in the privacy of the bedroom. Here I argue that teaching women English extended the possibilities of mimicry of English culture, a process that created not exact copies of the original English speaking Englishmen but rather, impersonators who performed the contradictions of cultural …

**Chandra Shobhi, Prithivi Datta, University of Chicago**

**What is a Poetics of the "Vacana"?**

Vacanas, the Kannada “sayings” of twelfth century Saiva devotees addressed to Siva, constitute a new episteme in medieval Indian civilization. These sayings were recontextualized, most notably in the fifteenth and twentieth centuries, when they were committed to writing, edited, and published. These interventions fixed the text, form, and meaning of the vacanas, transforming them into a discourse, a literary genre, and most importantly, foundational texts of the Lingayat community. Vacanas lack explicitly poetic features, and unlike classical Kannada literary forms, their meter is syntactic and not syllabic. Given both these formal features and subsequent interventions, can we recuperate vacanas as historical texts and their authors as historical authors? Further, what is a poetics of speaking to God, and how are we to read vacanas? In this paper, I explore a poetics of the vacana that hides more than it reveals about the form and meaning of the sayings themselves.

**Chapagain, Neel Kamal**, East West Center, University of Hawaii

**The Role of Local Communities in Heritage Preservation: Case Studies from Nepal**

The role of the local community is important in heritage preservation, from decision making to the site works, in maintaining these sites, and ultimately in ensuring a better future for these heritage sites. This paper attempts to analyze the role of local community in heritage preservation in South Asia. In this context, where there still are many heritage sites to be taken care of, especially in remote areas that are far from any organized preservation regulations, this approach of defining the role of local community would definitely help in preserving the cultural heritages, before it is too late for the concerned authorities to step in and take required actions. In this presentation, most of the practical references would be drawn up from Author’s experience of working in Upper Mustang region of Nepal, a remote and almost isolated area with a number of cultural heritages dating back up to 15th century.

**Charusheela, S., University of Hawai'i Manoa**

**Where are you from? Globalizing Home, Making Economy**

How is the microlevel of daily material activity linked to the macrolevel structures of economic life? This paper draws on postcolonial and feminist revisions of Post Keynesian economics, which argue against theorizing this connection via binarist separations of culture-economy, private-public, gift-exchange, local-global, capitalist-noncapitalist, national-transnational, home-market. Instead, we begin theorizing from the heterogeneous networks that enable and constrain material activity. This approach foregrounds the time-structure of material activity, understanding people’s economic lives as projects that draw on, construct, and reconstruct kinship networks, hometown associations, and other forms of affiliation. In this view culture, whether shared meanings or customary relationships, is foundational to economy, and it should not surprise us that capitalist penetration and globalization do not shatter such microlevel networks, but indeed depend on them.

Here, home becomes not only a place, but a conceptual frame through which networks are created and negotiated. This paper examines how “home” is constituted in …
Chatterjee, Anshu N., University of California, Berkeley

Media Markets in a Multicultural Setting: The Political Roots of Television Expansion in Liberalizing India

Why has liberalization in the media sector produced variations in television development across communities, and why does this growth not follow the logic of the free market? This paper demonstrates that rapid television growth in certain communities in comparison to others is due to historical processes that created diverse cultural markets across the sub-continent. The development of media institutions in South Asia complemented the political preferences of the nationalist and language movements at various levels, in which culture provided crucial symbols for mobilization. The ensuing political restructuring in independent India made language promotion an integral aspect of India’s democratic institutions, building upon processes started in the pre-independence period. These processes continue to shape the way media programs are consumed among the nation’s communities, including those that straddle national boundaries. I will illustrate this using the contrasting cases of Kerala, Punjab, and West Bengal.

Chatterjee, Kumkum, The Pennsylvania State University

Texts and Courtly Culture in 18th century Bengal

During the 17th and the 18th centuries, Bengal experienced the consolidation of Mughal authority, the emergence of a Mughal successor state and the rise of the early colonial state. These developments, paved the way for important shifts in the political and literary culture of certain segments of Bengali society, i.e. the aristocracy. Existing scholarship characterizes this period as one of literary/cultural stagnation and decline. I challenge such characterizations by demonstrating that the courts of the rajas of Bengal became venues where creative attempts were made to negotiate between a Mughal/Persianized culture and regional Brahmanical traditions. I use a cluster of Mangalkabyas produced in the 18th century to explore how these cultural negotiations were expressed through discursive shifts in existing genres of literature, new imaginings of temporal power and maneuvers among a plurality of languages (Bangla, Persian, Sanskrit, Nagri) each associated with distinct cultural registers and literary conventions.

Chatterji, Angana, California Institute of Integral Studies

Violence, memory, ascendance: The biopolitics of Hindu nationalism

“Your god has no eyes. He cannot have a soul. Your god is violent, just like you are”; a Hindu neighbour charges Hasina Begum, a Muslim woman resident in a housing society in Prajagir town in Orissa, India. This paper interrogates the ascendance of Hindu nationalism in Orissa in relation to the production of gendered violence. Through identity politics, the normalization of difference, and the extension of power into private as well as social life, Hindu majoritarianism exhibits scorn for those it finds inassimilable into its governing imaginary. Hindu nationalism is aided by the new (postcolonial) state as it operates as legatee to its imperial colonizer, inheriting and modifying its biopolitics. How does Hindu nationalism affect disenfranchised adivasi, dalit, Christian and Muslim communities in Orissa, particularly women and children? What alliances are enabled? What resistances enacted? This paper narrates minority-subaltern claims that allow a rethinking of borders, margins and futures.

Chaturvedi, Ruchi, Columbia University

Of Friendships and Enmities: A Study of Violence in Political

This paper draws on ethnography amongst local level party workers of the Hindu right and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Northern Kerala who have used relentless cruel violence against each other since late 1960s. As mediators between the state and its populace, political parties provide the framework for, what Partha Chatterjee calls, “political society”. Party workers become integral to functioning of democracy; the paper describes their everyday space as they generate communities of supporters tied by reciprocal gifts and favors, bonds of friendship, kinship, and religious and other ideologies. Simultaneously, those not perceived as “friends”; and “brothers”; are classified as enemies. Identifying an enemy becomes the primary political act wherein sovereignty is constituted and announced. Political practice gets directed towards elimination of this enemy, violence ensues. Thus the paper illuminates what it means to be “political”; for these members of Chatterjee’s political society, and what is the place of violence in this understanding and practice of the political.
Chaturvedi, Vinayak, University of California, Irvine

Of Peasants, Politics, and History in Colonial Western India: Remembering Daduram, 1906-1996

This paper examines how peasants construct their past through a study of oral and written texts about a popular bhagat (village priest) named Daduram. Between the years 1906-1909, Daduram led one of the largest and most influential peasant movements in Gujarat, establishing his political authority by raising concerns about the dominance of local elites, Indian nationalists, and the colonial government. The paper examines the specific nature of Daduram’s politics on caste, labor, and food, while also linking his ideology to popular traditions of Vaishnavism. Although Daduram was non-literate, his peasant disciples throughout the twentieth century have remembered his contributions through bhajans and folk stories, but also by writing details about his life in unpublished manuscripts. The paper argues that these disciples have constructed complex narratives about Daduram as a way to rethink how peasants contributed to the making of India.

Chaudhry, Lubna, SUNY, Binghamton

Reconstituting selves in post-conflict Karachi: Structural violence and the scope of gendered agency

The paper focuses on women’s attempts to reconstitute themselves and rebuild their lives in the wake of violence that literally hit their homes during the 1990s in Karachi, Pakistan. The concern is especially with women at the lowest rung of urban society. The reconstruction of self after the encounter with death, pain, and displacement has particular nuances in the face of persistent, everyday forms of structural violence. How do women construct themselves as affectees of violence as well as agents within the life-worlds they inhabit, life-worlds where familial, neighborhood, ethnic, religious, urban, national, and global contexts collide and intertwine? Simultaneously representing themselves as sufferers and as lynch-pins holding their families together, these women, for the most part, occupy spaces that are gendered, classed, and ethnicized. Efforts to extend spaces of survival in the aftermath of violence are either rendered ineffectual by prevailing material conditions or erased by constraining patriarchal discourses.

Chaussee, Griffith, University of Virginia

Shibli Nu'mani and the Categories of Literary Critique

"Literature" and "criticism" have long constituted separate textual categories in the Western literary tradition, going back at least as far as Aristotle's Poetics and Rhetoric. The separability of these two categories within the Perso-Urdu literary tradition, however, is not nearly as old or venerated, dating back only to the end of the nineteenth century. In vol. 4 of his five-volume She'r-ul 'Ajam (Poetry of the Non-Arabs, written in the first years of the twentieth century), Shibli Nu'mani begins to develop a critical vocabulary and methodology for analyzing (and reforming) the classical Perso-Urdu poetic tradition. In my paper I will investigate Shibli's formulation of his critical categories, and will discuss the language of his literary analysis.

Chertow, Jennifer Marie, Stanford University

Gender and the Feminization of Tibetans as National Minorities in Transnational Contexts: Health, Medicine, and Women in Tibet

This paper explores the feminization of Tibetan populations through national and transnational health initiatives for women in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. By contrasting birthing narratives of Tibetans living under the People's Commune Era of the 1970s to the new generation of Tibetans who grew up in a post-Mao Tibet, this paper explores the shifting location of women vis-à-vis the state and global economies of aid. State technologies and biomedical interventions around reproductive control and childbirth shape life possibilities of Tibetans at the same time that women's bodies come to stand in for the national body as docile recipients of "modern" forms of aid. How does local knowledge of the body, healing and medicine intersect with state and transnational epistemologies of health? How do women respond to these interventions? What forms of empowerment do they represent or render impossible? How are Tibetan identities constructed through their spatialization as population within a "hinterland" of Western China? …
Chettur, Elizabeth, Boston University

From Inalienable Possession to Commodity: The Life History of a Nayar House

This paper explores changes, and continuities, in the meaning of home ownership and housing style as shifting reflections of social identity in the Malabar region of Kerala. Drawing on recent fieldwork, and using the life history of a particular Nayar house as a lens, this paper seeks to elucidate how symbols of prestige and social status have shifted within the context of modern consumerism. Historically, in the Malabar region of Kerala, ownership of a tharavad, a house-and-land unit (Moore 1986), was the inalienable right of upper caste communities, and architectural design, location, and even building material reflected a family’s position in the social hierarchy. Living and deceased family members were ritually conjoined and together bounded to the house-and-land unit. A house reflected prestige and substantiated a family’s status within the social hierarchy; it constituted a family’s social identity. Over the last fifty years, however, tharavads have been released onto …

Ciotti, Manuela, University of Edinburgh

Political Careers of Dalit Women in the 'Age of Democratization' an Ethnographic Perspective From a Northern Indian Town

Scholars claim that India witnessed a new democratic upsurge in the 1990s, marked by high electoral turnout amongst low-caste/Dalit groups. Similarly, in the last decade, images documenting the relationship between women and democracy in India have proliferated, testifying to an increase in women’s participation. However, while studies of the above upsurge abound, there is little evidence about what exactly “democratization” has meant for women, and whether it has had the same meanings and consequences as for men. Part of a larger project on Dalit women’s political participation, this paper investigates the origins and nature of women political activists’ mobilisation within the folds of the Dalit-led Bahujan Samaj Party. The paper focuses on the motivations underlying women’s political choices, the contours and significance of their performance and their ideological agenda. Finally, the paper addresses the crucial question as to whether, and how, women’s participation has redesigned gender relations within their communities.

Clooney, Francis X, Boston College

Commentary and the Future of a Tradition: the Srivaisnava Example

Like other religious communities, Srivaisnavas assert and practice great respect for tradition, as present in scripture and doctrine, and in the lineage of teachers and students. Commentaries - Sanskrit, Tamil, Manipravala - are primary instances of respect for tradition. Their existence is by design dependent and derivative, entirely given over to honoring and interpreting classics properly. Yet the commentaries are also a tradition's future, how it lives on, beyond its classics, in a further, living conversation shared among successive generations of interpreters. Although the Bhagavat Visayam commentaries perfectly exemplify "commentary as a tradition's future," I focus on the commentaries [including one being written now] inscribed upon Vedanta Desika's 14th century Srimadrahasyatrayasara, itself a classic expression of tradition and a normative assertion of the truth that commentators must learn to embody the tradition on which they comment.

Cons, Jason, Cornell University

'Who Settled Its Dimensions': Constructing and Contesting the North-West Frontier.

This paper examines the formation of borders in late 19th/early 20th century colonial India with particular reference to the North-West Frontier. Understanding borders as simultaneous social, epistemological, political, and cartographic constructs, I historically situate changing colonial administrative understandings of borders as elements of security (both internal and external) and division with emerging political and sociological understandings of states as territorial entities. Such views imagine and rely on neatly defined boundaries. A reading of Survey of India activities in and around the North-West frontier significantly complicates such views. Territorialization is often imagined as a top-down process. However, an exploration of cartographic practice in sensitive political areas such as the border with Afghanistan suggests a more dynamic process. Here, border definition is seen as highly contingent and contested, emerging from the complex and mutually constitutive interactions between local populations, surveyors, geography, and imperial interest.
Courtright, Paul, Emory University

British Appreciations of Hinduism: The History Post-Colonialism Forgot

One of the major tropes of the post-colonial critiques of Orientalism—both in its secular and Christian evangelical renditions—is that the British uniformly detested Hinduism as they encountered it in India, and only saw some limited value in their own construction of the ancient tradition in areas that were congruent with European Romanticism. While there are many historical sources to support this representation of British interpretations of Hinduism from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there are important voices from this period who spoke very differently about Hinduism. The paper will present two important and largely forgotten figures, Charles "Hindoo" Stewart and Horace Hayman Wilson. Stewart was an officer in the British army in Bengal, a self-described "convert" to Hinduism, a collector of Indian art, and a pamphleteer in defense of Hinduism. Wilson, the most distinguished Sanskrit scholar of his generation and the secretary of the Asiatic …

Cox, Whitney, University of Chicago

On the Southern Reception of the Dhvani-vada

One of the key texts in the history of Sanskrit poetics, the Dhvanyaloka ("Light on Suggestion") of Anandavardhana argues that literary language is distinguished by the presence of implicit meaning. Composed in the ninth century in Kashmir, and given an authoritative commentary by Abhinavagupta in the same milieu two centuries later, the Dhvanyaloka became a foundational work for the study of poetics throughout India. I will document the reception and interpretation of its theory of suggestion in the works of three authors active in the far South in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These three texts—Uttungodaya’s Dhvanyalokakaumudi, Saradatanaya’s Bhavaprakasana, and Mahesvarananda’s Maharthamanjari—differ widely in their scope and agenda. The intellectual-historical task of unpacking their divergent understandings of Anandavardhana’s argument will be used to further a larger inquiry into the theory and practice of a distinctively southern Sanskrit literary culture in the late medieval period.

Daiya, Dr. Kavita, George Washington University

Transnational Belongings: Scenes of Violence and Migration in Modern South Asian Literature

This paper takes up contemporary questions about the relationships amongst violence, ethnicity, gender and belonging in South Asia, by examining modern South Asian literature after 1947. Engaging with the recent return to the silenced histories of the 1947 Partition in feminist, historical and anthropological scholarship in South Asian Studies, this paper argues that South Asian literature both challenges dominant social scientific approaches to Partition, and also plays a critical role in the imaginative and cultural negotiation of South Asian histories of violence and displacement. I take up primarily South Asian literature in English to show how South Asian migrants and refugees can become subjects that challenge the hegemony of nationalism in the public and political imagination. This literature interrogates modern discourses that construct the nation as ‘home,’ and that correlate (ethnic) community and nationalism in South Asian political life. In the process, it articulates new visions for transnational solidarities, …

Daulatzai, Anila, Johns Hopkins University

The Silent Residue of Politics: Iris-Scan Technology, Afghan Refugees and the State of Pakistan

The introduction of new technologies and terminologies has re-defined the subjectivities of Afghan refugees in Pakistan post-9/11. By offering information on two recently created biopolitical management processes, I hope to reflect on the state at a border. These processes, developed by the Government of Pakistan (GoP), have deviated from the standard procedures for refugee population management. I will speak of the adoption of iris-scan technology at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and the manufacturing of terminologies to describe Afghans that have enabled the state to constitute itself in new ways. These modern forms of state power produce biopolitical regimes, which control a population in intimate spheres of their physical and legal existence, to ultimately create new forms of life and new subjectivities. This paper, about management technologies for refugees, becomes an ethnography of the state. I draw from thirty-five months of ethnographic fieldwork with Afghan refugee populations in Pakistan over the past eight years.
Politicians and Pariahs: Reinventing Indian Third Gendered Identity?

Commonly regarded as social deviants and objects of ridicule, transgendered people, or hijras, comprise a shadowy subculture within mainstream north Indian society. In 1999 a phenomenon, unique even in a global context, became emergent in India: transgendered people began participating in political elections and many were elected to office by significant margins of votes. This seemingly contradictory trend raises questions regarding the interrelationships between gender ontologies and the public/political sphere. Specifically, to what extent can hijras as a historically marginalized group undertake agentic action towards the reinvention of their social identity? In beginning to address this question, this paper explores Indian third gendered identity and the ways in which it has been contested, challenged, manipulated, and reinforced by hijra political success in northern India.

Historicizing Religion or Theologizing History? Jyotiba Phule, M.G. Ranade and the 'Incompleteness' of Modernity

In this paper I examine the relationship between historicism and religious thought through the writings of two nineteenth-century public figures from western India, M.G. Ranade and Jyotiba Phule. While both came from very different social locations, they were deeply influenced by modern knowledge forms, particularly historicist thinking, and their views toward religion were shaped accordingly. Their thought reflected an increasing secularization and objectification of religious beliefs and practices, which located religion in a past detached from the present. However, eschewing notions of mimicry, or derivative discourses, I look at how both Phule and Ranade went beyond historicist views by adhering to non-historical notions of religion as living in the present, even as they historicized religion. Modern ideas therefore did not become hegemonic in their world-views but were ‘limited’ by their creative adaptation of non-modern ideas and practices.

The Lady Vanishes: Islam and the Disappearance of Gender in South Asia

To study the fate of Muslim women in South Asia is to participate in a kind of academic growth industry, one that possesses an illustrious genealogy stretching back to colonial times. Whatever the conclusions of these studies, they invariably locate themselves in a scholarly landscape dominated by the problem of gender. And the problem of gender, put simply, is that of its own production. In other words such studies tend to examine how it is that gender is produced or reproduced within a variety of historical circumstances in South Asia. In this essay I am concerned not with the problem of gender as one either of production or reproduction, but rather with the way in which this category is actually undone in twentieth and twenty-first century Muslim debates about women in both India and Pakistan. I intend to demonstrate that the undoing of gender as a category of distinction …

Rahul Varma's BHOPAL: Diaspora, Transnationalism, and Performance

This paper will consider Rahul Varma's play BHOPAL as exemplary of a new phenomenon in diaspora theatre: the collaborative development of an activist political work that creates fictional and thematic links between the host country and the "homeland," and is performable in both locations. The emphasis here will be on the relation of diaspora theatre to national, multinational, and transnational politics.

Conditioning Conflict: Islam, Community and the State in South India

Taken for granted in this paper are the premises that religious conflict is quotidian, that violent religious conflict (within a religious tradition or between competing ones) remains abnormal, and that the community itself plays a catalytic role in the production of any contentious political action or violent conduct. While the Indian state--no monolith in policy or practice--
and its various apparatus are certainly implicated in the subcontinent’s episodic communal violence, its complex and often competing agencies can, and often do, serve palliative functions in local conflicts. This paper will consider how the Indian state and its agencies conditioned the conduct of an intra-religious conflict that took place within the Muslim community of Androth Island in the 1980s and 90s. In particular, it will explore how the island administration, the police and the courts—often at odds with each other—served both to manage and mismanage a locally produced religious dispute.

**Didur, Jill, Concordia University**

An Unremembered Time : 'Secular Criticism' in Pankaj Mishra's The Romantics

The plot of Pankaj Mishra’s novel, The Romantics, revolves around the narrator, Samar’s, attempt to reconcile diverse cultural influences in his private life in a political context increasingly defined by a narrow definition of Hindu identity. While Samar characterizes India’s political rhetoric as dominated by notions of cultural purity and religious orthodoxy, my paper argues that the narrative is rife with symbols of India’s inter-cultural influences throughout history, which Samar refers to as “an unremembered time”. This paper investigates the diverse cultural and historical influences that inform the meaning of these symbols (Indo-Saracenic architecture, the history of the founding of Benares Hindu University at the beginning of the 20th century) and considers how Mishra’s text deploys them in his narrative. I argue that Said’s notion of ‘secular criticism’ as “a critique of the entire matrix of meanings we associate with home belonging and community” is a particularly apt way of understanding Mishra’s novel’s representation of Indian culture.

**Dimitrova, Diana, Loyola University Chicago**

Religion, Politics and Film in India

This paper will explore the intersections of religion, politics and film. I will discuss the representation of the creation of religious boundaries in Mani Ratnam’s films Bombay (Bombay), 1995, and Dil se (From the Heart), 1998, and Sampooran Gulzar’s Maachis (Matches). I will also explore the important role that these films play in promoting and affirming a climate of religious pluralism. The films offer criticism of the ideology of hindutva and are powerful documents of the intersections of art, religion and politics in present-day India. I will first study the historical background of the issues discussed and will then analyze the material in the light of postcolonial cultural theory. I will also explore the religious implications of the images.

**Dobia, Brenda, University of Western Sydney**

What Do Women Want? Six Pilgrim/Researchers Address the Hindu Goddess of Desire, Kamakhya

Scholars familiar on the one hand with the Indian context of goddess worship and on the other with the enthusiasm of western feminist spirituality for Hindu goddess symbolism have noted the discrepancies between “real and imagined goddesses” in both contexts, their appropriation in both contexts for different political ends, and their equivocal influence on the social status of women in India.

Incorporating experiential and ethnographic dimensions a group of six women co-researchers from India, the U.S. and Australia went on pilgrimage to Kamakhya, the preeminent shakta pitha. Our aim was to try to bridge cultural differences of interpretation and develop feminist readings of shakta traditions and their enabling possibilities for women. This paper will outline the methodological framework developed for this study and present its key deliberations and findings.

**Drewes, David, Indiana University**

Dharmabhanakas in Indian Mahayana

A number of scholars, most notably Richard Gombrich and K.R. Norman, have recently argued that the rise of Mahayana Buddhism was made possible by the development of the use of written sutras and the circumvention or collapse of the traditional system in which canonical texts were memorized and preserved by bhanakas, or reciters. Although this analysis is compelling in its linking of the success of the Mahayana to a change in traditional modes of textual transmission, it overlooks the fact that Mahayana sutras mention bhanakas (or dharmabhanakas) frequently and present them as revealers of Mahayana
texts, leaders of Mahayana groups, and foci of Mahayana worship. This paper examines the depiction of bhanakas in a number of Mahayana sutras and argues that early Mahayana can more plausibly be linked to an increase in the independence and prestige of certain bhanakas than to a usurpation of their role by written texts.

Dubrow, Jennifer, University of Chicago

From Friendship to Rationality and back: Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s Views of Political Community, 1858-1898

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, arguably the most influential Muslim reformer of the nineteenth century, is known for his modernist espousal of Western science, education, and the rationalization of Islam. Yet his political views have led to his denouncement as both a British loyalist and a Muslim separatist. While Sir Sayyid’s commitment to British rule and Muslim privilege might support these labels, a closer examination of Sir Sayyid’s original writings—the vast majority of which still remain un-translated and unexamined—reveals a complex philosophical inquiry into modes of right governance and political organization. This inquiry starts with the posing of Man as a fundamentally rational being, but ends with more complicated notions of community based on codes of civility and unmediated knowledge of the Other through heart-to-heart communication. This paper will examine Sir Sayyid’s call for government based on friendship and shared understanding in the 1858 pamphlet,…

Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, University of Iowa

Constructing The "New Ethnicities": Media, Sexuality and Diaspora Identity in the Lives of South Asian Immigrant Girls

This paper posits that adolescence, as experienced by girls of immigrant diaspora groups, is complicated by issues of race, culture and nation that intersect with discourses of sex and gender. In terms of globalization theory, sexuality is conceptualized as a locus of cultural hybridization; media representations of sexuality often mark the global/local nexus for diaspora peoples. In this study, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with South Asian American girls in order to uncover the role of media in their sexual identity constructions. The focus group data revealed radical rearticulations of sexual identity from an "interstitial" audience position that involved oppositional readings of various media texts. These re-articulations can be seen as part of the project of forging new ethnicities in the diaspora context.

Duschinski, Anna-Haley, Harvard University

Citizenship, Subjecthood, and Attachment to Home: Political Storytellings among Kashmiri Hindu Migrants in New Delhi

This paper considers themes of violence, displacement, and the state through reference to community mobilizations among Kashmiri Hindu migrants who left Kashmir Valley during the height of the militancy in 1990. I examine the complex entanglements between migrant organizations and state agencies within the spaces of political society in the capital city of New Delhi. These conditions of society/state interchange give rise to "political storytellings," as migrants attempt to make sense of their collective position in Kashmir Valley and in India through stories about the homes that they have lost and the lands that they have abandoned in Kashmir Valley. These storytellings suggest new forms of citizenship, subjecthood, and attachment to home. My analysis attends to the formations of such political storytellings in urban localities, and what these formations have to say about distinctive patterns of political democracy in contemporary India.

Elison, William, University of Chicago

Tribal Markings: Art, Space, and Recognition among Mumbai's Urban Tribals

The Warlis are a scheduled tribe with a claim of autochthony to forested areas of western Maharashtra and Gujarat. These claims extend to the Mumbai Suburban District, and include government lands reserved for conservation and dairy farming as well as the studio facilities of Filmistan and Film City. Warlis resident within city limits may number in the tens of thousands, but their presence goes all but unmarked in Mumbai's public culture. The signal exception is their visual art, a ceremonial form that was adapted for circulation in local and transnational art markets beginning in the 1970s. Having become established as a metonym of "tribal" identity, Warli art has since gone from chic to passé. I will discuss several examples of contemporary Warli artistic production in relation to the efforts of these urban tribals to attain recognition as a community that belongs in Mumbai. Is their claim to urban real estate …
Elmore, Mark, University of California at Santa Barbara

Religious Formations: Myths of Himachali Religious History and the Ascendancy of the Pahari Subject

This paper sketches the subjects formed in two competing public cultures in Himachal Pradesh—one village-based and the other state-wide. I use ethnographic and historical sources to delineate these two subjects and track the dominance of the latter. I argue that the logic which unites the 31 ancient kingdoms that comprise the modern state of Himachal is predicated on a redefinition of religion. This redefinition is achieved through the circulation of a particular myth of Himachali religious history in popular videos, vernacular journals, and tourism ads. This history is characterized as peaceful, natural and different from the plains; it is sanctioned by an abstract theology. The formation of a unified state and its accompanying subject is thus predicated on eliminating the authority of local deities and replacing it with a translocal identification stripped of the divisiveness of ritual practice, political history, and specific theological identification.

Engblom, Philip C., The University of Chicago, South Asian Languages and Civilizations

The Vithobas of the Marathi Literary Imaginary: Godbole's Navnit and Lineages of the Modern Abhanga

Addressing Vithoba not in the usual way as an important socio-religious icon of Maharashtra but rather as a metonym for the Marathi santa-kavi literary pampara (tradition, lineage), I will examine here some of the ways in which this parampara has come to be received, mediated in very specific ways by the colonial regime, and appropriated to highly diverse ends (the plural is significant) by modern writers of the “national literature” of Maharashtra. More concrete, what resonance has the abhang, the defining poetic form of Marathi bhakti (and more especially of Vithoba bhakti) had within Marathi modernity? The first printed anthology of Marathi poetry, Purshurampant Godbole’s Navnit: athava Marathi kavitance vence (published in 1854 by the Education Department of Bombay Presidency) for generations of Marathi students defined the literary canon of Marathi. The abhangas of Dnyandev and Tukaram appear together with the aryagitis and slokas of Waman and Moropant ...

Falls, Edward, UW-Madison

Did Buddhist Logicians Understand Substitutional Quantification?

Tillemans has proposed a means of interpreting the Buddhist tetralemma—refuting being, non-being, both being and non-being, and neither—in such a way as to avoid paradox without either supposing that it is an alogical technique designed to halt ordinary thought, or abandoning principles of non-contradiction or excluded middle. Translating the tetralemma into quantifier logic renders the existential quantification involved in the four statements explicit; the paradox then dissolves if a substitutional semantics is used to interpret the quantifiers. I shall examine the question how far, as historiographers of Buddhist philosophy, we can take Tillemans’ suggestion without ending up with an anachronistic reconstruction. I shall also consider the debate in contemporary philosophy concerning charges that substitutional quantification is unintelligible (van Inwagen) or does not work (Hugly and Sayward), along with what ramifications Tillemans’ interpretation of Madhyamika philosophy might have for this debate (and vice versa).

Farooqi, Mehr Afshan, University of Virginia

Quranic Translations: Earliest Urdu Prose?

When one thinks of early Urdu prose one usually thinks of the works produced at Fort William College, or the ornate, decorative prose of qissas and dastaans that followed it. Most scholars are unaware or have not considered the potential of some very remarkable prose works from the late eighteenth century, namely Urdu translations of the Qur’an. For example, Shah Muradullah Ansari Sambhali’s translation of the surah Fatiha, and the thirtieth para (section). The work was completed in 1770 and is practically unknown today as one of the earliest examples of modern Urdu prose. My paper proposes to introduce a few of these early texts and examine them for prose style and technique of textual explication. My larger objective is to draw attention to texts that have been ignored or bypassed in literary histories of Hindi and Urdu.
Faruqui, Munis D., University of Dayton

Mirza Hakim and the Formation of the Mughal Empire

Emperor Akbar’s reign (1556-1605) is rightly privileged for its remarkable political and religious developments. Unfortunately, most historical accounts tend to credit Akbar’s genius and creativity when explaining unfolding imperial policies prior to the 1580s. Using the bitter political competition between Akbar and his Kabul-based half-brother, Mirza Hakim, as its backdrop, this paper will argue that many of Akbar’s political and religious initiatives were in fact shaped in competition with his younger sibling. To put it differently, it was Mirza Hakim’s success in positioning himself as the only true upholder of the Mughal family’s Central Asian and Timurid heritage that forced Akbar to engage the political and religious resources of his own South Asian-based realm in order to construct a distinct political and religious identity. Besides highlighting the centrality of Mirza Hakim’s challenge in shaping Akbar’s vision of imperium, this paper demonstrates Central Asia’s importance in determining the post-1550s trajectory of the Mughal Empire.

Feldhaus, Anne, Arizona State University

The Dhangar Vithoba

For the Dhangar shepherds of Maharashtra, Vithoba is different in important respects from the form in which the Varkaris and others in Maharashtra revere him. For the shepherds he is primarily the brother of the shepherd god Biroba. Vithoba lives in Pandharpur, as he does for Varkaris and others, but he also lives with his brother in places visited almost exclusively—and in great numbers—by shepherd devotees. Dhangar pilgrims travel via Pandharpur between places of Biroba and Vithoba (Itthal-Birappa); Pandharpur’s boatmen owe the pilgrims special services stemming from an encounter with a legendary ancestor-devotee. Most strikingly, Biroba helps his brother Vithoba when the farmer’s god Mhasoba stands on the threshold of Vithoba’s temple in Pandharpur and crushes Vithoba’s devotees’ heads on the ground. Biroba brings to Pandharpur hundreds of shepherd drummers, the sound of whose drumming frightens Mhasoba away.

Freitag, Jason, Ithaca College

Another Great Game: James Mill and James Tod on History and Administration in India

This paper explores the continuities between historical narrative and administrative structure in early nineteenth century India through an examination of the works of James Mill (1773-1836) and Lt.-Col. James Tod (1782-1835). In their well-known texts, Mill’s History of British India and Tod’s Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, they manifest competing historical visions of India. Not as well known, however, in 1832 both men provided testimony to Parliament regarding the administration of the Indian territories, and they again provide different positions on governance issues facing the consolidating imperial power. This paper details how Tod’s Romantic depiction of the Rajputs leads him to argue for indirect rule, while Mill’s Utilitarianism drives his arguments for direct British rule in the subcontinent. Taken together, these texts demonstrate the deep relationships and negotiations between historical narratives and administrative discourses in this crucial, formative period of the imperial encounter in India.

Ganguly, Keya, University of Minnesota

Cinema, Music, and Perception in Jalsaghar.

The role that music plays in the cinema to elaborate a worldview remains, for the most part, a neglected topic of discussion. This paper argues that the wide range of meanings and emotions understood to constitute our experience at the movies can be adequately conceptualized only by thinking more seriously about how music signifies in the cinema. Focusing on Satyajit Ray’s 1958 film Jalsaghar (“The Music Room”)—which is a film that both uses music and is about music—I examine the latent counterpoint offered by musical meanings to the narrative’s manifest critique of traditionalism. Aside from expressing Ray’s depiction of the contradictory force of decadence in the transition from a feudal to a modern social order in Bengal, Jalsaghar is a film in which music conveys ideas not available through visual and verbal means.

My argument turns on the proposition that Ray experiments in this film with ciné-music’s capacity …
Garlough, Christine, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Cultural Schools and the Rhetoric of Immigration: Debates about Social Identity Among South Asian Americans

Since the turn of the century, American immigrant groups have used grassroots ethnic and religious schools as a vehicle for the conscious transmission of culture. Drawing upon a two-year fieldwork experience, this paper critically explores the ongoing creation and maintenance of such schools by South Asian American communities. These schools, I argue, are rhetorical forums that play an important role in community construction and identity driven struggles. These spaces facilitate moments of dialogue and debate over crucial issues; for instance, should South Asians in America emphasize a secular, inclusive, Gandhian vision of community or one that separates immigrants into multiple communities based on regional, language, caste, or religious differences? Such considerations, at the heart of contemporary political debates in India, are brought into sharp relief when people immigrate and attempt to create communities that reflect their vision of what it mean to be South Asian American.

Gautam, Sanjay K., University of Chicago

'The Anklet of the Night': Muktibodh and the Birth of Pain in Hindi

This paper is a historical study of how and under what circumstances the trinity of 'sat-cit-ananda' or being-thinking-joy, that constituted the foundation and telos of the discourse and practice of both literature and spirituality in pre-modern and even early modern India, gave way to the recognition of 'sat-cit-vedana' or being-thinking-pain as the insurmountable fate of the modern poet, in the poetry of Muktibodh (1917-1964). I argue that with the advent of modernity, Muktibodh's poetry became a historical site of the conflict between three competing imperatives: the literary, the ethical, and the political. The literary and the ethical imperatives that were grounded in the renunciative pursuit of the traditional and spiritual telos came in conflict with the modern discourse of reason and politics grounded, in the case of Muktibodh, in the new telos of political freedom in the form of nationalism, to begin with, and communism, later, and its essential existential …

Ghoshm Bishnupriya, University of California, Davis

A Vanishing Interiority: Satyajit Ray’s “Nabina” (New Woman) in Charulata (1964)

One of Satyajit Ray’s sustained projects was the tracking of the “nabina,” the figure of “new woman” emergent in the Bengal Renaissance—a site for masculine contestations over the production of a public modernity (in the form of nation). Devi (1960), Charulata (1964), and Ghare Baire (1984) are well known treatises on the nabina, a colonial cultural genesis that, at least for Ray, explains contemporary tensions faced by the middle class female subject (the adhunika) in the decolonized nation. I will focus on Charulata today, perhaps Ray’s most ambitious effort to represent the interiority of the upper class Hindu female subject, an “interiority” that is quite problematically necessitated by that nineteenth century moment of nation-making. Through a complex articulation between sexual desire and literary self-fashioning, Ray argues Charu’s interiority is hard won (and easily lost) in a heteropatriarchy whose injunctions remain intact, despite reformist zeal that forces female subjects to …

Gopal, Sangita, University of Oregon

No Place to Hide: The Conjugal Couple in National Space

I look at Hindi cinema from the 1950’s and 60’s to ask how the conjugal ideal, produced in the nationalist imaginary, fares in the actual space of the postcolonial nation? I suggest that in the films of Raj Kapoor [(Shree 420(1955) and Sangam (1964)] and Guru Dutt [(Mr and Mrs 55(1955) and Kaagaz Ki Phool (1959)] we witness the struggle to locate conjugality in a space that is neither fully public nor private but at the interstices of this divide. This space – usually materialized in the song-and-dance sequences – enables the couple to accommodate the contradictory demands of romantic love and the extended family, of modernity and tradition, of intimacy and patriotism. I conclude by looking at how this model is complicated in the contemporary era of globalization. Turning to films form the late-90’s [(Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (Bhansali, 1999) and Dil Se (Ratnam, 1998)] I argue that the conjugal …
**Grapevine, Rebecca,** University of Michigan

**A Civil Marriage Law for India: The Special Marriages Act of 1872**

In 1868, the Brahmo Samaj, led by Keshub Chunder Sen, petitioned the colonial government for a Brahmo marriage law. For the next four years, Indian religious and social groups as well as colonial officials debated how to manage marriage laws for groups like the Brahmos. In 1872, the Governor-General’s Council approved the Special Marriages Act; it allowed cross-caste and cross-religious marriages as long as the bride and groom denied any affiliation with the major religions of India. This paper examines how colonial officials and a variety of Indian groups shaped the transformation of the seemingly simple Brahmo proposal into the Special Marriages Act. By asking those who chose to marry under the Special Marriages Act to reject the major religions of India, the law drove reformist strains (like Brahmoism) out of the religious mainstream; it also denied that Indians could think in reformist, religious, and civil terms all at once.

**Guham Sumit,** Brown University

**Stately language and language of state**

The introduction of Persian epistolary and documentary forms under the Sultans had a significant impact on the Marathi language. This was greatest close to the courts. The early modern period in South India saw an explosion in documentation, and official missives flowed in and out of remote villages. People were aware of and played on the different linguistic registers available to them. In 1674 Shivaji had himself formally crowned and inaugurated a new regime. In the next few years of his life he also attempted a linguistic revolution. An important text is the Rajavyavaharakosa - a ten-part lexicon giving Sanskrit equivalents of then current Perso-Arabic and Hindustani terms of state. This paper will explore the impact of this effort via original documents written through the next century and thus analyze the cultural politics of the Maratha courts and administrations.

**Gupta, Divay,** Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

**World Heritage in India: Challenges and Issues in Its Protection & Management**

Even though the notion of World Heritage values common universal cultural and natural assets as a whole irrespective of its geographical or political locations, the definition of heritage and the protective mechanisms differ from nation to nation. In protecting their global heritage, the nations in the South Asian region, and especially India, face some unique challenges. One challenge is the interpretation of the heritage, as it has predominantly been monument-centric and the vernacular heritage as well as the larger context within which these sites are located is largely ignored. The present protective systems are found to be weak and inadequate in the changing conceptual context of heritage itself. In addition, conservation is seen as anti-development, and the local communities are not integrated in the decision-making of the conservation projects. This paper discusses these concerns of heritage definition, protecting framework, and the perception change in managing world heritage in the Indian context.

**Harris, Ishwar,** College of Wooster

**Hindutva: Gandhi’s Dream or Nightmare?**

Mahatma Gandhi is known as the Father of Modern India, and is recognized as the key figure in the Indian Nationalist Movement that led eventually to the British withdrawal from India in 1947. As such, any serious examination of Indian Nationalism in any time frame must take the Gandhian perspective into account. Hence, this paper explores his relationship with the Hindu Nationalist Movement at the dawn of Indian independence and the subsequent developments that led to the present political climate in India. Gandhi's vision for India is compared and contrasted with the vision of Hindutva leadership.
Haskett, Chris, UW-Madison

The Reasoning Behind øakya Chogden's Refutation of Tsongkhapa

This paper will examine the works of two prominent Tibetan philosophers on the soteriological implications of Madhyamaka and various interpretations of Candrakīrti, considering the writings of Tsong kha pa and his later Sa skya pa respondent øakya mchog ldan. In so doing I hope to illuminate the philosophical concerns underlying the disparity of Sakya and Gelug understandings of the role of rationality, philosophy, and functions of mind, in particular the divergent views of Tsongkhapa and Chogden on pramāṇa, Tantra, and classification of Madhyamika systems, and how these relate to Gelug and Sakya conceptions of soteriology. I will demonstrate that their disagreements, though far-reaching and multitudinous, can be traced to a comparatively small number of sources, such as differences in theories of the two truths and the logical workings of Madhyamaka negation, and that their interpretations of fundamental issues of reason and reasoning thus ultimately dictate their conclusions concerning its limits.

Haynes, Douglas, Dartmouth College

The Transformation of Artisanal Towns into Industrial Cities in Western India, 1900-2000

This paper examines the development of middle-sized industrial cities in western India, especially Surat, Bhiwandi, Ichalkaranji, Malegaon and Sholapur. It argues that changes in government textile policy and the interest of western Indian capitalists in recruiting cheap, non-union labor brought about a significant relocation of the textile industry from large, mill-oriented cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad to old handloom centers where weavers were converting their workshops into power loom manufacturing firms. Capital was attracted to the smaller centers and significant migration of labor from long distances began to occur, but urban growth has taken place without a corresponding development of public services. The paper will reflect more generally on the relationship between secondary industrialization and new forms of urbanization in western and southern India in the years after independence.

Heitzman, James, Georgia State University

Technology Corridors in the South Indian Metropolis

During the last 25 years one of the major success stories in the Indian economy has been the expansion of the information technology (IT) industry and the generation of a major generator of foreign exchange through software outsourcing. Since the early 1990s, we have witnessed an increasing tendency toward place-product promotion and competition within the high-technology sector, now branching out into genetic engineering and bioinformatics, among the three cities of Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad. The most recent manifestation of this relationship, exerting a direct effect on urban planning, is the evolution of schemes for suburban corridors encompassing multiple villages and aiming at urban populations of up to one million within the next two decades. This paper will trace the origin of the technology corridor concept, its relationship to urbanization in these three cities, and possible future impacts.

Henderson, Carol, Rutgers University

Constructing Representations of Kingship in Colonial India: the British Treaty Makers Encounter Man Singh, Marwar's Recalcitrant Raja

This paper examines the ways in which Raja Man Singh of Marwar’s resistance to treaties of subordination with the British during 1818-1821 created an encounter which stimulated multiple and competing accounts of kingship by Col. James Tod (1782-1835), Political Agent at Udaipur, Sir Charles T. Metcalfe (1785-1846), Resident at Delhi, and his successor, Sir David Ochterlony (1758-1825). Raja Man Singh was at this time absorbed in a difficult conflict with subordinates who resisted his interpretations of rule. Published and unpublished accounts by these British agents during this period depict a background of shifting political alliance, as well as contingent representations of kingship, the nature of sovereignty, and debates over political reform, in Great Britain and in India during this formative period.
**Herman, Phyllis K.,** California State University at Northridge

Refiguring the Other: Rape, Rama, and Rakshashas

This paper focuses on an historical analysis of some of the major religio-political forces behind the construction of the “Ram Darshan,” a presentation of a very distinctive Ramkatha in modern Chitrakut. The Ram Darshan is not described in its brochures as a temple, but rather as a site within the sacred area of Chitrakut to give the pilgrim/tourist ‘a glimpse of Lord Shri Ram’ and ‘insight into his exemplary life and character.’ This venue, with its state-of-the-art animatronic figures, statues, and dioramas, is a concrete result of the rise, during and after the Independence Movement, of particular Hindu nationalist groups’ ideas about and manipulation of a paradigm of ideal government, Ramraj. This paper will trace a specific historical interpretation of Ramraj and the Ramkatha, demonstrating finally how and why the backers of the Ram Darshan attraction chose especially to elaborate on the role of Ram as the defender of helpless women …

**Herrald, Angela,** Syracuse University

Escaping Modern Life: New Age Tours to the “Mystic East”

By forging their own spiritual paths in the “New-Age” milieu, American seekers attempt to reclaim meaningful lives by exploring traditions of others that are deemed unmarred by the march of progress. This seeking can be packaged as “spiritual tours”—by both Indians and Americans. Within the highly individualized practices of New-Age seeking, the tourist-seeker observes minimal or no religious obligations within his spiritual journey. As a voluntary traveler, he is free from social obligations at home and abroad. This divorces the individual from an exchange relationship with a spiritual community. Transactions on these tours are often relegated to market exchanges, where spiritual learning becomes commodified through a tourism industry. Drawing from fieldwork on spiritual tours in India, I illustrate how New-Agers may actually be perpetuating the causes of their modern angst because these “new” forms of seeking are rooted in old ideas of the “mystic east,” leisure, and capitalism.

**Hiltebeitel, Alf,** George Washington University

A Woman of Character: . . . bRhatii zyaamaa buddhisattvaguNanvitaa/ draupadii. . .

In the Mahabharata, just as in the Ramayana, the poets center their stories on the character of a woman. As research has progressed on the two epics, it has become evident not only that Draupadi and Sita are very different kinds of characters, which has always been obvious, but that their characters are more interesting and complex than previous generations of scholars were wont to recognize. This paper will focus on Draupadi, beginning from one of the last things said about her in the Sanskrit Mahabharata—when her seniormost husband Yudhishthira enters heaven, in his own body and with his human heart still intact, and asks, "Where is Draupadi, the great dark one rich in spirit, character, and virtue?" (Mbh 17.3.36). I have freely translated sattva as "character" here, and both it and the compound in which it occurs could be translated in numerous other ways. But I wish to …

**Hindman, Heather,** Centre College

(Re)markable Whiteness and (Re)making Alterity: Western Expatriate Considerations of Difference in Kathmandu, Nepal

In this paper I seek to explore contemporary understandings of difference within Nepal by the western expatriate community living in Kathmandu. A population largely familiar with perceiving themselves as "normal"-as unmarked in racial category-the largely Euro-American community of those working for a short duration in Nepal are forced to reevaluate their identity as a part of their status as a visible minority. Yet, this exploration rarely translates into a problematization of racial, cultural or class categories in Kathmandu. Instead, many of the formulations that expatriates have for understanding difference in Nepal continue to draw on romantic formulations of exotic others from guidebooks and popular ethnography. In exploring how expatriates perceive alterity in Nepal, I also suggest that this is a discussion, a shared grammar that elite Nepalis often either share or are complicit in perpetuating.
Hodges, Sarah, University of Warwick

Contraception’s Voluntary Empire: Health and Society in India Before the Development State

In late colonial India, the possibility of welfare—that is, a tactical suturing together of health and society—was most regularly enacted not by the state or supranational agencies, but rather via a loose and episodic network of voluntary organisations. This paper examines the case of birth control in interwar south India as it was promoted by international birth control evangelists such as Margaret Sanger of the United States and Marie Stopes of Britain, and taken up by mainly urban, educated, bourgeois, upper-caste Indian men. If Kothari (1989) was right in challenging us to consider that the modern Indian state has necessarily defiled everything entrusted to its care, this paper asks: In the context of a colonial welfare that was characterised by a series of hesitations, exclusions and deferrals, did contraception’s voluntary empire provide a possible alternate trajectory for health and society in India, or did it merely pave the …

Hussain, Shafqat, Yale University

People, Texts, and Landscapes in British India: From the Search for Commonality to a Narrative of Difference

This paper discusses how colonial conceptions of Indians changed between the late 18th and early 20th centuries. While 18th century East India Company scholars examined Hindu sacred texts to ascertain a common origin for Indian and European societies, Victorian travelers and explorers in the Himalayan frontier region of India saw the landscape as one of the defining features of the social (racial) categories of the local people. The paper argues that in both cases--Orientalist scholars in the late 18th century and explorers and travelers in the late 19th century--the construction of knowledge of the Other remained origin-centric, but the rationale behind the search for origins was fundamentally transformed. What started with the attempts of early Orientalist scholars to discover a common origin of Indian and European civilization ended as a search for the origin of difference in the late 19th/early 20th centuries.

Hyder, Syed Akbar, University of Texas, Austin

Qawwali as Pedagogy: Narrative Domains of South Asian Religious & Popular Cultures

The qawwali tradition, often described as Muslim spiritual musical tradition, occupies a central role in South Asian popular cultures by virtue of its engagement with issues of piety, love, religion and aesthetics. Not only is the qawwali genre the pivotal medium through which age-old Sufi traditions of the Subcontinent validate themselves today but it is also a genre through which legacies of important Urdu poets have been kept alive. In this paper I will explore the dynamic qawwali tradition and the manner in which it constantly reconstitutes itself as a result of its audiences' religious orientations and its patrons' stipulations. In particular, I will draw on the qawwalis of Hyderabad's Padmashree award-winning qawwal, Aziz Ahmad Khan Warisi, and assess their instructional roles as songs of Sufi pedagogy. The extent to which this pedagogy has an intertextual relationship with religious polemics and popular cinematic cultures will also be discussed.

Ibrahim, Farhanam, Cornell University

Cartographic Control and the Right to Representation: A 'Restricted Zone' in Western India

This paper analyses ethnographic data from Kachchh district, Gujarat to explore how mapping practices create the ideal national community. This is a border territory and access to maps and cartographic information has been strictly policed and monopolized by the state since 1971. My analysis is based on the radical alterations in the topography and attendant cartographic practices of this area in the wake of a massive earthquake that devastated large parts of the district in 2001. Post earthquake village reconstruction in remote border areas which have remained hitherto publicly 'unmapped' has led to the decentralization of map making. As religious and cultural organizations enter into the field they too acquire stakes in interventions in the landscape, both physical and social. As a plethora of 'unofficial' maps now circulate through Kachchh, this paper concludes with a reflection on the stakes involved in representation and cartographic control in the modern nation state.
Iyer, Nalini, Seattle University

The American Other: Constructing Ethnic Identity in Contemporary South Asian American Writing

In his essay “Ethnicity in an Age of Diaspora” R. Radhakrishnan examines what ethnic identity means to Indian Americans of different generations, and he explores how each generation of Indian immigrants invents a relationship to the homeland in order to construct a sense of authenticity in America’s racialized society. My paper furthers Radhakrishnan’s analysis by exploring how South Asian American writers construct a “South Asian” identity through their narratives in relation to white America and other ethnic minorities in America. I argue that South Asian American identities are constructed not only in reaction to the imagined homeland (India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka/Bangladesh/Nepal) but also by othering Americans (particularly white Americans). This process of othering and ethnicity will be studied through an analysis of Chitra Divakaruni’s Mistress of Spices and Jhumpa Lahiri

Johnson, Alan, Idaho State University

Jungle, Garden, Bungalow: Notes on the Aesthetics of British India

This paper argues that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European narratives of exploration in the Indian subcontinent begin to set in place certain tropes that greatly influenced representations of India, particular the tropes of the wild, lawless jungle and walled garden sanctuary. These iconic spaces, I argue, become versions of one another, further testifying to the characteristic ambivalence of Anglo-Indian life. Using archival documents along with more conventional literary texts, this paper concludes that such tropes continue to influence modern views of nature and nation, albeit in often contradictory ways.

Jones, Reece, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Religion, Identity, and Homeland in Bengal: A Territorial Interpretation of Religious Nationalism

Communal violence in South Asia is often portrayed as a primordial conflict between two historically adversarial populations. However many scholars of the region have shown that up until the late nineteenth century there were relatively few differences between Hindus and Muslims, particularly in rural areas where the belief system was largely syncretic. As colonialism was challenged in the early twentieth century, the meaning of being a Bengali, a Hindu, and a Muslim was contested and redefined while political support bases were developed. In this paper I will point to the territorialization of a Hindu-based version of the national homeland as the key process in the development of communal difference in Bengal. Once the boundaries of the homeland were delineated, and the homeland was linked to the Hindu history of the population, the non-Hindu communities residing there became Others, which initiated a contestation of hegemony within the territory.

Jordan, Kay K., Radford University

Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Progressive Hindu Nationalist

Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy, the first woman to serve in an Indian legislature, was an ardent spokesperson for women's uplift and suffrage as well as Indian independence. She was active in both the Women's Indian Association and the All India Women's Conference. Dr. Reddy was a member of the Hartog Committee and was also selected to speak in support of woman's suffrage before the Linlithgow Committee in London in 1933. A follower of Mahatma Gandhi, she often referred to Hindu heroines and goddesses in her speeches while simultaneously supporting religious reforms including the elimination of devadasi dedication, child marriage, and untouchability. Reddy's construction of Hinduism combined elements of Brahmanical Hinduism and rationalism. She believed that there were truths common to the major world religions including rationally based moral teachings. She affirmed those elements of Hinduism that she viewed as supportive of women and humanity, in general, and discarded those elements ...
Joshi, Priya, University of California

At Home in the Metropolis

The most fabled hometown in the Indian novel does not exist. It cannot be found on any map, no census records its residents, and no politician visits it looking for votes. Yet citizens from this nonexistent hometown have traveled far and wide, bringing back to it trophies in the form of foreign brides and new fangled ways. The town has a web of social relations and professionals, including a financial expert, a bachelor of arts, a painter of signs, and a vendor of sweets. It even once had a maneater. I refer of course to R.K. Narayan's Malgudi, a place paradoxically so mythic and concrete that it is the imaginary homeland for many real individuals.

Crossing over from the fictional to the "real" are the many other hometowns that proliferate in India's Anglophone fiction. What strikes one almost immediately in surveying this fiction is how frequently its "hometowns" are a metropolis. …

Kale, Sunila, University of Texas at Austin

Cross Currents: Dilemmas and Differentials in the Political Economy of Electricity Reform

Most sectors, institutions, and actors in the Indian economy have been touched by the reforms of the neoliberal era. The electricity sector, in the form of its primary institutions—the State Electricity Boards—is no exception. This paper will examine the political economic dynamics that undergird state-level attempts at restructuring and in some cases privatizing the State Electricity Boards. Many states have negotiated contracts with private, often foreign, power companies to build power plants, most notoriously the Enron Corporation’s unit in coastal Maharashtra. Only two states so far—Orissa and Delhi—have privatized their distribution networks along the lines of the model advocated by the World Bank, although politicians in many others have claimed similar intentions. This paper asks why privatization has been geographically uneven, proceeding more rapidly in some states than others, and proffers an analysis rooted in the particular alignments of social forces and structures of power that prevail in each state.

Karatchkova, Elena, Columbia University

Lockett’s Report: Constructions of Criminality in Early Colonial Western India

In 1831, Lt.-Col. A. Lockett was commissioned by Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839), Governor General of the British Government in India, to investigate the “bands of armed plunderers” in Shekhawati, a territory within Jaipur state. Lockett, accompanied by Lt. A.H.E. Boileau (1807-1862) of the Military Engineers, was to document groups and crimes committed. The British could not count on the assistance of the Jaipur court, at that time in a state of political crisis with anti-British sentiments flying high. This three-month expedition was meticulously recorded by Lockett, whose Narrative of a Journey from Bhasawar in the Bharatpur Territory... was subsequently published. This paper undertakes a close reading of this document, paying special attention to Lockett’s constructions of “criminality,” “caste” and “tribe.”

Kashyap, Arunima, Michigan State University

Microwear Analysis and its Scope and Application in Indian Context

Microwear analysis is the microscopic examination of the surface wears and fracture scars that form along the edges of the stone tools. Research confirms that different kinds of wear fractures, scars, striations and polishes are produced on stone tools by the different kinds of materials worked on (such as hide, meat, reeds etc.), as well as the different ways the tools are worked (such as cutting, scraping etc.). The results of microwear research have clearly demonstrated that information about different kinds of activities of prehistoric groups can be made on justifiable and scientific grounds from the information retrieved by systematic analysis. Although both high and low magnification techniques have been used to reconstruct the primary activities of the prehistoric people in different parts of the world very little innovative research of this kind has yet been undertaken on stone tools from southern Asia generally especially for the Mesolithic period in India. …
Kenkre, Tanya, Pennsylvania State University

Education, Economic Participation, and Women's Status in India

Although social scientists have been interested in the study of women’s status for some time, consensus on a standard definition of this concept has been elusive. In spite of the nebulousness of the term, demographic research concerning women’s status is typically operationalized by items measuring decision making, access to and control of material resources, and the experience of physical violence. Consequently, large scale survey questions only focus on women’s subjection to manifest forms of power, and socio-demographic understandings of women’s status have been limited to this domain. Large scale data collection instruments measuring more hidden power dynamics have been unavailable to social scientists. The study discusses the potential for measuring women’s status more broadly in large scale surveys than has been achieved thus far.

The study analyzes data collected by a demographic survey in India that follows the typical format, the NFHS-2, and reviews these data alongside findings from focus …

Key, Jeffrey, Sweet Briar College

Nepal's Maoist Rebellion and Resurgent Monarchy

Nepal underwent a revolution in 1990-1 when its monarchy was replaced with a constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy. This system functioned fitfully for eleven years before collapsing in 2002 due to its inability to stop a widespread Maoist insurgency that began in 1996. Local government is in disarray and Maoists claim to govern many of the country’s seventy-five districts. A prime minister appointed by the king nominally governs the country. Nepal’s instability concerns India, China, and the United States.

This paper will examine the impact of Nepal’s Maoist rebellion on the country’s government and politics. The collapse of institutions, especially local government administration and the national parliamentary system, will receive particular attention. The re-emergence of a functioning monarchy under King Gyanendra will also be discussed. The paper will conclude with a review of the interests of outside powers and the prospects for a settlement.

Khan, Atiya, University of Chicago

Formation of the Muslim Political Self: Maulana Azad's Imaginings and Articulations c. 1919-40

Contrary to nineteenth century Muslim intelligentsia, who conceptualized Muslim identity in both Islamic and Indian terms, twentieth century Muslim intellectuals (re)articulated the idea of the Muslim self on the basis of pan-Islamism. Pan-Islamism generated in response to the hostility of the British to Turkish Caliphate and received a particular impetus in Abul Kalam Azad’s political thought. This paper examines personal narratives and political texts of Azad which exemplify the deployment of religion as an instrument of Muslim political organization and opposition to the colonial state. At the same time, however, his political discourse reveals the most fundamentalist articulation of Islam and Muslim nation shorn by contradictions and false claims. As soon as the Khilafat movement petered out largely due to its weak assertions, Azad made a shift to becoming a member of the Indian National Congress thereby professing secular nationalism. Arguably Azad’s ideology served as a precursor to Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan.

Khan, Muqtedar, Adrian College/Brookings Institution

Islam & Democracy in South Asia

This paper argues that Islam is central to the political and cultural identity of South Asia. Contemporary South Asian politics can be understood as a crisis of collective identity. The polities in the region are struggling to accommodate, find an appropriate place, for a resurgent Islam within their respective socio-politically frameworks. The struggle to cope with Islamic resurgence has opened debates about national identity, secularism, pluralism and the nature of democracy in multi-religious societies. In essence this paper is an attempt to understand the public role of Islam and its impact on the evolution of democracy in South Asia.
Khan, Naveeda, Johns Hopkins University

Of Children and Jinns: Inquiries into an unexpected friendship during uncertain times in Lahore

In my paper I will attend to how sectarianism, manifest as violent showdowns between Shias and Sunnis upon the national scene in the 1990s, gets folded into everyday life in Lahore, Pakistan. I will do so by focusing on a Punjabi Sunni family’s extended encounter with a shahaba jinn (genii) in Lahore, to tease out how the fraught relationship between Shias and Sunnis informs this encounter. In particular I look at how sectarianism maps onto familial relationships and, in turn, the vague threat of religious difference is provided figuration by familial modes of relating. My goal is to move beyond the public-private dichotomy by neither privileging sectarianism in the national scene nor the tensions within domesticity in speaking about religious violence.

Khattak, Saba, Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Adversarial discourses, analogous objectives: Controlling Afghan women, legitimizing violence

The paper addresses the question of how political discourses produce violence and women. It analyzes western as well as “fundamentalist” discourses on Afghan women over the last decade to highlight both misogyny and racism as they are deployed to legitimize multiple forms of violence. Using interviews conducted with Afghan women over the span of ten years, the analysis questions the depth to which portrayals emanating from different quarters touch women’s lives and if in turn women can shape these portrayals. It argues that ultimately such discourses stem from very similar motivations in the context of conventional power politics. As the Afghan case demonstrates, women’s emancipation from oppressive conditions is not at the base of the motivation to control their lives by local, regional, or global forces. As such, very little positive social change may be expected to take place with respect to women’s life circumstances and conditions.

Khokhar, Sarah, Johns Hopkins University

The Pakistani State, the Punjab and its Identity 1947-1971

This paper is concerned with the emergence of Muslim Punjab and the place of Punjabis vis-à-vis the Pakistani state. Post-1947, the problem of Punjab was compounded due to the rupture of a non-communal composite identity and its location in the provincial and nationalist politics of Pakistan. Ethnic interests became paramount and were seen as detrimental to the nationalist project, with Punjabis playing a key role in the army and bureaucratic apparatus. However, Punjab is not monolithic, and there are multiple variations which render the task of addressing Punjabi identity more complex. Despite a preponderance of Punjabis in state institutions, Punjabi indigenous identity was not overtly visible. However, it continued to exist, and even thrive, albeit beyond the parameters of the state. In this paper, I explore how and to what extent, Punjabi identity was affected by the imperatives of the Pakistani nationalist project between 1947 and 1971?

Kishore, Jhilmil, The Halpern Partnership Ltd

Defining an Urban Conservation Approach for South Asia: Learning from the Civic Amenities Act 1967 of England

This paper seeks to test the Civic Amenities Act (CAA) 1967 of England for adaptability to the Indian and the South Asian contexts in conserving historic town centers. The CAA was one of the first steps towards a more comprehensive approach to Urban Conservation in the world. It focused attention upon some of the principal issues confronting historic areas, namely, economic pressures, difficulties in providing appropriate uses, decay and its prevention, tourism, and traffic and design difficulties in adaptation. Today England has more than 8000 designated conservation areas, and still growing, perhaps in some areas too many have been identified and greater discretion might have ensured a greater degree of success. While England is busy re-assessing the chain reaction set by its CAA, this paper questions whether it can be the first …
**Kolsky, Elizabeth**, Pratt Institute

“The Body Evidencing the Crime”: Rape on Trial in Colonial India, 1805-1947

The British in India attended with great vigilance to sensational and alien forms of gender violence, such as sati and female infanticide. However, colonial legislators were less intrigued by those crimes with which they were more familiar. British judges in the Nizamut Adawlut were unmoved by the astounding number of wife murder trials that came before them. All 31 cases of justifiable homicide tried by the Court from 1805-1850 involved husbands who killed their wives for adulterous acts, and over 1/3 of all murders tried during this period involved wives, witches, and concubines. Rape is another form of everyday violence against women that did not appeal to the reformist impulse described by Gayatri Spivak as “white men saving brown women from brown men.” In this paper I will examine rape trials in colonial India by focusing on how a gendered discourse of native deceit and the technologies developed …

**Koops Elson, Mark**, University of Chicago

The Life Insurance Market in India and the Resurgence of Modernization Discourse

This paper examines attempts to create a national Indian market for life insurance in the formative decades of the 1950s and 1990s. In 1956, Indian planners nationalized the life insurance industry, while in the 1990s the Indian state chartered a neoliberal path, creating a competitive market for insurance. Although these constituted opposing policy directions, the liberalizers of the 1990s were the heirs of the 1950's technocratic planners, reviving the optimistic rhetoric of modernization theory, its allochronistic temporal frame, the expectation that a new policy paradigm would lead to self-reinforcing growth, and a desire to isolate planning from politics. As in the 1950s, reformers forecast that the expansion of the life insurance market would play a central role in generating a cycle of national economic growth, as this modernizing growth would greatly increase Indian demand for life insurance through, among other projected developments, the breakdown of the joint-family.

**Koshy, Susan**, English and Asian American Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

The Minority Report: South Asians and the US Census

This paper argues that errors in the historiography of South Asian American census classification are symptomatic of an "inauthenticity" that haunts South Asian efforts to seek recognition as Asian Americans. It also points to a larger political difficulty of theorizing the minority subject outside the paradigms of the subject of civil rights based on the experiences of African Americans. The South Asian case offers a particularly important case study because it anticipates the challenges of formulating the meanings of racial discrimination in a post-civil rights era and foregrounds the vulnerability of model minorities to perceptions of alienness, despite the ameliorating power of their class status in the post 9/11 era. When one views the South Asian American bid for minority status and classification as Asian Americans in the 1980 census within the broader context of the struggles of all other Asian Americans for recognition and redress, it is their exclusion …

**Kroll, Ethan**, University of Chicago

Svatva: The Conception of Proprietary Right in Early Modern Sanskritic Discourse

In the early 16th c., sva (proprietary right) emerged as an object of philosophical inquiry for the Navya-nyaya (New Logic) school of Sanskritic discourse. Raghunatha Siromani's Padarthatattvanirupana first classified sva as an ontological category, recognizing that proprietary right necessarily denoted a relationship between a person and an object, which relationship could be included in neither the object's nor the person's defining attributes. Raghunatha's categorial innovation encouraged subsequent early modern scholars to define sva and svamitva (ownership) and to analyze the ontological relationships at work in those portions of dhammasastra (Hindu Law) concerned with the production and destruction of proprietary right. That the foremost specialists in Navya-nyaya, a discipline best known for its mind-boggling abstractions, began to concern themselves with the basics of civil law is both remarkable and puzzling. This paper will therefore seek both to draw attention to Navya-nyaya analyses of the relationship between sva and svamitva, the …
Kumar, Shanti, University of Wisconsin-Madison

In Search of Autonomy: The Nationalist Imagination of Public Broadcasting in Indian Television

This paper focuses on the debates over broadcasting policies in India by critically evaluating the recommendations of various Committees, such as the Chanda Committee (1964), the Verghese Committee (1977), the Joshi Committee (1982), and the Sengupta Committee (1996), which were set up by the national government to provide autonomy for television. It discusses how the nationalist agenda of public broadcasting defined the question of “autonomy” in Indian television from the early 1950s to the late 1980s. The paper also demonstrates how, during this period, the concept of “national programming” served as the guiding framework for broadcasting policies in India, and led to the rapid expansion of Doordarshan as a state-sponsored network.

The second part of the paper examines how the rise of satellite and cable television channels since the 1990s has posed a serious threat to Doordarshan’s hegemony over national programming in India. It concludes that the growing competition between …

Kutty, Omar, University of Chicago

The question of civil and political society among sweepers in Delhi

Partha Chatterjee has recently argued that the central tension in contemporary Indian democracy is that between civil society and political society, where the former is defined by its pedagogical relationship to the population and the latter by its function of channeling the resources of the welfare state. This paper assesses the utility of this distinction through an analysis of the political and social organizations of Delhi’s Balmiki community. There are an abundance of organizations working on behalf of this community and they fall into both categories. For example, the Ghandian organization Sulabh International, which casts itself as an explicitly non-political organization on a mission of social reform, is in tension with the powerful Balmiki unions, which maintain a close relationship to the Congress party as they fight to hold on to heavily subsidized government jobs. This paper will examine this dynamic in a context of neoliberalism and impending privatization.

Lakier, Genevieve, University of Chicago

The Nepal bandh and the violence of political society

This paper will examine the bandh, a pan-South Asian form of political protest, as it manifests in contemporary Nepal. Although usually glossed in English as a “general strike”, bandhs are mobilized in the name of the national public, not the worker, and target consumption and mobility instead of production. The parties and organizations which call bandhs use threats and sometimes violence to enforce the total shutdown of public life and to demonstrate their political power. This paper will examine why bandhs have emerged as primary tools of political struggle in democratic Nepal (1990-) to argue that insofar as they mobilize popular demands upon the state, they must be considered an element of Chatterjee’s “political society”. The coercion intrinsic to most bandhs thus reveals the violence of political society and forces us to examine how it produces, and never simply represents, the public in whose name it acts.

Lal, Ruby, Johns Hopkins University

Historicizing the Haram: a history of early Mughal domestic life

I write about the domain of domestic life in the time of the first three Mughal kings of India (1487-1605), Babur, Humayun, and Akbar. My purpose is to investigate the making of new imperial structures, and practices, in an “invisible”, inner space, the haram, that has so far been treated as always already given. The Mughal domestic world and its inhabitants were an intrinsic part of the diverse and complicated procedures that went into the making of the “Great Mughals”. The changing political situation and power of this dynastic regime is indexed in the domestic sphere not only in the titles and honors bestowed upon women, but also in the projection of their activities and in the living quarters assigned to them. That the women became pardeh-giyan (veiled ones), and were restricted to secluded quarters called the haram, did not altogether reduce their power or make them less important in …
LaRocque, Brendan, Xavier University

Hagiographies and Merchant Groups in the Mughal Empire

The Mughal emperor Akbar is renowned for his religious tolerance and curiosity, while the emperor Aurangzeb, in contrast, is depicted as having promoted a narrow-minded and rigid interpretation of Islam. In this paper, I shift the focus from the strictly religious import of these emperor's policies to look at the political and economic implications of imperial attitudes toward ostensibly religious issues, as recorded in hagiographical literature. I analyze the close relationship established between Akbar and various non-Muslim religious communities - particularly those with a strong following among merchants, such as the Jains and Vaishnavites * as this was both asserted and recorded in the devotional and hagiographical literature of such groups. This is then contrasted with the alienation of merchant groups from the Mughals under Aurangzeb, likewise reflected in hagiographical literature. I conclude that hagiographies traditionally, until Aurangzeb's reign, served as documents which represented the state's willingness to recognize and protect trading communities.

Leonard, Spencer, University of Chicago

The James Laine Affair: An Analysis of Substanceless Content

In early January 2004, the Sambhaji Brigade, the male-youth wing of the Maratha Seva Sangh, attacked the Bhandarkar Institute for Oriental Research in Pune in protest of the scholarly assistance which that institute had provided to American research scholar, Dr. James Laine. Subsequently, Laine's book was banned by the Maharashtra State. All parties have since entered into competition as to who most passionately condemns Laine's alleged insult of Shivaji Maharaj, Maratha pride, Indian culture, etc..

The study upon which I intend to report focuses on the attack on the Bhandarkar Institute and the tireless debate surrounding Laine's book as political and media events. The study, which relies primarily on Marathi language media, proceeds from the thorough analysis of the major mainstream and party-affiliated dailies available in Pune, in addition to a wide variety of more disparate writings that have appeared in various journals in the months following the attack.

Li, Shenghai, UW-Madison

On Two Kinds of Formal Argument in Indian Madhyamaka Commentaries

My paper will focus on Bh‘vaviveka and Candrak‘rti’s views regarding formal argument that are found in the key passages in their commentaries on N‘rjuna’s M‘lamadhyamakak‘rik‘. Through close reading of Candrak‘rti and Bh‘vaviveka’s justifications, respectively, for prasaïga and svatantr‘num‘na (consequence and independent syllogism), I will examine the reasons for the two Madhyamaka authors’ preferences, their views of the domains to which the two forms of argument are applicable, and their understanding of the manner in which their preferred arguments engender knowledge. Finally, I will show that Candrak‘rti and Bh‘vaviveka’s choices for logical argument are linked with their different outlooks on the nature of perception; and I will also briefly consider the possibility that the divergence might be caused by a difference in their ontological stances.

Liechty, Mark, University of Illinois at Chicago

Building the "Road to Kathmandu": The Himalayas in the Western Countercultural Imagination

This paper considers the rise of mass tourism to Nepal in the 1960s in light of the historical processes that created images of the Himalayas in the Western imagination. By the 19th century critics of modernity had begun to look to "The East" in search of the spiritual authenticity they believed lost in the increasingly "disenchanted" West. From the Transcendentalists to Spiritualism, to Theosophy, disaffected anti-modernists found a new global axis mundi in South Asia generally, and the Himalayas in particular. By the early 20th century this Himalayan fixation found expression in the creation of Shangri-la and a growing fixation of supposedly Tibetan occult sciences. These images and others helped create the spatial imaginary that launched hundreds of thousands of Western youth on "The Road to Kathmandu" in the 1960s.
Little, Layne, St. Lawrence University

Cinema Siddhas: Tamilizing Hollywood’s Yogi-Christ in Ranjikanth’s Baba

This paper explores the entrance of Tamil Siddha tradition into the world of popular culture by examining the 2002 Tamil film, Baba, written, directed, and starring “superstar” Rajnikanth. The film depicts a “universal” Tamil Siddha world fully integrated with Tamil temple traditions and conservative Hindu culture. My paper argues that Rajnikanth’s unique re-envisioning of the Tamil Siddhas through his repatriation of Babaji, “the Yogi-Christ of India,” attempts to promote a direct lineal relationship between indigenous Tamil yoga traditions and Kriya yoga forms, which have become increasingly popular in the United States since the 1930s. In doing so, Baba encapsulates a dynamic moment in the Tamil nationalizing process that co-opts Siddha tradition through a pop-cultural form of diaspora-Hinduism.

Lukose, Ritty, University of Pennsylvania

Reconfiguring Politics in the era of Globalization: Citizenship and Education in Kerala, India

This paper examines the production of gendered citizenship under conditions of neoliberal reforms in Kerala, India. I examine what happens to the politics and practices of democratic citizenship in an educational setting, namely a low-caste based college, when that setting is being newly reconfigured as a commodity, focusing on the politics of privatization. Over the last century, within Kerala’s developing narrative of modernity, the “public” that constitutes educational spaces has come to be understood as a “political public”, driven by the political agency of revolutionary or revolutionizing young men. I examine explicit discourses about “politics”, its limits and characteristics, in order to point to the ways in which this domain is situated within a wider social field of gender and generational practices and therefore is a constant site of struggle. Within this contemporary moment of privatization, I examine how the “private consumer”, through discourses of consumption, is laying claim …

Lutgendorf, Philip, University of Iowa

Do the Uttarakurus Have More Fun?: Indian Cinematic Imaginings of Himalayan Folk

Fantasies about life beyond the front range of the Great Himalaya have been a trope in Indian literature since at least the period of the Sanskrit epics. The "northern Kurus" (as residents of the region have sometimes been called) were rumored to have long, happy lives burdened by few inhibitions, especially in sexual matters. Their women were spared (what the Mahabharata calls) the "terrible dharma" of respectable women in Bharatavarsha and were free to enjoy multiple extra-marital liaisons and polyandrous marriages. Such legends appear to persist in popular 20th century narrative through a much-used trope in Bombay cinema: the depiction of the Himalayas as a realm of uninhibited romantic fantasy. Although this trope is often confined to virtually extra-narative song sequences that whisk the hero and heroine to Himalayan (or lately European or even New Zealand alpine) locales, a number of highly successful films have given it much more extended …

Madhok, Bindu, Albion College

Swayam: A Self-Affirming Urban Women’s Organization in Calcutta

Founded by a young entrepreneur-turned social activist, Swayam (literally ‘oneself’) is a non-profit urban women’s organization committed to fighting violence against women and children in Calcutta, India. Through awareness-raising programs like street-plays in the slums, outreach programs in educational institutions and community groups, and research and documentation, Swayam seeks to bring women’s issues to public discourse and influence public opinion against violence towards women. Lobbying for social and legal changes through collaboration with the judiciary and community groups is one of Swayam’s major objectives. Based on recent field-research, this paper will examine the beginnings, conceptual framework, innovative initiatives, and outreach programs employed by this urban grassroots organization.
Majumdar, Rochona, University of Chicago

The Content of the Aesthetic: The Brahmo Marriage

This paper focuses on the Civil Marriage Act of 1872, first adopted by the Brahmos under the leadership of Keshub Chandra Sen (1838- 1884). According to the new code Brahmo marriages would be considered legally valid even when they abjured all Hindu nuptial paraphernalia, such as idolatry, sanctifying the bond through the chanting of "mantras" by a priest in front of a sacred flame and so on. The latter were considered retrograde and backward by the reformist Brahmos. Instead, displaying their zeal for secularization and individuality the union would now be presided over by a registrar and the couple would pronounce their own vows. However, soon after the promulgation of the new law Keshub Sen himself in complete contravention of every one of its precepts got his own daughter, Suniti Devi, betrothed to the Prince of Coochbehar. The paper on the one hand focuses on the alignment between legal norms …

Malik, Anas, Xavier University

The problematic supremacy of conflated ideological variables in 'Islam and democracy' research

"Islam", "Islamicate", "Islamist", and "Islamic", are terms that continue to be used in diverse, overlapping, indeterminate, and inconsistent ways. Yet this is not a vocabulary problem alone. It reflects a widely shared Orientalist outlook that constrains research and policy discussions. Some literatures have tended to presume a unique supremacy of ideological forces in Islamist politics, and accordingly discounted the value of rational choice analysis in terms of strategic factors to which more pragmatic political actors would respond. This problem is quite prominent in the study of South Asian Islamism. Doing so has produced a lacuna in the study of Islamist movements, namely and lack of work on the tactical sources of political action and even the choice of ideology as a tactical matter. Writers in the Fundamentalisms Project, a major research endeavor, tend to make this presumption. Marshall Hodgerson's distinction between "Islam" and "Islamdom" or "Islamicate" is a useful …

Mallapragda, Madhavi, Indiana University

Model Minorities and Virtual Grandpas: Parenting and Cyberspace

This paper examines cyber representations of parenting on the Indian-AmericanWeb targeting Non Resident Indians (NRIs) and People of Indian Origin in the U.S. Parenting, a popular theme on the Web, is addressed through strategies such as advice columns, discussion forums, and opinion pieces and in some instances, cyber grandpas who participate as storytellers. Although stereotypical references about Indian parenting, and kids with the best of East- West, abound, the Web foregrounds a complex set of anxieties and desires shaping the relations between parents and children. This paper argues that parenting functions as a key trope in the discourse on cultural identity in a community that is increasingly impatient with reductive constructions of the Indian, the American, and the Indian-American family. It further argues that cyberspace is a key site for the struggles over and negotiation of the anxieties and desires shaping the everyday practices of a diverse community.

Menon, Niveditha, Pennsylvania State University

Exploring Differences: Domestic Violence in Rural India

The focus of this paper is domestic violence among rural women in India. This paper builds on previous work that asked the question: How do regional, family, and personal characteristics of a woman affect her likelihood of being hit by her husband? In the previous study, I attempted to incorporate both interpersonal relationships and structural forces to explain husband’s violence towards their wives using the 1999 DHS data. I found clear regional and religious variability in the reported rates of domestic violence. As expected, higher levels of socio-economic status and education are powerful forces that dissuade violence against women. Contrary to predicted results, however, being in a nuclear family structure, having higher decision-making powers and labor force participation increased the risk of women being assaulted by their husbands. These surprising findings, taken together, require an elaboration of the feminist analyses of motivations of domestic violence and suggest that the relationship …
Metz, John, Northern Kentucky University


The idea of deforestation-led environmental degradation in the Himalaya has a long and varied career. The argument was first utilized by colonial foresters to limit subsistence users' activities, and it justified many development projects in the 1980s and 90s. Research to specify the processes revealed a much more complicated set of physical and social processes operating. Revisionists argued that human impacts on vegetation cause little erosion and flooding relative to geological, hydrological, and meteorological forces. More recently, scholars have explored how changes in Himalayan environmental discourses correlate with fluctuating development discourses. I review the career of the concept of Himalayan environmental degradation, examine the empirical evidence, and consider the validity of attempting such an empirical evaluation.

Mills, James, University of Strathclyde

Cocaine in Colonial India: The making of a drugs scare, 1900-1912.

By looking at the regulations imposed on the drug by the Government of Bombay in 1912 this paper begins to explore the obscure history of cocaine use in modern south Asia, and examines the reasons why the British authorities in India anticipated the metropolitan government by four years in prohibiting cocaine use. In the decade after 1900 stories circulated that paan-wallas were adding an extra kick to their products by mixing in cocaine with the usual ingredients. Indian doctors wrote to British medical journals detailing problems with cocaine use among their patients. The prospect of the city's bazaars taking to the drug alarmed the Government to the extent that it banned any contact with cocaine except by medical practitioners. The paper looks at this previously unexplored drugs story and explains why it was thought that India had a cocaine problem in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Mir, Ali, William Paterson University

Lyrically Speaking: Hindi Film Songs and the Progressive Aesthetic

During the period of time when the Progressive Writers’ Movement had a hegemonic hold over Urdu poetry, members of this movement were simultaneously dominating the landscape of Hindi film lyrics. Poets such as Sahir Ludhianavi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Kaifi Azmi, Ali Sardar Jafri, Shailendra, Jan Nisar Akhtar and others were the pre-eminent lyricists of their age. Not surprisingly, the songs they penned were inflected with their politics and the politics of their movement. In this paper, I intend to examine the reasons for the dominance of progressive Urdu poets in Hindi cinema (and the corresponding reasons for the absence of Hindi poets), the historical trajectory of their subsequent decline, and the nature of the political intervention they sought to make through their lyrics.

Mir, Raza, William Paterson University

Shayar nahin hai who jo ghazalkhaan hai aaj kal
He is not a poet today, who pens nothing but ghazals

The progressive movement in Urdu poetry exhibited particular disdain for the 'moribund' rhyme schemes of the classical age. However, to use an old ghazal metaphor, they were as irresistibly drawn to it as a moth to a flame. In this paper, I propose to explore the love-hate relationship toward classical Urdu poetry exhibited in the work of the progressive poets, especially as it played out in the area of poetic rhyme schemes. I contend that progressive poets never really transcended the rhythmic structure of classical poetry, but under their watch, the conventional metaphors of shama-parwana (flame-moth), firaq-visal (separation-union) and husn-ishq (beauty-love) were turned on their heads in the service of a new aesthetic of social change.

Mitchell, Lisa, University of Washington

Telugu Language, “Telugu” History? Narrative and the Shaping of Collective Memory

New nineteenth century perceptions of language reshaped historical memory by organizing knowledge and practice in new ways. The Telugu language, like other regional languages, emerged as a new foundation for the dramatic yet largely
unnoticed reorganization of literary production, pedagogical practice, curricular agendas, the writing of history, and ultimately assertions of collective identity and ideas of personhood. This paper demonstrates these changes by tracing the shifting subjects and social meanings of charitras [biographical narratives] composed in Telugu. From medieval celebrations of the heroic contributions of individual kings, warriors, saints, and founding figures of religious movements, the subjects of charitras were largely replaced by the last decades of the nineteenth century by the “ordinary” protagonists of the first Telugu novels and by personified inanimate entities like regions, languages, and collectivities of subjects. The paper argues that the various narratives identified as charitras not only document shifting subjects of significance within Telugu …

Mohammad, Mahboob (Afsar), UW-Madison

Ramayana Themes in Mohurram Songs

In this paper, I seek to explore the dialogic narrative mode of Mohurram songs, in which Hindus sing about Muslim Martyrs. Hindus structurally appropriate their own mythological themes in performing and telling these Islamic hagiographies. To demonstrate this dialogical and syncretic cultural trait, I will utilize Telangana Folksongs specifically focussing on their narrative strategies. In a larger context, I wish to written narrative counterparts, suggesting more complementary religious pratice between Hindus and Muslims, unlike usual examples Hindu-Muslim binary oppositions.

Mohan, Dia, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Education and Political Theatre as Means of Representation in Rural West Bengal

In this paper, I draw on research on an organization called Jana Sanskriti that has combined political theatre with activism to create a pedagogical process that contests constructions of rural subjectivity and marginality. I explore how Jana Sanskriti encourages the formation of new definitions of education and its relation to development, through role-playing new subject positions onstage and offstage. In their work, education is not just a means of developing a productive citizen, but a means of representation. I use ethnographic material on Jana Sanskriti's efforts to realize this pedagogy in pre-primary schools in a Muslim village to raise questions about how different pedagogical projects are formulated, contested, and tentatively resolved in these encounters. I argue that Jana Sanskriti's encouragement of debates about what counts as education itself produces education as site of representation in ways that provide a rich foundation for imagining alternate pedagogical processes in contemporary Bengal.

Momen, Mehnaaz, Texas A&M International University

Garment Workers in Bangladesh: Empowering Whom?

The garment Industry in Bangladesh is associated with expansion of the labor market for low-skilled workers, which has allowed a large number of women to participate in the labor force in urban areas. Like its precedents in the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the garment workers have had to fight to change the social norms dictating women’s role. The success of NGOs is often dependent on their capability to create and maintain positive vibes with the community, while the garment industry, stakes claim on women’s labor in a more pervasive form that alter the relationships with their families and communities. The vast number of jobs created by the NGOs has also initiated new prospects for class mobility, a trend that remains absent in the garment sector. This paper attempts to assess the impact of the garment industry by comparing its impact with the NGO programs and by situating the phenomenon in the larger socio-economic context.

Monius, Anne, Harvard Divinity School

Character and Sectarian Conflict in Twelfth-Century South India

This paper considers the principal character of the Periyapuranam, a twelfth-century Tamil text attributed to Cekkilar that narrates the lives of the "leaders" (nayanmar) of Siva's earthly community. Cekkilar's anthology organizes itself around the life-story of the eighth-century poet Cuntarar, literally "the Beautiful One." Cuntarar's characterization is the most complexly human in the Periyapuranam, from his vexed relationships with his two wives to his often humorous encounters with the lord. Given the tradition that claims that Cekkilar composed his text in order to woo his royal patron away from an interest in an earlier Tamil Jain narrative (the ninth-century Civakacintamani), Cuntarar also emerges as an explicitly Saiva reinterpretation
of the Jain hero Civakan. This paper examines the multiple ways in which the characterization of Cuntarar undermines Civakan's disgust with the world, positing instead a heroic Saiva devotional practice demanding vigorous worldly engagement.

Morarji, Karuna, Cornell University

Schooling, Development and Textbooks: Challenging the "Moral" of the Story

This paper examines Indian state school textbooks as social maps that orient rural identities and aspirations. State textbooks order and regulate everyday relations and practices (for example, interactions with family and friends, work, transportation, leisure time), which naturalize national, urban, middle-class and increasingly Hindu identities while making invisible other ways of being. Teaching state textbooks embody rituals of rule in the substantive content and moral of the stories, as well as through exercises which frame students' engagement with the content. By contrast, SIDH, an NGO in the rural, mountainous Uttaranchal region of India, reshapes relationships between schooling, development and subjectivities. I explore the power of SIDH's alternative pedagogical practice through one project in which children learn about, research, and represent relationships in the community, thus animating issues of identity and history. I argue that this curriculum produces an alternate social map, reconfiguring the meanings of education and development.

Muirhead, Bruce, Lakehead University

Differing Perspectives: India, the World Bank and the 1963 Aid Negotiations

The 1963 negotiations among India, the World Bank and the Aid-India consortium represent a watershed. For the first time since its formation, members of the latter expressed disenchantment with what they perceived to be the slow rate of Indian economic growth caused in part by the entrenched nature of India's bureaucracy. This paper brings out the main lines of the argument among participants and attempts to evaluate the position of each. It also demonstrates the arm-twisting and coalition-building by the US, of and with other Aid-India members, in order to achieve what the US believed to be the desired result: increased aid to India, the world's largest democracy and a foil to Communist China. The paper is based on archival research at the World Bank, the US National Archives, the PRO and the National Archives of Canada.

Mukherjee, Dr Mithi, University of Colorado at Boulder

Transcending the Nation: Gandhi and the Discourse of Law and Freedom in Modern India

The Gandhian movement for independence from British rule in twentieth-century India has generally been viewed in Indian historiography as a nationalist movement like any other anticolonial movement or movement for democracy, with the difference that in India, the means adopted was primarily nonviolent. In this paper, I will contest this predominant interpretation of the Gandhian movement by exploring the specificity of the Gandhian discourse of freedom and its relation to the idea of law. I will argue that unlike in the west, where the discourse of freedom and the discourse of law have been two sides of the same historical movement, and lodged firmly within the territorial and discursive bounds of the nation, in India, in contrast, the Gandhian discourse of freedom saw as its primary telos the overcoming of the idea of law altogether. In fact, Gandhi termed this envisioned state of 'lawlessness' 'enlightened anarchy'. I will contend that …

Mundschenk, Paul, Western Illinois University

The Roots of Hindutva: Religion and Politics in Anti-Colonialist Nationalism

The irony of British rule found one expression in their creation of a class of English-educated Indians who embraced their rulers' democratic ideals while simultaneously being denied meaningful participation in the governance of their own country. By the middle of the 19th century, the inevitable consequence was the birth of the Indian Nationalist Movement which, at first, was carried out by individuals who became known as Moderates, and who worked for democratic reform essentially by petitioning the government to put into practice its own democratic ideals. When only miniscule reforms were granted with painful slowness, the Moderates were challenged by other Indians who advocated more radical methods, who soon became known as Extremists, as who looked to India's glorious past in order to generate anti-British sentiment. Their work thus united religion with politics, and the roots of Hindutva came into being.
Muppidi, Himadeep, Vassar College

Technologies of the Postcolonial Body

The controversy over outsourcing has drawn dramatic attention to the existence of vast pools of skilled labor in countries such as India. These highly skilled but relatively inexpensive workers from India are now an important resource in many sectors of the global economy. How do we understand their social production and their global abilities? This paper takes issue with some of the dominant (and generally colonial) explanations of this phenomenon. It argues that understanding the politics of language and technology in postcolonial modernity is crucial for any adequate explanation of this phenomenon. Our theoretical argument is concretized, among other things, through a critical reading of a classic Telugu text, Vishnusarma Englishu Caduvu.

Murthy, Suryanarayana, KSHETRA Consultancy

Relocating Cultural Heritage of Alampur Kshetra, Andhra Pradesh, India: The Case of Loss of Identity and the Need for Integrated Conservation Management

During 1980s, the temples of Kudaveli and Papanasi, which were part of the symbolic spatial notion of ‘Dakshina Kashi’ region in Andhra Pradesh in India, were relocated into Alampur region in order to protect them from the threat of submergence caused by the construction of a dam across Krishna River under Srisailam hydro-electric project. The local communities and the pilgrims, who associated their socio-cultural identity with these historic monuments, are at a loss due to this strategy of transplantation adopted in the conservation approach. This paper investigates this issue of loss of identity, meanings, and values attributed to cultural heritage when the sites of cultural importance are relocated into a different context as part of their preservation strategy, and argues for the adoption of an integrated management for such conservation practices which would respect and maintain the value of historic meanings and associations given by the local communities and pilgrims.

Nairm Neeti, Tufts University

“Things happen to upset plans”: the problem of responsibility and Partition violence

Through an examination of violence in Rawalpindi (March 1947) and Lahore/Amritsar (August 1947), this paper suggests that the problem of determining responsibility for “Partition violence” mars the easy distinction between ‘high politics’ and subaltern perspectives that is the staple in Partition historiography today. I will use first information reports, letters from high officials, refugees, troops and district officials to suggest that Partition violence can, in fact, be comprehended in all its enormity when it is integrated into the larger narrative of ‘partition’s causes.’

Oldenburg, Veena, CUNY/Baruch College, Graduate Center

Ruling Passions: Wajid Ali and the Colonial State

The reputation for politeness, sexual excess, decadence, and self-centeredness that the nawabs of Awadh acquired during the rule of its Nawabs(1785-1856) is an enduring one. Premchand in his Hindi short story "Shatranj Ke Khilari" (The Chess Players), which was made into a film of the same name (1976), famously depicts the reluctance of Wajid Ali’s two courtiers to interrupt their chess game, even as the British red coats are dimly seen in the background annexing Oudh for its own good in 1856. Wajid Ali Shah (r. 1846-1856) is memorably portrayed by the East India Company as an effete, obese, self-indulgent ruler—the quintessential Oriental Debauch—with more than three hundred wives and a sex life to match, and is punished for his alleged misrule with permanent exile and the annexation of his coveted Kingdom. I will present a preliminary exploration of the politics of desire inherent in this complex relationship.
Orfall, Blair, University of Oregon

Rescripting A National Hero: Vishwas Patil's Subhas Chandra Bose

Vishwas Patil's 1998 best selling fictional biography, Mahanayak, or The Great Indian Leader, actively seeks to rehabilitate Indian nationalist leader Subhas Chandra Bose's uncomfortable past, which included affiliations with Hitler and Mussolini. Patil's controversial novel is openly sarcastic towards popular leaders of the independence movement, including Gandhi and Nehru, reflecting contemporary middle class sentiment for previously untouchable national heroes. Through close analysis of the novel, its domestic reviews, and interviews with the author, translator and publisher, Mahanayak's success and the author's motivations will be contextualized in relation to the current Hindu nationalist agenda. Originally written in Marathi, Mahanayak has been translated into several Indian languages, all with great success. This essay will examine the rescripting of cultural memory through the popular desire for, and consumption of, a revisionist history of Chandra Bose and his participation in the independence movement.

Parameswaran, Radhika, Indiana University

Local Culture in Global Media: Excavating Colonial and Material

This paper analyzes two cover stories, “Global Culture” and “A World Together,” in the August 1999 Millennium issue of the National Geographic to interrogate the representational politics of the magazine’s narratives on globalization. My textual analysis draws from the insights of semiotic, feminist, and Marxist critiques of media images and consumer culture. It explores the ambivalence that permeates the Geographic’s stories on South Asia, East Asia, and Africa by accounting for multiple media texts and historical contexts that filter the magazine’s imagery.

Drawing from postcolonial theories, the paper argues that the Geographic magazine’s interpretation of global culture is suffused with images of femininity, masculinity, and race that subtly echo the othering modalities of Euro-American colonial discourses. The paper undermines the Geographic’s articulation of global culture as a phenomenon that addresses Asians as only modern consumers of global commodities by questioning the invisibility of colonial history, labor, and global ....

Parnerkar, Ira, University of Chicago

Political Regimes and Economic Growth: A Comparison of the Indian States

This paper exploits variation among the Indian states to explore the important and interesting question of how political regime type is connected to the wide differences in economic growth rates across states in India. The paper is divided into four broad parts. First, states are classified into regime types on the basis of data on political and social dimensions including party fractionalization, political participation and the representation of underprivileged groups (castes) and of women. A noteworthy feature that emerges from the classification is that most states stay in the same regime type during the fifty-year period examined suggesting the existence and persistence of intrinsic differences in democratic functioning between groups of Indian states. In the second part, I establish that state political regime type is associated with economic growth after controlling for other variables associated with growth, and go on to examine the ways in which differences in various aspects ...

Patel, Geeta, Wellesley College

Hindsight: Embodying Finance before and after 1857

Colonial pensions were the financial forms through which claims to intimacy were adjudicated, and consolidated in law. This paper examines political, military and civil pensions given to “faithful” soldiers, mutineers and political pensioners who were both inside and outside the battles of 1857. In the aftermath of 1857, I argue that differentiated notions of self and family, producing genealogies of origin and reproduction, are carefully constructed and carried over from pre-1857 discussions of fraud and pensions. Some of the questions I raise are: How does the embodiment of sexuality transform these concepts of self-hood, and kinship ties? How can renumeration of a (native) body inform us about its failure and its worth?
**Pearson, Anne, McMaster University**

The Mahila Shanti Sena: A New Women’s Development Movement in Bihar

Following amendments to state constitutions requiring the reservation of one third of district council seats for women and the subsequent election of 45,000 women in the state of Bihar, Acharya Ramamurti, leader of the Gandhian organization Shrambharati, organized a training program for rural women, launched in 2002 with the participation of the McMaster University Centre for Peace Studies. Since its launch, over 10,000 women from Bihar, U.P., Gujarat and Assam have received training in leadership skills, conflict resolution, the status and rights of women, and literacy, among other areas. Women themselves have become the trainers and are now advancing the Shanti Sena, helping the women elected to the Panchayats and others find their voice. This paper will describe and analyze this remarkable movement’s origins, development, training methods and future prospects.

**Peterson, Indira, Columbia University**

Theater and the Court in Maratha Tanjavur

The Maratha rulers of Tanjavur (1677 –1855) oversaw a flowering of literature and the arts in South India. Notable were the innovations in the yakshagana, a dramatic form inherited from the Nayaka court. Under Shahji II’s (1684-1711) patronage the yakshagana became a dance-drama that treated mythological and invented themes in several languages (Tamil, Marathi, Telugu, Sanskrit), and was staged at both court and temple. Focusing on the Marathi drama Ganga-Kaveri-samvada nataka (The debate between Ganga and Kaveri), I show that court theater functioned for the newly formed Tanjavur Maratha court as a major instrument for enunciating local identity and as a forum for “staging” the court’s perspectives on social and cultural issues, such as marriage, and the encounter of languages and cultures. Dance-drama showcases the popular and folkloric elements in the ethos of the court, and the samvada (dialogue, debate) is a trope of Maratha public culture.

**Petrie, Ian, Saint Joseph's University**

'Standards of Comfort' and the Comfort of Standards: Cultivating Consumption-as-Development in Late Colonial India

Aspects of the politics of consumption have been amply discussed in the history of modern South Asia, particularly with regard to Gandhian nationalism. To focus our attention solely on khadi, or on the boycotts of the swadeshi movement, however, is to overlook the manner in which a rather longer history of ideas about appropriate and desirable forms of consumption were central to the origins of development thinking in the region. This paper examines definitions of poverty and prosperity from the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, with a particular emphasis on eastern India, contending that assessing and reshaping the lifestyles and consumption patterns of the 'cultivating classes' was often at the forefront of efforts by both the colonial state and diverse Indian actors to assess, hasten, or forestall 'progress' in the countryside. State, philanthropic and social scientific investigations of consumption in the countryside …

**Prasad, Srirupa, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

Timing the Domestic, Timing History: Temporality, Domesticity, and Well-Being in Early Twentieth Century Bengal

This paper, analyzes configurations of Bengali, Hindu, middle class domesticity in late colonial Bengal as it was imagined and conceptualized ‘through’ and ‘in’ a certain understanding of time. In late 19th and early 20th centuries annals of middle class Bengali domesticity, time was not only one of the important organizing strategies of domestic order and disciplining, time became a particular cultural and ideological trope through which the Bengali domestic was imagined and practiced. While time demarcated the rhythm, relationships, things, and identities of the Bengali middle class domestic realm and therefore subsequently bounding it in a certain sense of order, time also became constitutive of this domesticity in a crucial way by providing a particular cultural-moral language and meaning/s in and through which this domesticity came into being.
Pritchett, Fran, Columbia University

"Natural Prose": Muhammad Husain Azad and the Ancestry of Urdu

Muhammad Husain Azad (1830-1910), in his famous canon-shaping literary history "Aab-e Hayaat" (1880), sought to create a new ancestry for Urdu. Urdu was, according to him, descended from Braj Bhasha-- but not the Braj Bhasha everybody knew, a literary dialect full of religious poetry. Rather, Urdu was the daughter of a special, purified "Bhasha" that was so hostile to literary artifice that it actually rejected metaphor entirely. Since there were no examples of such a purified "natural prose" language available, Azad had to write his own. This paper will consider how he did this, and analyze the nature of the language that resulted, and discuss the rhetorical and political implications of his claims for it.

Punathambekar, Aswin, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship

This paper brings together ethnographic detail and a thematic reading of Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham to examine the mediation of consensus regarding Indianness. K3G's emotional resonance with viewers in the diaspora is attributable in part to a departure that its narrative marks from Bollywood's earlier efforts to recognize and represent expatriate Indians. In positioning and drawing the diaspora into the fold of a Great Indian family, K3G articulates everyday struggles over being Indian in the U.S. to a larger project of cultural citizenship that has emerged in relation to India's tentative entry into a transnational economy, and the centrality of the NRI figure to India's navigation of this space. This paper posits that this process of mediation follows a transitive logic involving K3G's representational strategies, first generation Indian immigrants' emotional investment in the idea of India, and the Indian nation-state's attempts to forge symbolic and material ties with the expatriate community.

Puri, Jyoti, Simmons College

Between Home and Nation: South Asian Narratives on Hometown

The paper explores the meaning and significance of hometown as a site of affiliation as a means to counteract the hegemony of nations. Nations and nationalisms face a contemporary challenge due to internal fragmentations and global flows. At the same time, cultural nationalism fueled by politically conservative groups that emphasize the nation as home and as the primary site of affiliation, receive due criticism. Critical scholars have underscored the exclusionary and violent potential of these nationalisms, and the limits and fault-lines of nations as a modern form of community. What have not been addressed as well by critics are alternatives to hegemonic discourses in which belonging is articulated through nationalism and nation. In this presentation, I will highlight the concept of hometown as a primary site of affiliation that helps disrupt the predominance of these discourses. By exploring South Asian narratives on the meaning, role, and importance of …

Pusuluri, Sumitra, University of New Orleans

The Invigorating and the Intrusive: the Effect of Tourism on Historic Districts; Comparative case studies of Vieux Carre of New Orleans LA, USA and The Charminar, of Hyderabad AP, India.

Historic districts are no longer the problem spots in the modern cities all over the world. They are now seen as solid solutions to fluid problems of resolving conflicting demands on space. The New Urbanism in United States derives its inspiration from the historic districts to create sustainable communities and neighborhoods. In India, historic districts are seen an economic resource to be exploited, using the device of tourism. Tourism is a global industry and the largest industry of the world. It has both beneficial and detrimental effect on the historic districts. This paper aims to show the effects it has on two historic districts, Vieux Carre in New Orleans and the Charminar in Hyderabad. Each is distinct in its geographical and cultural locations but the unifying element is the impact of tourism on them.
Rademacher, Anne, Yale University

Restoration and Revival: Remembering the Bagmati Civilization

The urban reaches of the Bagmati River in Nepal are widely characterized as severely degraded. State and international development agents have allied to create a restoration agenda that is actively contested by several groups, including those who charge that official river management plans are insensitive to, and abusive of, the river’s cultural significance. This paper explores the local circulation of the concept of a “Bagmati Civilization:” a particular configuration of history, cultural identity, and ecology espoused by prominent river activists in Kathmandu. I explore how this approach to framing ecological restoration promoted specific linkages between cultural heritage protection and urban river ecology. Through a discussion of the Bagmati Civilization, the paper explores a particular characterization of the proper past, present, and future relationship between the state and the urban riverscape, and how that characterization was deployed to promote specific ecological, cultural, and political ends.

Rai, Amit, Florida State University

Becoming Globalized and Untimely Sexualities in Hindi Cinema

This paper articulates a double movement of becoming. Deleuze suggests that "becoming isn't part of history; history amounts only [to] the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to 'become,' that is, to create something new. This is precisely what Nietzsche calls the Untimely." What are those Untimely sexualities being created today through the multiple movements that constitute popular Hindi cinema? The argument of this paper is that Hindi cinema is helping to reconfigure the conception and practice of "sex" through a regime of subjection specific to India's experience of economic and cultural globalization. Focusing on one aspect of this experience, the emergence of the Non-Resident Indian (NRI), this paper tracks the shadow of the sexual other that haunts the NRI in contemporary Hindi cinema. Irreducible to representation, the sexual shades of the NRI proliferate in a set ...

Raj, Selva, J., Albion College

Swadhina: Promoting and Sustaining Women’s Freedom in Rural India

Of the numerous women’s organizations in Calcutta, Swadhina, (literally ‘freedom’), stands apart by virtue of its ideological orientation and targeted audience. Though headquartered in the city of Calcutta, its programs and initiatives are aimed at rural and tribal women in the Indian states of Bihar, Orissa, and West Bengal. A salient feature of this organization is its intentional focus on improving the social status and economic power of these women through a wide array of grassroots programs and initiatives that include, among others, health care, literacy, agro-economic development, and sustainable living. Its operational strategy is to form local village-level women’s committees and entrust their leadership to local women leaders. Based on recent field-research, this paper will investigate the organization’s history, structure, ideological orientation, and specific village-and-eco-friendly initiatives.

Ramachandran, Tanisha, Concordia University

New and Improved! The Appropriation of the Hindu Goddess by Western Feminism

Hinduism is the only major world religion with a historical and living Goddess tradition. Hindu goddesses are actively worshipped and regarded as the supreme cosmic power, Shakti from which all is created, maintained and destroyed. This conception of the divine as female has proven to be an important resource for both secular and spiritual feminists from the West. However, while appropriation of the Hindu Goddess has provided western women with a model of empowerment it has in some cases come at a cost to the culture it has “borrowed” its images from. The representations of the Goddesses in the Western context often fail to take into account the cultural location of these goddesses. In other words, they are simply placed within the Western framework, with disregard to their Indian origins and are often misinterpreted. While this situation may be empowering for the Western woman, it often creates a climate of …
**Rana, Junaid, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign**

The Making of Class: Transnational Workers and the Pakistani State

Since the 1970s transnational workers from Pakistan have contributed to a significant shift in the social and cultural terrain of Pakistan. Increasingly, such migrations are far more complex and involve multiple sites and regions that are formative of a Pakistani labor diaspora. In the absence of opportunities on the domestic front, workers seek employment abroad thus entering the informal system of transnational labor migration. State sanctioned control of this transnational migration from Pakistan is a fairly recent phenomenon. The intervention of the state overlaps with the huge boom period of migrant labor going to the Gulf region in the 1980s. In this paper I explore the role of the state in the production of transnational labor migrants. As an ethnography of the state, I argue that labor migrants are part of the social and cultural production of a particular class formation that has been mediated by the Pakistani state.

**Rao, Ajay K, University of Chicago**

From Manipravala to Sanskrit: The Theologization of Vibhisana’s Surrender

From 1250 to 1600 Srivaisnava intellectuals produced a number of adaptations and commentaries on the Ramayana which rendered the paradigmatic work of Sanskrit literary culture, the adi-kavya, into a soteriological treatise. This complex hermeneutic project mirrored the initiation of Rama worship from the tenth century in the Tamil region and the mid-twelfth century elsewhere. In this paper I examine how in the context of Vibhisana’s surrender to Rama, Govindaraja’s Sanskrit commentary paraphrases the Manipravala (mixed Sanskrit and Tamil) works of Periyavaccan Pillai and Vedanta Desika. While my discussion will focus on the transformation of Tamil anecdotes and maxims into the idiom of Sanskrit scholastics, I will also explore questions of respective institutional location and audience. What does the theologization of the Ramayana and subsequent diffusion into the world of kavya and popular culture tell us about the interplay between local and translocal realms of discourse in the late-medieval Srivaisnava community?

**Rao, Vaman, Western Illinois University**

Hindutva: Expression of a Nationalist Approach to India's Future

For the past decade or so, the term Hindutva has been used more and more to express the nationalist approach to India's modernization that says a prosperous life in the 21st century does not require the sacrifice of core values from India's past traditions. It is said, in fact, that these traditions may help find solutions to several of today's problems. Still, because the term is mired in political wrangling, it is as vehemently ridiculed in some quarters as it is advocated in others, and several objections to its use are raised. There may or may not be substance to these objections, yet Hindutva has been successful in attracting not only common citizens (voters), but also a larger and larger number of intellectuals and professionals. Is it the bankruptcy of intellectual circles and the opportunism of the professional classes that has made the term more and more acceptable, or is ...

**Riaz, Ali, Illinois State University**

Micro-Finance, Empowerment and Social Capital: Experience from Bangladesh

There are growing empirical evidences and wide agreement among scholars that micro-finance, especially group-based lending programs, improves the welfare of the poor. Although the social dimension of micro-finance has received the attention of researchers, the relationship between the performance of micro-finance and the role of social capital has remained unexplored. This paper addresses the issue. The central question the paper addresses is whether micro-finance cultivates and therefore contributes to the augmentation of social capital or it relies solely on the existing social capital, i.e., horizontal and vertical relationships among the borrowers. The paper, exploring the experiences of Grameen Bank and BRAC, argues that the both structural social capital (i.e., established social roles, social networks, and other social structures supplemented by rules, procedures and precedents) and cognitive social capital (i.e., shared norms, values, trust, attitudes and beliefs) are crucial in economic success of group-based lending, and subsequently the empowerment of …
Richman, Paula

Shifting Terrain: Rama and Odysseus Meet on the London Stage

In 2001, the Tara Arts drama troupe presented a play that rethought the nature of epic narratives. In part one, the Odyssey was acted out while Rama watched and periodically made comments. In part two, the Ramayana was performed while Odysseus watched and periodically made comments. My paper will analyze the ways in which the performance was staged and how the themes of home and journey were explored. My analysis ends with some reflections on the features of the performance that explored the notion of the Asian diaspora in Britain.

Rook-Koepsel, Emily, University of Minnesota

The Place of Minorities in the Jinnah-Bose Correspondence of 1938

In 1938, a correspondence was exchanged between the Muslim League and the Congress Party, under their respective presidents Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Subhas Chandra Bose, attempting to negotiate a meeting between the two parties to reach a settlement on the Hindu-Muslim ‘problem’. Because of demands on both sides, the meeting never happened. I consider the articulation of both sides’ position on the status of minorities through a close reading of the letters. Each side of the correspondence makes overt statements about their own desire and ability to protect minority rights. Less overtly, each side casts doubts over the other’s desire and ability to protect minorities. Additionally, both make subtle arguments that signal their dedication to majority rule. Here, I consider the importance of the place and power of minorities in the politics of two of the major players in the campaign for independence on the subcontinent.

Rotman, Andy, Smith College

Baba's Got a Brand New Bag: The Visual Economy of Indian Jute Bags

Jute bags with images and text silk-screened upon them are sold in abundance in marketplaces throughout India. Like jute bags bearing advertisements that are given away for commercial promotions, these bags are commodities that traverse commercial networks. Yet the images that they bear are not easily decipherable commodity images. Many of these visual forms might be read as kitsch, for there is a predominance of sentimental figures accompanied by text in English, but bag vendors and their customers whom I interviewed in Banaras and Pune routinely resisted such a reading. In fact, they resisted any reading. It became clear to me that to read the bags in the conventional sense of the term was to misread them as well as to misunderstand the visual economy in which these bags operated. In my paper, I explore this visual economy, its underlying practices of image consumption, and the role of sentimentality and...

Roy, Haimanti, University of Cincinnati

Examining Violence in the Partition of Bengal 1947-1950

Scholars of Partition have examined violence as an analytical category which differentiates between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and exposes inter community rifts. Focusing mainly on Punjab, the historiography has developed a paradigm of partition violence which I argue, privileges the physical and relegates the threat of violence to the psychological and hence of secondary importance. The apparently less violent division of Bengal fits awkwardly in this model. My paper examines the different nature of violence in Bengal between 1947 and 1950 as expressed in contemporary letters, official reports, newspapers and literature. In the post partition years, intimidation, and threats of violence became routine and normalized in minority grievances and decisions to migrate between West Bengal and East Pakistan. Not only did this influence inter dominion relations, but was also instrumental in state representations of Bengali refugees as ineffectual migrants.

Rudrappa, Sharmila, University of Texas at Austin

Labor in the World and Labor at Home: Techno-Braceros and Their Transnational Families

This paper develops out of a larger project where I examine the globalization of the information technology (IT) and its implications for 21st century American citizenship. In the United States, by the mid-1990severy year over 40% of the H1-B
visas— temporary work permits— were issued to Indian computer programmers and engineers, persons I call techno-braceros. Our techno-braceros are turning up in Bangalore by the droves after their wild western adventures in the dot.com world. They have either lost their American dream jobs or are being relocated to Bangalore to work for their American employer’s subsidiaries. A common perception is that our techno-braceros having greater flexibility are returning to their “home” country, India. However, interviews conducted with transnational migrant families in Bangalore show that these migrations are not as painless as they might seem; the wives do a bulk of the physical and emotional work entailed in moving. I this paper I explain how the labor the wives of these techno-braceros in the private sphere absorbs the transactional costs of transnational migration, thus facilitating global capital accumulation.

Sarin, Ankur, University of Chicago

The Positive Effect of Quotas on Educational Attainment in India

The efficacy of affirmative action programs in reducing socio-economic disparities in India has been a topic of much discussion but little empirical examination. In this paper, I examine the effects of a program to reserve 27 percent of all jobs in the Central Government on the educational attainment of children from the ‘Other Backward Classes (OBCs)’. Using data from two rounds of the National Family Health Survey and using 3 dimensions of comparison over time, between OBCs and other groups and between states -- I find that the change over time in the gap in educational attainment between OBCs and other socio-economic groups was larger in states that did not have a substantial affirmative action program for OBCs prior to the one introduced by the central government. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief the results suggest that the benefits are not limited to the most advantageous amongst the OBCs.

Sarkar, Bhaskar, University of California, Santa Barbara

Outward Bound:The “Adhunika” (Modern Woman) in Mahanagar (1963)

While in his nabina portraits Ray mourns the loss of self in the female encounter with colonial modernity, on several other occasions Ray plots the agony of the postcolonial middle class female subject’s emergence into an urban public sphere. Interpellated as a worldly, independent, working woman with strong domestic obligations, the adhunika or the modern woman becomes continuing project in Mahanagar (1963), Aranyer Din Ratri (1969), Seemabaddha (1971), and Jana Aranya (1975); since it is the central problematic in Mahanagar, I will focus on this film. The workplace, in context of an urban modernity, is the public sphere which both the male and female subjects must learn to negotiate. Made a year before Charulata, Mahanagar criticizes the call to become adhunik or modern, a demand that almost destroys, rather than “liberates,” female subjects who remain within prachin or traditional heteropatriarchies. Unlike his exploration of female interiority in the nabina films, …

Sarrazin, Natalie, University of Virginia

Dil Se: On Musical Coding, Sentiment and Heart in Indian Popular Film Song Narrative

One of the primary markers of Indian identity is the distinction from other cultures through use of expression and emotional connectivity – sentiments particularly suited to the musical display on the screen. In this paper, I identify the specific musical codes and popular cinema’s use of these codes to establish and legitimize the representation of expression that continues to dominate the discourse regarding the populace’s self-understanding as “Indian” – a meaning that is derivative of both Hindu and Muslim musical and poetic styles.

Through musical analysis of film songs and texts, I identify relevant musical aesthetics from various genres and styles that support and indeed encourage the consumption of the sentiment and emotion, the formation of these as musical codes and tropes that successfully represent the sentimental sonic-image in Hindi popular film. I will demonstrate how these sonic conventions legitimize a pan-Indic identity image while simultaneously remaining open to multiple interpretations capable …

Sasikumar, Karthika, Cornell University

The political economy of challenge: India and the nonproliferation regime in the time of globalization
India, which tested nuclear weapons and declared itself a Nuclear Weapon State at the peak of its globalizing economic reforms, challenges Liberal approaches which link greater international economic integration and acceptance of the nonproliferation regime. At the same time, the Indian policy is not explained by the Realist model where security concerns are paramount; the global economy did play a significant role in decision-makers’ calculations.

What is the mechanism that links economic globalization and adherence to the nuclear nonproliferation regime? What are the conditions that influence its operation? This case study of Indian nuclear policy in the 1990s identifies the ways in which globalization strengthened pro-nuclear elites—for instance, by ensuring that sanctioning countries would bear some costs, by reinforcing the traditional associations between economic development and nuclear prowess, and by weakening notions of Indian exceptionalism and pacifism.

Sathaye, Adheesh, University of California-Berkeley

Mixing in Stores: The Subnarratives of Visvamitra as Textual Performances in the Sanskrit Epics

Despite the publication of critical editions, text production continues to be the central conundrum of epic studies. How exactly were these massive tomes composed, distributed and legitimated, and, most importantly, why? Despite lip service to orality, the overwhelming scholarly tendency has been to see epic-building as a literary mechanics of scribes writing and copying manuscripts. At the same time, even the staunchest of textualists must admit that the embedding of tales, myths, and legends within these texts constituted a critical engagement with folklore. This paper examines the legends of the sage Visvamitra as ‘textual performance’ as the construction of counter-normative spaces within the epics in which varna boundaries were negotiated. Comparing epic performances with Visvamitra in contemporary Marathi kirtan, I will not only bring folkloristic theories of performance to bear on Sanskrit epic production, but investigate the reception of Sanskrit texts in the contemporary construction of socio-religious history.

Saxena, Neela B., Nassau Community College

Claiming the Tantric Tradition for Women

This presentation will discuss an aspect of my newly published book titled In the Beginning IS Desire: Tracing Kali’s Footprints in Indian Literature (Indialog, 2004) to show, what I call, the Samkhya, Yoga, Tantra continuum within the Indic philosophical tradition. I propose to claim the Tantric tradition, which is the most misunderstood thought strain coming out of South Asia, for women. When it comes to women’s place within that world view, it has been even more problematic as mostly androcentric misreadings portray women as sexual vessels of a primarily male preoccupation with transcendence that belies the tradition’s radically immanent core. This paper will show the tradition’s challenge to hierarchical thinking that puts the female principle at the center of its understanding of the world that is philosophically satisfying to women’s sense of self in relation to the world at large.

Schultz, Anna, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

How Did Povada Get into Kirtan?: Colliding Genres and Nationalized Pasts in Marathi Rashriya Kirtan

This question, “how did povada get into kirtan?” was playfully asked by the narrator of a Marathi kirtan CD. Povada is a sung epic storytelling genre, and rashtriya kirtan is a performance medium that combines nationalist storytelling, religious didactics, and song. As the narrator’s question suggests, povada maintains its extra-kirtan connotations, specifically history and nationalism, when recontextualized within the devotional frame of kirtan. I am interested in why—musically and textually—povada is considered nationalist and how it transforms kirtan narratives, narrators, and audiences.

I term the complex interplay of sung and spoken genres in rashtriya kirtan “collision of genres,” a metaphor that expands on the Bakhtinian notion of generic dialogue. When genres collide, they rupture and are reformed—music becomes disassociated from its text and recombined with speech. This process is more characteristic of nationalist than of “apolitical” kirtan, and I explore the possibility that collision promotes politicized performances.
Using Capitalism to Build Primitive Communism

Tribal activism in India today demands innovative solutions to longstanding problems. The activities of the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre in Baroda, working amidst a population of Bhil, Bhilala and Rathwa people in Eastern Gujarat, show one possible way in which an NGO, dependent on private financing and self-generated revenue schemes, can use contemporary, globalized capitalism to defend and promote the communitarian values of tribal society. The Bhasha Centre does not advocate capitalist exchange, but rather recognizes it as an essential reality in the present which must be confronted and engaged before any possible transformation is possible.

The Bhasha Centre conducts the following activities for tribal social welfare in three main categories. The Adivasi Academy is established to create a unique educational environment for the study of tribal civilisation. Therefore, research and training programmes designed at the Academy combine academic study with social intervention. Students undertake community development work for …

None of Her Lord’s Blessings Would She Deny: Towards a Feminist Consciousness in Monica Ali’s Brick Lane

This paper examines Monica Ali’s representation of Bangladeshi immigrant life in her novel Brick Lane (2003). Brick Lane was very well received in Britain; in fact, its proofs so impressed Ian Jack and his editorial team that a chapter from the book entitled “Dinner with Dr. Azad” was included in Granta’s “Best of Young British Novelists” (Spring 2003) even before the manuscript was published as a novel. Written several years after The Satanic Verses (1988) controversy, which alienated British Muslims from other immigrant groups, Brick Lane is one of the first pieces of fiction to explore the effects of 9/11 on the British Muslim community. It is also the first novel to describe the lives of Bangladeshi women in London. It is therefore unfortunate that it does not entirely live up to its promise by failing to systematically critique the racist policies

Restricting Religion: The Indian Supreme Court and the Regulation of Religious Practices

This paper examines how the Indian Supreme Court, while interpreting the freedom of religion clauses in the Constitution, has defined what qualifies as a valid religious practice. Unlike the United States, the Indian Supreme Court has devised the “essential practices” test to decide what religious practices and doctrine are fundamental to any religion. In the Shirur Mutt (1954) case, where the essential practices doctrine was first spelled out, the Court asked: “[W]here is the line to be drawn between what are matters of religion and what are not?” Since then it has become standard practice for the Court to decide “often by elaborate exegesis of the scriptures” what practices are “essential” to any religion, especially Hinduism. I argue that in so doing the Court has played a crucial role in the extensive reform and reformulation of religious practices, the rationalization of religious discourse and the construction of a monolithic Hinduism.

Experimental childhoods: expertise, nature and the colonizing of the native child

Beginning in the 1860s, the child and childhood emerged as new fields of expertise and experimentation in colonial India. In these fields, administrators and educators speculated intensively about the nature of the native child: its universality, its responses to colonial strategies of intervention, and the extent to which it intersected with the nature of the native. These experiments with punishment, education and parenting were intended not only to produce particular types of colonial subjects, but also to establish a productive relationship between metropolitan theories and colonial experience. This paper considers two sites for the examination of the native child: the juvenile reformatory and the elite boarding school. It argues that in these settings, childhood was redefined as a set of moral meanings and normative (and abnormal) behaviors that might be mapped on to the colonizer and the colonized, the dominant and the upstart, the ‘modern’ and the ‘traditional,’ and so on.
Sengupta, Parna, Carleton College

Pedagogic Fathers and Paternal Teachers: Masculinity in colonial Bengal

Shaping native masculine subjectivity through schooling was a central aspect of both governmental and missionary educational projects in colonial Bengal. Teacher training schools (formally established in the 1850s and 1860s) became ideal institutions to theorize and propagate a form of manliness that was based on the care and education of dependents, whether students or children. The engaged, sympathetic male pedagogue who listened, played with and most importantly guided his students offered an obvious counterpoint to both “traditional” fathers (coercive, diffident and distant) and by extension “traditional” society. Late nineteenth century theories of teacher training held that neither pedagogic nor paternal authority was “natural.” Both teachers and fathers had to learn to develop relationships with their students and children that would engender respect and obedience. Bengali teacher training manuals and institutions constructed a paradigm of native masculine authority in which good teaching came to define and be defined by the qualities and behavior of good fathering.

Sharafi, Mitra, Princeton University

Suing the State, Suing Each Other: Parsis in the Law Courts of Bombay, 1900-30

The Parsis had a special relationship with colonial law. Most Indian litigants used the colonial courts cynically--to harass, mock and impoverish their opponents. But a body of reported and unreported case law suggests that the Parsis genuinely believed in the system. Between 1900 and 1930 there are numerous examples of Parsis suing the colonial state. The Parsi “eminent domain” case law is a catalogue of dissatisfaction with particular acts of the state. But its simple existence attests to the exact opposite: an underlying faith in the colonial legal system. I will consider explanations for this phenomenon, among them the remarkable Parsi presence in the legal profession at the time, as well as the Zoroastrian doctrine of Asha, which made it the duty of every Parsi to fight for truth in an active and even confrontational way.

Sharma, Jayeeta, Carnegie Mellon University

Reading Lachit, Reading Assam: The Heroic ‘History’ of an Indic Periphery

This paper considers the complex ways in which ‘history’, ‘memory’ and ‘public culture’ coalesce around ‘modern’ representations of a late-medieval military hero, Lachit Barphukan. It examines how the new Assamese intelligentsia of the early-twentieth-century was able to appropriate the Lachit motif from ‘buranjis’ - the Ahom dynasty chronicles, and local folklore, and integrate it into their ‘historical’ contributions to Assam’s print-literature. The paper then offers a brief overview of latter-day Lachit imagery, with examples drawn from children’s literature, public architecture and the contemporary theater. In this manner, the shifting post-colonial fortunes of this quintessential ‘Assomiya patriot’ emerge as a significant location to study popular renderings of region, nation and the past. Understanding these local identities and gendered political discourses also becomes an important step towards exploring Northeast India’s connections with other regional and pan-Indian narratives and collectivities.

This panel examines the emergence of historiographic narratives in nineteenth century India, from …

Silva, Kapila, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Impact of Ineffective Development Control and Promotional Mechanisms on Heritage Preservation: A Case of Kandy, Sri Lanka

In preserving cultural heritage, both national and local governments formulate various development control mechanisms to curb unnecessary damage to the cultural heritage, while introduce promotional mechanisms to facilitate the development and the growth within preserved areas. However, these control and promotional mechanisms could at times generate unexpected undesirable results that would harm the very heritage that these mechanisms attempt to maintain. This paper, based on the conservationdevelopment activities in the World Heritage City of Kandy in Sri Lanka, will demonstrate how development policies could become ineffective and identify some principles that would help minimizing such policy failures.
**Simpson, Edward**, London School of Economics and Political Science

Colonial maps and dissenting hands: British legislation and the regulation of Gujaratis in the western Indian Ocean during the nineteenth century

This paper is a reconstruction of the confluence of worldviews and practices inscribed on a British survey map of the 1830s. An integral part of colonial expansion and methods of governance, the map was part of a much larger project to survey and control the territories on either side of the Ocean. Sometime after publication, the map was rewritten by a dissenting hand in Gujarati script, place names were altered and the relative significance of various locations was transformed. It is suggested that the map represents competing visions of territory and relatedness as well as mapping conflicts over emerging statutes concerned with nationality, citizenship, naturalization and jurisdiction.

**Singh, Sanskriti Rawat**, Parks Canada Agency

Value-based Management of Cultural Resources in the Context of India

This paper explores the concept of value-based conservation and its relevance within the Indian context. Conservation in India has unique challenges arising out of the inadequate statutory framework, the complexity of heritage resources and limited funding. The evolving concept of value based conservation may offer mechanisms for addressing numerous issues; however a framework for value-based management will have to be put together and tools developed for effective implementation. The challenge of identifying heritage value and articulating the significance of historic places will remain. The paper will also look at the existing framework and identify possible mechanisms using the core principles of this new concept of value-based management of historic places.

**Sinha, Amita**, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

The Sacred Landscape of Pavagadh Hill: Narratives and Representations

Pavagadh hill is the abode of the Great Goddess, worshipped as Kalika, Bhadrakali, and a number of local goddesses. Originally a tribal deity, she was incorporated in the folds of mainstream worship of the Devi in the last millennium. How the natural landscape of hill evolved into the regional pilgrim center of a Shakti pitha is a typical example of many such transformations that have resulted in the polycentric sacred landscape of Hinduism. The divinity of the goddess is manifested in and through the landscape, in the multiple ways she is visualized and represented in iconic and aniconic forms. Mythic legends underlie her symbolic association with water and vegetation on the hill. Historical accounts of the Rajputs describe her as a moral anchor that sustained the medieval kingdom and ensured its prosperity and longevity. The paper focuses on visual representations and cultural narratives that have together shaped the present day cultural landscape of Pavagadh hill.

**Sloan, Anna**, Smith College

Venues and Values: Framing "Inheritance" in Contemporary Miniature Painting

The traditions of miniature painting that emerged in Mughal and Rajput courts between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries provide visual and conceptual inspiration for hundreds of artists working in Pakistan and India today. Many of these artists articulate relationships to premodern painting, both verbally and in practice through conscious acts of replication in the areas of style, subject matter, and technique. Yet artists' claims to a South Asian artistic heritage are far from coherent. Notions of continuity are invoked variously to articulate nationalist identities, to support acts of historical revision, to assert authenticity, and to claim "true proprietorship" of the past. This paper explores divergent genres of contemporary miniature painting and their markets to examine the role of the past in the development of contemporary aesthetic criteria. In particular, it will examine the construction of "inheritance" in a series of contexts: artist's workshops, the National College of Arts in …

**Soneji, Davesh**, McGill University

Dancing Disjunctures: Performances of Memory Among the Kalavantulu of Coastal Andhra Pradesh
In 1948, five women—Manikyam, Anusuya, Varahalu, Seshachalam, and Maithili—were expelled from the temple of Krishna in the village of Ballipadu in Andhra Pradesh. Today, they live in the town of Duvva, adhering to their traditional patterns of kinship as kalavantulu or devadasi women. Whereas in public culture, devadasis oscillate in and out of sets of historical and moral discourses in which they occupy a highly contested position, in their homes, contemporary devadasis embrace fragments of the past by remembering (and in some cases re-enacting) precisely those aspects of their identity which they can no longer express or display in public. Citing the example of a nineteenth-century javali (Telugu poem) that discusses menstruation, I show that these journeys of memory highlight the disjunctures between past and present, and are the primary modalities through which devadasis are able to re-constitute and represent their identities in contemporary South India.

Sreenivasan, Ramya, Kenyon College

Forgetting and remembering: Region and nation in colonial Bengali historiography

Middle-class (/bhadralok/) writers in colonial Bengal appropriated Rajput heroic traditions from western India to forge the boundaries of a new ‘nation’ in the late nineteenth century. The /bhadralok/’s social boundaries shaped the limits of this new nationalist historiography, as emerging norms of citizenship subtly marginalized the Muslim ‘alien’ historically and politically. At the same time, the transformation of Bengali into a modern literary language was accompanied by a rejection of the narrative traditions associated with Muslim patronage and audiences—whether courtly romances or their popular and folk transmutations. This paper focuses on one such seventeenth-century romance, the Sufi Saiyid Alaol’s /Padmabati/, that retold Alauddin Khalji’s conquest of Chitor and his ultimate ‘defeat’ at the hands of the Rajputs. Alaol’s instance demonstrates how the new nationalist ‘history’ in Bengal emerged through the erasure of pre-colonial regional narratives that offered contrary interpretations of medieval history.

Srinivas, Mytheli, University of Connecticut

‘The Pleasures of this Life’: Caste, Conjugalilty, and the Tamil Politics of Child Marriage

In 1890-1891, debates about child marriage and the ‘age of consent’ emerged as critical points through which nationalists laid claim to political and cultural power vis-à-vis the colonial state. However in 1929, when marriage and sexual relations again became subject to legislation, the ‘consent’ of girls was no longer a productive terrain for articulations of nationalism. Rather, nationalist modernity staked its claims to authorize marriage in starkly different terms. Revisiting the rich feminist historiography on child marriage (much of which has centered on Bengal and Maharashtra in the 1890s), this paper examines the changing intersections of marriage with nation-building in the context of Tamil politics. Relatively quiet in the 1890s debate, the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency emerged as the center of opposition to raising the marriage age in 1929. Linking the strength of this opposition to confrontations between caste, communitarian and nationalist identities, this paper directs attention to important …

Srinivasan, Perundevi, The George Washington University

Pen Vesham: Performing Body in Tamil Context

This paper uses my field research with actors playing female roles (pen vesham) in theater forms such as kuttu, novels, icai natakam and bhagavata mela in Tamil Nadu, India. In analyzing the criteria for “authentic” representation of the “feminine” on stage, I investigate the production of gendered subjectivities through theater. I argue that the pen vesham is “performative” and not merely performance. While “performance,” in its deployment of signs, replays the meanings that are pre-given, in “performativity,” there is a certain “subject-effect” produced by the “reiterative power of discourse of norms” (Judith Butler). I observe that these norms have concrete operative existence in the audiences witnessing the performance. My analysis traces the coming into existence of these norms in the “materialization” of the feminine sex in the Tamil ethos. I focus especially on the concept of meyppadu (bodily emotions) in Tolkappiyam, a Tamil text that deals with language and poetics.
Steindorf, Sally, Syracuse University

Television Tales of Immoral Transnationals and Rural Rajasthani Impressions of ‘Foreign’

For an increasing number of privileged Indians, globalization has meant more frequent travel between India and United States and Europe, along with extended stays abroad for studies and employment. In recent years, India’s government-subsidized national television channel Doordarshan has taken up this theme in its family-based soap operas, with characters who have returned to India from abroad. On Doordarshan, such characters are often represented as morally suspect, and sometimes as truly valueless individuals. For rural Rajasthani women who rarely have the means or ability to travel within India, let alone abroad, television serials along with news broadcasts become one of their primary windows on the world. This paper explores first the ethics of three foreign-returned characters in Doordarshan serials, and second, how these serials overlap with rural Rajasthani impressions of ‘foreign.’

Sturman, Rachelm, University of Michigan

Property and the Formation of Secular Hindu Legal Subjects: Western India in the early-20th century

Starting in the first decade of the twentieth century, when adoption was defined by the Bombay High Court as a secular Hindu act, legislation and judicial adjudication of property during the era of ‘high nationalism’ worked to delineate a secular, autonomous Hindu legal subject. Drawing on a foundation of legislation from the middle of the nineteenth century, this era of legislation and adjudication aimed to limit the legal operation of embodied forms of stigma, such as Untouchability, blindness, and leprosy, as well as the broad claims of family and inheritance. This paper examines this process, the vision of secular Hindu legal subjecthood articulated through these innovations, as well as its uses and limitations. In addition, it considers the centrality of property to defining the rights and qualities of legal subjects, and it highlights the intimate and uneasy relationship between ideas about property and ideas about personhood within colonial law.

Swank, Heidi (Frank), Northwestern University

The Miss Tibet Pageant: Contesting Feminine Identity in the Tibetan Diaspora

Beauty pageants are spaces in which local and global often intersect. Contestants are expected to represent their own culture while simultaneously embodying those qualities appealing to a global audience. Since 1994, beauty pageants have become big business in India. In the Tibetan Diaspora in India, though, this intertwining of local and global is viewed by some as a threat to their ethnic survival. In October 2002, the first Miss Tibet Pageant was held in Dharamsala, India. However, due in part to a statement by the Tibetan Diaspora’s Prime Minister, it had only four contestants and was the subject of much debate. The Miss Tibet Pageant in 2003 had only one contestant, who was then crowned. This paper is based on fieldwork conducted during the 2002 and 2003 pageants. It examines (1) how the reproduction of Tibetan diasporic identity is tied to notions of feminine identity that conservative forces within the …

Taber, Patricia, University of California, Santa Barbara

Pushing the Apple Cart Without Upsetting It: Enterprising Women and Neo-liberal Ambivalence in a South Indian Moral Economy

Among the host of social and economic changes ushered in with India’s opening to global forces in the 1980s has been the increased movement of middle-class women into employment. Previously viewed with suspicion and pity, today there is greater acceptance of women’s pursuit of careers. Still, many families retain a conception of middle-class respectability defined in part by a strict division of labor and space that hinders or precludes even highly-educated women’s participation in “outside” employment. Spurred by economic circumstances and personal aspirations, some women have negotiated this dilemma by starting small home-based enterprises. Life-story narratives of women in the city of Mysore elucidate some of the social and psychological ramifications of this entrepreneurial move which maintains certain aspects of “traditional” gender ethos while quietly challenging others.
Talwalker, Clare, University of Dayton

Colonial Textbooks in the Mythology of ‘Primitive Accumulation

In this paper, I focus on the first series of primary textbooks written in Marathi between 1857-1861 by British officials collaborating with English-educated Marathi Brahmins. While these state-produced Marathi textbooks were used in a small number of schools established by the colonial state, they later became the template for successive private textbook writing ventures by prominent Marathi-speaking figures in the late 19th and early 20th century. I argue that the form and content of this first series can be usefully interpreted to show how they reflect the emergence of capitalism (and, specifically, the money form) in colonial India. Drawing on cultural critic Fredric Jameson’s reading of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (who views myth as symbolic resolution of social contradiction), I read the form and content of these textbooks as symbolically resolving the contradictions imminent in the transition from a precapitalist social formation to a peripheral capitalist formation.

Tambe, Ashwini, Georgetown University

Gandhi's Fallen Sisters: Moral Hygiene in Public Participation

The public participation of women in nationalist campaigning was predicated on their adherence to strict standards of sexual purity. In this paper, I examine the responses by M.K. Gandhi to Congress campaigners who were engaged in professional dancing, singing, and/or commercial sex. Through an analysis of a variety of his published writings and correspondence on what he termed "fallen sisters," I illustrate his prescriptive norms for women's public participation in nationalist activities. I focus on his responses to women in "immodest" professions who sought to join the Congress, as well as his support for middle class women's campaigns for "moral hygiene." Building on recent analyses of ascetic masculinity, I explore Gandhi's well-known struggle with issues of sexuality as well as the limits of his vision of social inclusiveness.

Teitelbaum, Emmanuel, Cornell University

Freedom to Grow? Unions, Political Parties and the Institutionalization of Industrial Conflict in South Asia

To what extent freedom for labor unions is consistent with rapid economic growth is an important question for developing countries. One potential contribution of unions is to social and economic stability. By institutionalizing conflict, unions can stem extreme and violent protest that could choke off production and investment. But not all unions make this contribution. This paper argues that because large political parties have a stake in stability and growth, unions affiliated to large parties are more likely to restrict their tactics to nonviolent, legal forms of grievance resolution. I compare four regions in South Asia and show that industrial relations are more stable and institutionalized in West Bengal and Kerala, where unions are affiliated to large political parties, and more chaotic and violent in Maharashtra and Sri Lanka, where a number of minor parties and politically independent labor union entrepreneurs compete for union members.

Toor, Saadia, Cornell University

Communists, Hindus, Bengalis and Others: State formation and the 'problem' of East Pakistan 1947 - 1952

Between 1947/1948, and February 1952, the new nation-state of Pakistan experienced two rounds of language riots. The issue at stake was the status of Bengali vis a vis Urdu, following statements by the Government that Urdu would be the only national language of Pakistan. This demand for inclusion into the national project on equal terms was not an unreasonable one, but it disturbed the insecure Pakistani ruling elite. As the controversy advanced, the semi-official media increasingly began to construct East Bengal as the space of sedition. Its cultural links with West (Indian) Bengal and its significant population of Hindus were used to discredit the language movement. By looking at contemporary newspaper reports, editorials and letters to the editor, I show how this construction of East Bengal as a place teeming with threatening “Others”, specifically “Hindus” and “Communists” who were bent on undermining the unity of Pakistan can be understood as …
Vail, Lise, Montclair State University
Kaleidoscope: Shifting Designs for a Karnataka Ascetic Leader

Many Karnataka Virasaivas honor the lineage of ascetic Jagadgurus begun by 15th-century Tontada Siddhalinga Sivayogi. This paper explores the kaleidoscopic mix of stellar qualities and identities attributed, by others, to the present 19th lineage guru, Siddhalinga Swami—derived from interviews, stories, and Karnataka oral history. Siddhalinga represents many things to many people: ascetic, the founder reincarnated, king, installed murti, scholar, teacher, moral exemplar, world father or grandfather, etc. Through such protean attributions, Siddhalinga’s capabilities are enhanced and concentrated into one superlative character—miracle-worker or visionary reformer. This is obviously a key Indian strategy for magnifying the renown of real-life (and literary) religious heroes, such as Mohandas Gandhi, while also contributing to 19th-century Anglo-Indian judges’ difficulties assigning any simple legal identity to Hindu monastic heads.

Vali, Murtaza, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
‘Filmi Ishtyle’: Bollywood and Contemporary Indian Art

A popular form of entertainment and a lucrative industry with a long history, Bollywood has a prominent place in the visual culture, public sphere and urban and national imagination of India and its Diaspora populations around the world. For these communities, Bollywood and its products serve as powerful ideological apparatuses involved in the creation of an ‘imagined’ nation/homeland. In this paper, I would like to trace the intersections between the popular culture of Bollywood and that of modern and contemporary art in India and its Diaspora. Drawing on the works of artists who have been influenced by Bollywood, I would like to demonstrate some of the ways in which the images, conventions and strategies of Bollywood have been adopted, appropriated and critiqued by artists. Bollywood is also a powerful component of a specifically urban visual culture and imaginary and a discussion of the intersection between the popular culture of Bollywood …

Varadarajan, Latha, University of Minnesota at Minneapolis
“The Largest Gathering of the Global Indian Family:” Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas and the construction of the modern Indian nation-state

In January 2003, the Indian government organized the first ever “Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas” (“Indians Abroad Day”) to strengthen its case for institutionalizing the “already present, historical and cultural bonds between India (“the motherland”) and Indians Abroad (“her Children”).” This paper explores the site of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in the context of rapidly changing ideologies of nationalism and globalization in modern India. In an era inaugurated by the implementation of economic “liberalization” policies by the Indian state from 1991 onwards, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, we argue, is centrally important as an ethnographic and rhetorical site for the production of modern “India.” We locate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas within the historical emergence and current dominance of right-wing Hindu nationalism in India today, as a means to examine how attempts to create a coherent ‘national’ diaspora are situated at the intersection between the globalization of capital and Hindu nationalist desires for “recognition within an increasingly global horizon”

Varma, Rahul, Teesri Duniya Theatre, Montreal
BHOPAL: Event, Process, and the Manifest Theatre of Politics

This paper by Indo-Canadian playwright Rahul Varma will discuss the principal stages in the development of his play BHOPAL (2001), which deals with the 1984 industrial accident at the Union Carbide plant in that city. Varma will focus on the inception of the play in Montreal, his extended collaboration with Indian playwright-director Habib Tanvir, the process of multiple revisions, and the multiple locations of performance, in Canada and India.
Venkatesan, Archana, St. Lawrence University

The Araiyyar Cevai as commentary at the Srivilliputtur Antal Temple

The ritual service of recitation (araiyyar cevai) is performed at the conclusion of all three major festivals celebrated at the Antal temple in Srivilliputtur. The araiyyar cevai is a performative commentary peculiar to the sect of the Tamil Srivasnavas. In this paper I analyze the muttukkuri (divination with pearls) unique to the Srivilliputtur Antal temple. Here the araiyyar (reciter) takes on the role of the gypsy fortune-teller to divine the fate of Antal’s love for Visnu. In doing so he liberally interweaves verses from Antal’s poems with those of the other Alvars to articulate the nature of the bhakti heroine of whom Antal is the exemplar. In this paper I apply the traditional Srivasnava understanding of commentary as anubhava granta (text of experience) to the muttukkuri araiyyar cevai at Srivilliputtur to explore the local theology of Antal in conceptualizing her as both mortal devotee and immortal goddess.

Walters, Kimberly, University of Chicago

Out of the Forests and into the Offices: The Changing Face of South Indian Asceticism

The turn of the millennium has witnessed a rapid swell in the annual pilgrimage for the god Ayyappa in South India. Devotion to Ayyappa demands that for a period of at least forty-one days before the pilgrimage a swami dress in black; walk barefoot; sleep on the floor; renounce sex, alcohol, tobacco and heating foods; and focus on worship, honesty and social detachment. Yet, Ayyappa swamis simultaneously maintain their positions as doctors, businessmen and bureaucrats. The annual pilgrims may now total more than two million. From interviews with Ayyappa swamis in Bangalore and Hyderabad in 2003-2004, I argue that this sect reconfigures life course models of vanaprastha (forest-dwelling) and sannyasa (renunciation) to permit aging men to continue to execute modern economic responsibilities while simultaneously fulfilling a cultural ideal of renunciation in latter life. Ayyappa worship negotiates between modern exigencies and ancient imperatives, effecting a new equilibrium in male Hindu identity.

Weisgrau, Maxine, Barnard College-Columbia University

What Did John Malcolm See When He Saw "Bhills"?

Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833), best known in the documentation of the British East India Company for his diplomatic and military skills, was a prolific writer on history and social life in Central India. Malcolm's observations on the "Bhills" of Malwa and Rajputana shape what becomes a master narrative on Bhil social, religious, and political life. This paper discusses Malcolm's assumptions about tribals in general and Bhils in particular, as well as his methodology of gathering information.

These epistemological issues are significant for at least two reasons. Malcolm's writing contains a counter discourse on Bhils to what later becomes a rigidly racialized vision of tribals. Additionally, his observations recorded in the early 1820s are subsequently integrated into later colonial discourse and post-colonial ethnography. Malcolm's descriptions of Bhil life are repeated almost verbatim over nearly two centuries of representation of, and resulting social policy concerning, the Bhils.

Wendt, Ian, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Community Formation and Reformation in Early Modern South India: Patterns from the Textile Industry

Southeastern India was one of several vibrant textile producing regions in 17th and 18th century South Asia. This paper, based on archival research in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and the Netherlands, describes the actions and activities that shaped, reshaped and even reconstituted South Indian communities participating in the textile industry in the midst of historical crises and opportunities.

Diverse communities, from agrarian villages to weaving villages to pariah settlements, could specialize in textile production and commerce. These communities can be understood through their social composition and organization, their economic activities, as well as their geography. Spinners, weavers, washers, merchants and others formed complex organizations and
interlinked their communities in order to survive, make a living and thrive in the midst of local and global challenges and opportunities. The actions and decisions of these individual and groups reveal the agency animating early modern South Asian communities.

**Wentworth, Blake**, University of Chicago

**So Sexy It Hurts: Beauty as Political Control**

The poetic device of portraying a hero’s control over territory through his sexual attractiveness to women has a long history in Indian literature. From Arjuna’s conquest of the directions through passion in the Mahabharata, the parade of Gautama in the Buddhacarita, and the wedding processions that Kalidasa describes in Raghuvamsa and Kumarasambhava, the Sanskrit sources are numerous and influential. When the trope of influence over women as an expression of power was taken up by Tamil poets, however, its remarkable popularity resulted in the creation of a new genre: the ula, where parading heroes have a devastating impact on the women who watch them. This paper examines the creative ways in which the Tamil author Ottakuttar made use of the ula genre to meet local political demands in his masterwork “Muvar Ula,” focussing particularly on the poet’s insistence that a Chola king’s beauty is itself the source of world-making radiance.

**White, Daniel**, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

**Colonizing the Divine: British Appropriation of Religion in India**

Unlike much of what has been written about British attitudes toward India and Indian religions in particular, this paper examines ways in which the British appropriated religious myths, symbols, issues in more "appreciative" or "positive" ways to promote their colonizing interests. To do this I shall examine two early 19th-century British East India Company figures: James Anderson, Physician-General in the Madras Presidency, who used myth to stabilize disease by encouraging cowpox vaccine in the region, and James Tod, Resident in Udaipur, who called upon both myth and ritual in the divine status of the Mewar Maharana to bring some stability to that region. Both individuals understood and appropriated religious myths and symbols from two distinct regions of India to encourage those colonized to accept their goals--one medical, the other political in an effort to stabilize the region for the benefit of its citizens.

**Wilkerson, Sarah Beth**, Cambridge University

**The Annihilation of Caste? Current Dalit Discourse in the Hindi Public Sphere**

Historically, the Dalit movement has used literary modes in order to protest caste-based discrimination and question the legitimacy of cultural traditions which uphold the practice of untouchability. The growth in Dalit literature in Hindi, since the mid-1980s has provided a public space in which Dalits can raise their voices in dissent. This paper seeks to give an analysis of current Dalit discourse in Hindi in order to analyse how these Dalit writers create a sense of Dalit identity, how they contest colossal social structures such as Hinduism or the caste system which form the basis of their oppression, and most importantly, what kind of imagined future they are struggling to achieve. Problematising this discourse’s relationship with the views of its named historical leader, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, this paper asks to what extent this emerging body of literature challenges current social paradigms and to what extent it is theoretically confined to …

**Winther, Paul**, Eastern Kentucky University

**A Good Smoking Extract is Like a Fine Wine: How to comprehend the India-China opium trade, 1757-1925**

Opium consumption in China and other parts of Asia during the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a topic of enduring interest. Nonetheless, there is a curious omission in twentieth and twentieth-first century publications, which is a concern with the chemical foundation of the trade’s existence. The active ingredients of the opium poppy are alkaloids and this presentation identifies variations in the ratio of alkaloids and the presence of alkaloid ‘families’ in the different ‘opiums’ available in Asia in this period. Available at various times and in various places on the Asian market were products from Smyrna (Turkey), Persia (Iran), Egypt, India and from regions within China. A focus upon chemicals, rather than economic and political variables, prompts a bold hypothesis: British dominance of the controversial opium commerce for most of the era was, in part, an accident.
Zacharias, Usha, Westfield State College

Writing Order, Visualizing Violence: The Media Script of A “Hindu/Muslim” Conflict in Kerala

This paper argues that the media produce readymade, gendered scripts of warring communities to structure the narrative and visual presentation of communal conflict. Based on an analysis of media reports of events at Marad, Kerala, where clashes broke out in a Dalit fishing community in May 2003, the paper shows how the media used gendered narratives to position “Hindu” women as exclusive victims of communal attack, leaving the males and Hindutva organizations to inhabit the outer, decision-making political arenas. Even as Hindu women gained visual citizenship as wives and mothers of victims, Muslim women, who were forced to abandon their homes, were portrayed as refugees and as dependents on the state. In news stories, they appeared as charity-seekers who were no longer eligible for legitimate rights as citizens. The state-sponsored resolution to the conflict was finally touted as a “triumph of secularism” where Hindu and Muslim women reunited under …

Zare, Bonnie, University of Wyoming

“Evolving Masculinities in Recent Stories by South Asian American Women”

Contemporary South Asian American short stories by women tend to depict female characters breaking away from limitations or crafting compromises between traditional and new ideas about their life paths. As critics have observed, these stories often show women in the process of shedding an essentialized identity. Because modernity offers more fluid gender norms, we might expect to see male characters exploring changes in their role as well. My essay will take up the less discussed subject of the depiction of male characters by female authors. Are men in stories by Tahira Naqvi, Jhumpa Lahiri and Anjana Appachana depicted as striving to similarly break away from norms of masculinity? If one could generalize about a somewhat universal set of masculine ideals, those would include concern with honor, strength, rationality, leadership and household dominance. Do male characters in thes

Zelliot, Eleanor, Carleton College

The Dalit and Buddhist Vithoba

Although the Bhakti saint Cokhamela was an important source of pride and inspiration in the early days of the Mahar movement, the God he worshipped, Vithoba, is no longer revered, as in a Daya Pawar poem which blames Vithoba for keeping Cokhamela outside the Great Door to the temple. However, there is a strong scholarly impulse to claim Vithoba as an offshoot of Buddhism in Maharashtra, a claim backed by some scholars not in the Dalit or Buddhist movements.

Zitzewitz, Karin, Columbia University

K. G. Subramanyan and "Indian" Visual Culture

K. G. Subramanyan, modern Indian art's most influential aesthetic theorist, has developed a theory of "Indian" visual culture that places art within a thick complex of representational practices drawn from popular and folk sources. His own artistic practice is likewise complex, ranging across various media and drawing upon various epic and folk narrative structures. But he is remarkably restrained in his treatment of what has often been considered to be India's most distinctive practice of vision--namely, darshan. Defined primarily in its ritual context as the exchange of glances between icon and devotee, darshan has often been used as the primary heuristic for understanding all manner of popular Indian visual representations. Subramanyan's painting, through various techniques of estrangement, has systematically broken down the possibilities of a darshan-like address. Through a close reading of his paintings and writings, Subramanyan's avoidance of this feature will be closely examined, as will the implications …
Panel and Roundtable Abstracts

33rd Annual Conference on South Asia

October 15-17, 2004
Note: Abstracts exceeding the 150-word limit were abbreviated and marked with an ellipsis.

Alternative Paths to Urbanism in Post-Colonial India

This panel investigates the transformation of rural communities into urban networks through the expansion of industry, commerce and the state in post-colonial India. Panelists will begin with short empirical studies of urbanization after independence. Their studies will examine the transformation of handloom weaving towns into industrial centers in western India, the development of central places that provide a range of services for agricultural regions in West Bengal, and the emergence of technology corridors in southern India. Each case study will provide the basis for analyses of growth poles within the modern urban hierarchy of South Asia. The purpose of the panel is not simply to provide details of specific sites, but to move toward a theoretical discussion of the interactions between public policy, entrepreneurial activity, and labor that contribute to urban clusters.

Archaeological Practice: Poetics and Politics of Collaboration

Recent methodologies employed in archaeological practice reflect a move towards creating transparent processes involving collaborative projects. Significant in this shift is the recognition of collaboration as being a crucial element in any archaeological project. Focus on this aspect speaks not only to ethical considerations of practice, but also to strategies employed by archaeologists in order to successfully conduct research in the field and at home institutions. This roundtable will highlight collaboration as a fundamental aspect to the practice of archaeology in Pakistan & India. The panelists will discuss experiences in Pakistan & India ranging from working with local communities, collaborating with collection management & geoscience institutions, to collaborating across disciplines in the teaching of archaeology.

Between Civilizing Missions and Modernization Theories: Interstices in South Asia’s History of Development

This panel seeks to animate the history of development in South Asia through a critical examination of the relationship between late imperial ‘civilising’ projects and the ideal of modernisation as it informed post-war international development. The papers that constitute the panel take up these issues as they are made manifest in the cases of first, the politics of consumption, poverty and prosperity among the ‘cultivating classes’ in eastern India from the second half of the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth centuries; second, interwar birth control advocacy in Tamil south India; and third, an investigation into a WHO- and Indian government-sponsored chemotherapy project for poor urban tuberculosis patients in south India at mid-century. By looking both to the colonial past and the international future, the papers outline the contours by which the key social targets of development – labour, population and health—were constituted and reconstituted under successive global …

Beyond the Nation: Literature, Politics and History in Modern South Asia

This interdisciplinary panel enquires into moments in the history of modern South Asia in which the territorial and discursive bounds of the nation came to be questioned. The individual papers on this panel pursue these moments in the domains of literature, history and politics. Received approaches to nations and nationalisms in the humanities and social sciences tend to devolve upon mapping the discursive and political formation of hegemonic nationalisms. This not only allows the modern nation to remain as the primary protagonist of the story of modern South Asia, but often leaves neglected the histories and voices that challenge dominant nationalisms, that go below and beyond the nation to address and articulate local, regional, and transnational communities and sociality. In its interdisciplinary exploration of political and cultural discourses that violated and challenged the dominance of the ‘nation,’ this panel tracks new, transnational directions in the study of modern South Asia.

Conceptualizing Political Opposition in India: The Elite Perspective, 16th-20th c.

This panel aims to contest dominant narratives of Indian nationalism by focusing on four distinct moments of elite political opposition. Spanning the sixteenth to twentieth centuries, from Sanskrit philosophy to Goan nationalism to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Abul Kalam Azad, each moment features elite actors engaged in the work of conceptualization, whether it entailed redefining proprietary right as an ontological category rather than a political one or espousing pan-Islamicism as a basis for political imagination. Such conceptualizations, while usually refusing a role to the masses, nevertheless represent revolutionary models of governance that have since been forgotten or misappropriated by nationalist discourse. The four
papers in this panel will reopen the question of elite participation in political opposition by looking at Navya-nyaya philosophy on svatva (proprietary right), the writings of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Abul Kalam Azad, and Goan nationalist discourse in print to not only investigate competing nationalisms …

**Critical Texts: The Prose Tradition in Urdu**

The recent convergence of literary and historical theory has made literary history one of the most exciting fields in the humanities. Equally, the historiography of modern South Asian languages has gained by a re-focusing on their origins. However, it has been the study of poetry which has dominated the field of Urdu literature, with the result that our understanding of the social, cultural and literary dynamics implicated in the foundation of Urdu prose is not well developed. This panel examines some of the "critical texts" that were crucial in the development of Urdu prose.

**Crystalline Reflections: New Approaches to the Study of Character in South Asia**

Using Ramanujan's crystalline metaphor, this panel posits that character in South Asia is not so much an essence as an aggregate of kaleidoscopic reflections. Indeed, the grandeur or aesthetic depth of the characters we analyze is not based on a single quality or virtue, but rather in the multiple and multi-dimensional ways that they can be understood or interpreted. The characters below defy an analysis based on any single category, group, or role; instead as living, remembered, or even imagined characters, they embody the confluence of an intricate pattern of attributes and relationships. Using material from a range of source (literary and folk traditions, hagiographical texts, and fieldwork) and employing a variety of methodologies (literary and scriptural analysis, history of religions, ethnography, and oral history), these papers demonstrate that approaching South Asia through its complex and charismatic characters is a productive and rich hermeneutic field.

**Cultivating Childhood and Performing Fatherhood**

This panel examines how “childhood” and “fatherhood” emerged as new fields of expertise and experimentation in colonial India. The papers explore a wide range of sources, from Bengali children’s literature to documents from juvenile reformatories and normal schools. Each paper analyzes the theoretical and institutional efforts of distinct colonial actors—the state, bhadralok reformers, missionaries—to articulate a set of normative behaviors, dispositions and moral qualities meant to produce “modern” children and “modern” fathers. We link these processes to a larger set of concerns about modernity, tradition, gender, colonialism and nationalism.

**Discourses of Nature: Representations of 'environment' in the Himalaya**

The aim of this panel is to discuss how the Himalayan environment is represented and discussed in the discourse of key actors: scholars and scientists, NGOs working in the field of development and community activists. Metz examines the idea of the Himalayan environmental crisis in academic and policy discourse and discusses the revisionist thesis that human causes of the crisis are greatly overstated. Anand’s paper considers the way NGO discourses of indigenous environmental protection focus attention on the role of farmers in biodiversity conservation, while Rademacher examines the struggles over the management of the Bagmati River in Kathmandu in terms of a discourse on the concept of a Bagmati civilization articulated by activists who tie the urban ecology of the river to cultural heritage protection.

**Displacing Darshan: Theorizing Graphic Traffic in South Asian Visual Cultures**

If there are visual forms of cultural production that are distinctively South Asian, are these images met with practices or processes of seeing that are also culturally distinctive? Departing from a conventional understanding of images as texts to be read for meaning, this panel will build on the insights of theorists of darshan as well as look to alternative formulations in advancing a discussion of South Asian visual cultures. Our opening move will be to theorize images as dynamic material objects that circulate within and across distinct visual registers. To this end, Anna Sloan examines the role of the past and the construction of "inheritance" in the work of contemporary miniature painters. William Elison looks at examples of "tribal art" from Mumbai and how they negotiate various systems of representing urban space. Karin Zitzewitz discusses the darshan model's viability for an analysis of Indian modern art: Is modernism necessarily secular? …
Drugs, Medicines, History and South Asia

The panel will consider patterns of drugs consumption and control in south Asia from the eighteenth century onwards. Papers will look at markets for opium, cocaine and patent medicines in the region and the attempts of the state to police the trade in these substances. It will consider these processes of consumption and control in comparative contexts by looking at similar processes elsewhere in Asia and also in Europe and the Americas. It will reassess existing historiographical debates and offer fresh perspectives on the history of markets for drugs and medicine in modern south Asia.

Early-Modern South Asia from the “Margin”

This panel explores early-modern South Asian history (16th-18th C.) from the perspective of various geographic, economic, social, and political margins believing that in so doing we enrich and complicate the historiography of the period. Through use of a single over-arching thematic, we seek to collectively explore issues of interpretation, methodology, and object of study. Thus, to what extent can our individual papers indicate new historiographic directions away from imperial or state-centric accounts? How far can it be argued that the various “margins” examined are central in shaping the “center”? What is the “margin” and how is it constituted? As pre-modern historians, how are our readings of highly diverse historical sources challenged or enabled by examinations of the “margin”? And, can we learn, across regions and chronological time frames, from each others’ interpretive innovations? Together, the papers on our panel reveal how undertaking history from the “margin” opens up fresh and innovative possibilities for historical inquiry.

Education, Representation, and Development in India

Education in postcolonial India has primarily been connected to economic development and the creation of productive citizens. This conventional wisdom shapes research on the relation between education, marginality, and citizenship, limiting attention to measurable achievements and failures of state policy. We explore interventions that transform the meaning of education. Ritty Lukose examines discourses about education in the context of recent commodification of a low-caste based college in Kerala to show the reconfiguration of citizenship under conditions of globalization. Karuna Morarji shows that while Indian school textbooks serve as social maps which constitute narrow definitions of development and subjectivities, children in Uttaranchal engage in a reworked curriculum, and reconfigure these definitions. Dia Mohan explores how an organization called Jana Sanskriti uses political theatre to encourage the formation of new understandings of education and its relation to development, through role-playing new subject positions onstage and offstage in rural Bengal.

Empowering the Poor: Poverty Alleviation, Gender and Social Capital

In recent years poverty alleviation measures in South Asia have witnessed a major shift from state led developmental processes to non-governmental institutions initiated programs. Policy goals have also moved from delivering development to the empowerment of poor – both rural and urban. In this context, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and Panchayati Raj movement in India, have arguably emphasized the active participation of rural poor in the process of economic development. Concurrently, market economy, especially integration with global market through export-led industrialization, has opened the possibility of empowerment of a different kind. The focus is now more on the formation of social capital among participants through micro credit arrangements and local government political activism that could itself act as the basis for sustainable development. This panel, through four different case studies, examines how these developments have impacted the lives of rural poor and urban women, and to what extent these measures …

Ethnographies of the State: Moving Towards a Critical Pakistan Studies

In recent academic literature, theories of the state have been brought into useful dialogue through ethnographic methodologies that examine relationships of power and culture. By expanding on earlier influential works of political economy and various structuralist approaches, this new body of research has built on the analysis of power that views the state as constructed through a cultural process itself, as opposed to the singular view of the state involved only in the making of national cultures. In the case of Pakistan, the state is a matter of much speculation. From the idea of a militarist state to an Islamic state to a failed state, the Pakistani state has taken on many identities. These four papers expand scholarly understandings of the Pakistani state and national project as ethnographies of state formation. In doing so they pursue the questions of power, culture, and nation so central to the working of the …
Exploring the Paradox of Hindutva

Hindutva, the rallying cry for India's newest manifestation of nationalism, is an almost perfect embodiment of paradox if not outright self-contradiction. On the one hand, it functions as the ideological foundation for a particular party, thus, by definition, embracing a clearly exclusivist element. This side of Hindutva is reinforced by the fact that its "Hindu" part refers to a religious tradition, again implying exclusion. On the other hand, that same "Hindu" component seeks to embrace a world view of ancient Indian origins that promotes the unity of humankind, thus, again by definition, undermining the exclusivist factor. It is no wonder, then, that Hindutva is lauded by some as the hope for India's (or even the world's) future peace and prosperity, and vilified by others as another name for fascism. This panel is designed to take some first steps in sorting things out.

The Future of Indian Muslims in the Light of 2004 Elections and India/Pakistan Rapprochement

The 2004 general election in India could be decisive for the welfare, even survival of the huge Muslim minority. Since the pogrom in Gujerat two years ago for which Modi's BJP state government has gone unpunished, many Muslims have been worried about their fate. Should the BJP-led alliance in New Delhi get an even larger majority, or a majority on its own, the full program of Hindutva might be enacted with serious consequences for minorities. On the other hand, if negotiations started between India and Pakistan should bear fruit, pressures on the Muslim minority in India might lessen significantly. The participants in the round table will discuss these issues each from his/her own disciplinary viewpoint.

Global Media, National Policies and Cultural Representation

This panel investigates the manner in which media practices in television broadcasting and print journalism represent and shape the debates over globalization and nationalism in postcolonial India. As the vast majority of people increasingly encounter these crucial debates through the media, the adversarial and symbiotic relationship between globalization and nationalism in electronic media and print media warrants renewed attention by academics, policymakers and media practitioners alike.

By focusing on topics such as national broadcasting policies; the politics of economic liberalization; representations of Indian culture in the National Geographic magazine; and the challenges of representation and self-representation in journalistic discourse, this panel examines the changing character of globalization, nationalism and localism in India. The goal of the papers in this panel is to critically evaluate the role of the media in representing and shaping the global, national and local flows of culture, politics, commodities and ideologies in postcolonial India.

Historical Memory, Historiographic Practices: Regional Perspective on 19th century India

This panel examines the emergence of historiographic narratives in nineteenth century India, from a variety of linguistic and regional angles. Its explores the convergence of various aspects of modernity – print, changing literary practices, new collectivities and a modern perspective on the past in the later nineteenth century. Three panellists will examine different aspects of this process. One examines the transformation of older historical forms in Andhra such as charitas into modern narratives of Telugu identity, another explores the nature and politics of the appropriation of western Indian heroic narratives by Bengali histories, while a third focuses on the construction of pre-colonial Ahom heroic figures into modern, gendered symbols of Assamese patriotism, public culture and masculinity. Through these diverse regional prisms, the panel seeks to explore the complex relationships between regional historical memories, gender and Indian nationalism.

Historicizing Market Creation in 20th Century India

This panel brings together papers on the creation of media, labor, and insurance markets in 20th century India. Each paper explores how a particular market is made and expanded through the massive efforts of particular actors, such as the Indian state, in historically constituted circumstances. While each of these markets develops through unique historical processes, several themes emerge in comparing them as cultural, political, and institutional constructions. All three papers confront the limits to the territorialization of the Indian national market, the politics of market segmentation along community and rural/urban lines, and the mobilization of modernization discourses by private- and public-sector institutions.
Hometown: Revising Narratives of Attachment and Mobility

Not all cities or towns are hometowns, but some do become places of special affiliation, belonging, or commitment creating a vital conjunction of home and town. The affiliation to a city or town may be one of the most understated sociological and existential phenomena, yet heightened today by an unprecedented mobility, on the one hand, and an increasing critique of the paradigm of nation/state, on the other hand. Hometown may present an alternative discourse to the hegemony of nation as the very nature of citizenship, kinship, commitment and belonging are reformulated through it. Mobility – the cycle of departures and returns, periodic or long lasting – seems important in both mediating and complicating considerations of hometown as it creates a continually changing or fluctuating set of relations with hometown.

Conceptually, we wish to place hometown between the notion of nation and home. Both nation and home are overemphasized abstract and ideated sites …

Industries of Image-Making: Producing, Consuming, and Disciplining Indian-ness through Work and Leisure

"Indian-ness" is continually constructed in the US and in India through multiple ideologies and images that are produced, consumed and negotiated via transnational flows. These exchanges—whether it is immigration flows to the US, established diaspora communities, images of transnationals on Indian television, or Americans touring Indian spiritual traditions in the subcontinent—are mediated by members of both Indian and American communities. There are, however, a few overarching themes that intersect and often shape how India and Indians are perceived and self-situated in these global contexts. This panel seeks to unpack some of the underlying logics that work to situate Indian-ness in transnational exchanges. How do Indians, in their strategies of self-representation, create, manipulate, and resist this discourse? How do these images affect the imaginings of life abroad? And lastly, in what ways do the industries of tourism, IT, commerce, and media commodify Indian-ness in the US and abroad?

Islam & Politics in South Asia

The panel shall explore the dynamics of religion, democracy, and radicalism in South Asia. South Asia is an important region to study the evolution of post-colonial societies, emergent markets under globalization, the dynamics between religion and politics within a democratic ambience and now to study the role of regional radicalism in global politics.

The four papers shall chart the territory shared by theology, geopolitics and global narratives on terrorism and democracy.

Islam Along the South Asian Littoral

This roundtable takes as its starting point the notion that the South Asian littoral (including the Gujarat, Malabar and Coromandel coasts, Lakshadweep, the Maldives and Sri Lanka) represents a unique and uniquely neglected node in a broader network of Muslim communities extending throughout the Indian Ocean. Overshadowed by their co-religionists in the north and long ignored by anthropologists and historians of South Asia, these Muslim communities nonetheless serve as vibrant centers of religious and cultural production in their own right. They have also served as entrepôts in the trade of goods and ideas conducted by Muslim merchants, Sufis and itinerant clerics (such as Ibn Battuta) linking the Arabian Peninsula, India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. For these reasons, recent scholarly initiatives addressing specific Islamic communities in this southern Indian Ocean region requires greater attention and coordination. This roundtable will make available fresh ethnographic and historical information, and initiate collaboration among …

Legal Encounters: Judging Agency, Evidence, and Intent in Colonial Law

The rule of law was central to the project of colonial self-understanding and governance marking colonial rationality, impartiality, civility and secularism. It was simultaneously a site of similitude and difference. Codification as a project of colonial governmentality imagined Indians sharing a universal human nature yet co-existed with essentialized ideas of Indian religious difference. This panel explores legal epistemologies, strategies, technologies, forms of argumentation and adjudication characteristic of colonial discourse. Asad Ahmed’s paper examines the tensions and ambivalences in the codification and secularization of religious offences. Rachel Sturman continues exploring the contradictions of colonial law by examining the court’s elaborations of a secular autonomous yet Hindu legal subject. Elizabeth Kolsky unravels the development of judicial technologies of investigation as the courts sought to secure and appropriate the ‘truth.’ Finally,
Sameetah Agha’s reading of a military tribunal’s judgment seeks to rupture the courts construction of ‘truth’ thereby recuperating a moment of resistance.

**Logic and Reason in Madhyamaka**

The broad commentarial tradition of explication and argumentation on Madhyamaka has informed and illuminated investigations into the Middle Way, but has also presented a complex and diverse array of potential interpretations. This panel returns to the foundations of Madhyamaka, to examine the way logic and reason—the very building blocks of the ‘dhyamikas’—function in its construction, to clarify how ‘dhyamikas have reached their conclusions. We will consider three distinct eras of commentary and criticism regarding N’g’rjuna, the system’s founder. We first take up the question of how N’g’rjuna’s thought was worked out in the Classical Indian period by the commentators Bh’vaviveka and Candrak’rti. We then turn to examine later Tibetan reactions and interpretations both to N’g’rjuna and to those same commentators. Finally, we will interrogate a modern critical response to Madhyamaka.

**Many Vithobas: Approaches to the God of Pandharpur**

The Pandharpur pilgrimage in Maharashtra is well known from the writings of Karve, Mokashi and turner. The God of Pandharpur, Vithoba, a Strange stiff figure with his hands on his hips, is little known except as a constant helpmate for his devotees. However, there are many approaches to him beyond those of his bhaktas, and here we present three: The Dhangar shepherds have woven him into myths of their major gods; the Dalits have moved from devotion to neglect to claiming a Buddhist heritage for the God: The orthodox Brahmins have kept him pure by removing his essence to a copper pot outside the temple.

**Merely Conventional Signs?"Map-Making on South Asian Borders**

Drawing on four distinct case studies within South Asia, this panel examines cartographic practices as attempts to reformat landscapes and subjects through representation. Maps become documents that are an integral part of complex material and symbolic struggles over space. Based on research from the North West Frontier, the Indian Ocean, the Northern Areas of Pakistan and Kachchh, this panel considers maps and cartographic practices to be productive ways of understanding conflicting geographies, identities and practices of territorialization. Reconstructing continuities between colonial projects of border definition and the postcolonial state’s "cartographic anxiety” - characterized by its policy of withholding maps and regulating cartography in border areas - these papers will explore mapping practices, engage with issues of secrecy and uncertainty, and unsettle naturalized notions of nation-states and frontiers. An exploration of maps as social practice provides a way to expand and complicate South Asian ethnographies and histories of the nation-state.

**Nationalist Politics and the Public Sphere in Western India**

While nationalist discourses depend greatly upon inclusive and modern notions of the "public," the emergence of public spheres has generally involved exclusions. Our interdisciplinary panel approaches the rise of a nationalist public sphere in Western India from various angles, showing how the overlapping categories of religion, morality, political economy, and gender identity influenced its contours. The papers analyze how the role of religion in an increasingly historicist public imagination was articulated by Phule and Ranade; how educated Marathi women struggled with the newly-fashioned spaces of public speaking and print culture; how women's nationalist participation depended on their sexual purity, as seen from Gandhi's objections to campaigners who were “fallen women;” and how the totality of the nation was configured through narratives of an Indian "body politic" in Dadabhai Naoroji's economic history. Taken together, our papers show how regional debates went on to inform the trajectory of nationalism in the country.

**Negotiating the Margins: Constructing the Borders of Rule in Early Nineteenth Century Western India**

The creation by treaty between 1810 and 1835 in western India of a diverse mixture of directly and indirectly administered territories generated debates among British commentators and administrators over the limits to British rule and the acceptable degrees of “otherness” within the expanding empire. While the British initially regarded this region as an important political frontier, their emerging discourses of rule also encompassed a debate over a frontier of sovereignty as well. This discourse addressed questions of the nature of indirect rule; of the meanings of sovereignty; of subjecthood and particularly that of the
newly conquered groups; and lastly, of crime and criminality. This panel examines key texts from the period to delineate the contours of this dialogue and to demonstrate the construction of rule in western India.

New Sexualities in Globalizing South Asian Cinemas

We suggest that the contemporary moment for South Asian cinemas is one of globalizing—that is becoming global in a fundamentally new way. This becoming global is crosshatched with multiple possibilities and multiple determinations, virtualities and actualities, that cannot be reduced to a static conception of "neo-liberal governmentality in the age of multinational capital.” In light of South Asia's contemporary moment of globalization, this panel attempts to pose the question of cinematic representations of sexuality. Drawing on work in South Asian visual cultures, queer theory, feminist studies and postcolonial theory, this panel attempts to push the debates around representation to the very limits of their intelligibility. Thus we are seeking work that looks at how sexuality materializes the possibilities and contradictions of South Asian cinemas new empires. At a moment when, for instance, popular Hindi cinema has "graduated" to industry status, and is now seen as one of the most …

Nuptial Contracts: Marriage and the Nation

This panel explores how conjugality articulates with the colonial and postcolonial nation-state. Building on recent scholarship, this panel asks the following questions: Were concepts of modernity and reform tied to the legal and aesthetic forms that marriage took in colonial India? How did the debate over marriage age in different parts of India construct national identity? Was the notion of a marriage based on companionate love viewed as important to the task of nation-building? How did the love/arranged marriage debate shape the politics of class and gender in postcolonial India? In what ways are these questions being reformulated as India enters the era of globalization? Why is conjugality again the focus of attention in current debates over culture and identity? This interdisciplinary panel comprised of scholars in history, film studies, women and cultural studies will investigate these issues at three distinct historical conjunctures – the late nineteenth century, the 1920s and the 1950s.

Of Sound Text and Body: Intergeneric Approaches to Performance in South Asian Contexts

This panel explores how genre affects the ways in which South Asian performance traditions represent the past. How does performance mediate between the artifacts of the past and contemporary interpretation? And what happens to this reception of history at the borderlines between genres? Approaching performance from the fields of music, dance, and text, this panel investigates how intertextuality contours the representation of social memory. Analyzing the interplay of the spoken and the sung, Anna Schultz’s paper examines the politicization of Marathi rashtriya kirtan in its ‘collision’ with the historio-musical genre of povada. Davesh Soneji’s journey into the Telugu poetic self-representations of devadasis addresses the borderlines between public and domestic genres, and how this community uses them to re-articulate their contested social history. Adheesh Sathaye examines how counter-normative legends of the boundary-crossing sage Visvamitra were embedded within the Sanskrit epics as ‘textual performances,’ through their reception in contemporary Marathi kirtan.

On violence, migration and the state: new perspectives from Punjab, Bengal and Kashmir

This panel addresses the relationship between violence and the state through three moments of significant rupture. Partition violence in Punjab and Bengal, and the recent migration of Kashmiri Pandit refugees serve as predominantly politically motivated ruptures that have become part of mainstream discourse on ‘communal violence’. We study the ambivalences in historical records of these migrations and their effects on the new communities that were forged in their aftermath.

Performatively Speaking: Urdu Poetry and Popular Art Forms

Urdu poetry has always been a performative art form, and as such, has a special propensity to lend itself to song and declamation. In this panel, we explore the different dimensions of the rhythmic quality of Urdu poetry, as it manifested itself in three genres. Ali Mir explores the role of progressive Urdu poetry in Hindi film lyrics, contending that the Hindi film song was consciously used by the Progressive Writers’ Movement to propagate a particular kind of politics. Akbar Hyder explores the performance of the qawwali, a dynamic song format that lends itself to poetic innovation as well as philosophical pedagogy. Raza Mir studies the tension between the concept of poetic structure preferred by the poets of the Progressive...
Writers Movement and that of the classical tradition, which he characterizes as a love-hate relationship, where the progressive poets never relinquished the traditionalist structure but transformed it significantly.

Poetics and Regional Self-Identity in Medieval South India

Does the encompassing term “southern” have real analytic value for the study of Indian literary cultures? In the medieval period, south Indian authors confronted numerous literary traditions and a wide array of critical reflections on the literary. In the ensuing surge of innovative genres and poetic styles, we can apprehend how existing theories were adopted, revised, and transformed in accordance with new regional demands. Taking this period of rapid creative development as a starting point, our panel asks whether analysis of the various poetic traditions of south India will ultimately reveal broader commonalities—which themselves would gesture towards a distinctively southern literary sensibility. Through close readings of Kannada, Sanskrit, and Tamil sources, we will try and trace out some of the contours of a recognizably southern literary tradition. If this comprehensive formulation is warranted, moreover, can we further speak of a self-consciously south Indian identity in the medieval period?

Preserving the Cultural Heritage in South Asia: Reflections on Shared Concerns and Lessons from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka

Some of the common yet important policy concerns in the protecting the cultural heritage of the South Asia involve the participation of the local communities, the negotiation of the definition of cultural heritage, tourism and its impact, and formulating effective guidelines to manage the development within the preserved areas. This panel, based on case studies drawn from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, demonstrates the nature and impact of these important policy concerns in the conservation of the cultural heritage in the South Asian region. Chapagain, based on heritage conservation activities in the Upper Mustang region of Nepal, addresses one of the most overlooked aspects in the heritage preservation; that is the significance of involving the local communities in the heritage conservation, when there are no resources or structure laid out by the concerned authorities to step in and take required actions. Murthy investigates the issue of loss of identity, …

Preserving the Cultural Heritage in South Asia: Reflections on the Need of Effective Conservation Policy

Preserving the rich and vast cultural heritage of the South Asia always challenges the conventional wisdom requiring innovative solutions and learning from hands-on experience. This panel reflects on some of the important concerns in the conservation policy of the cultural heritage in the South Asian region and identifies key lessons that could be useful in making the conservation efforts successful. Kishore seeks to test the Civic Amenities Act 1967 of England for its adaptability into the Indian and the South Asian contexts in conserving historic town centers, which would define policies in addressing economic pressures, difficulties in providing appropriate uses, decay and its prevention, tourism, and traffic and design difficulties in adaptation. Singh explores the concept of value-based conservation and its relevance within the Indian context in facing the challenges arising out of the inadequate statutory framework, the complexity of heritage resources and limited funding. Gupta discusses the concerns of …

The Problem of Civil and Political Society in Contemporary South Asia

This panel critically engages Partha Chatterjee’s thesis that third world democracies are increasingly characterized by a tension between civil and political society. The latter, in Chatterjee’s usage, designates the domain of political practices that do not follow the norms of liberal civic association insofar as they involve various forms of illegality, demand government welfare as a right, and claim these rights on behalf of collectivities rather than individuals. Political society is not the manifestation of “traditional” modes of governance, but a very real form of democracy which threatens the bourgeois interests of civil society by providing a competing venue for mass participation. The papers of this panel will raise questions about the validity of Chatterjee’s theory and its implications for a theory of modernity in the age of neo-liberalism by considering problems of privatization, de-industrialization, political mobilization and protest in various parts of India and Nepal.
Prophets Facing Backward: Postmodern Critiques of Science and Hindu Nationalism in India

We propose a critical engagement with the arguments of Meera Nanda's book, Prophets Facing Backwards, by professors of political science, history, anthropology/religion, and science studies, with responses from the author. Nanda's main argument is that there has been a dangerous convergence in India between the reactionary modernity of Hindu nationalists and the postmodernist romance of alternative epistemologies for the purpoer of decolonizing knowledge (“discourse”) itself. Postmodernist calls for the resurgence of local knowledge against the presumably Western/colonial/patriarchal claims of modern science are no different, in substance or in form, from the kind of arguments Hindu nationalists make in defense of the superiority of assorted Vedic "sciences" for the purpose of "decolonization of the Hindu mind.” Defense of knowledge that is organic to the culture is the primary mechanism through which reactionary modernism works. Fundamentalist, fascist and authoritarian regimes validate epistemological relativism via redefinitions of evidence, proof, and reason itself.

Ray Redux: Modernity, Musicality and Gender

This panel will turn to the films of Satyajit Ray and complicate the categories “modernist filmmaker” and “third world auteur” usually assigned to him. In the process, it will also put pressure on the binary – Bollywood/Art Cinema – through which Indian film continues to be analyzed. If popular Indian cinema has become a favored site for describing the emergence of an alternative modernity, we will investigate the extent to which Ray was engaged in a similar project. The first two papers will show how Ray demonstrates the inadequacy of using either interiority or citizenship to grasp the problem of gendered agency within the Indian context. The third will explore how Ray uses music to represent a utopic space that transcends the dialectic of tradition and modernity. All three presentations will elucidate how Ray refashioned – thematically and aesthetically – the propositional claims of Western modernity – to cinematically express the contradictions and possibilities of postcolonial India.

Rendering Gender, Race and Identity Visible in South Asian Diasporic Fiction

Gender, Race, and Identity Politics in South Asian Diasporic FictionThis panel explores recent South Asian diasporic fiction by such authors as Monica Ali, Jhumpa Lahiri, Tahira Naqvi, Chitra Divakaruni, and Anjana Appachana to understand the politics of gender and race. Asha Sen questions Monica Ali’s portrayal of the developing feminist consciousness of Ali’s character Nazneen in Brick Lane. Julie Rajan studies the depiction of Kali for the construction of subjectivity in Raj fiction and in diasporic fiction. Bonnie Zare examines depictions of masculinity in diasporic short fiction by women to understand men’s internal conflicts under a patriarchal framework and to examine why masculine roles are usually not rendered as subversive. Nalini Iyer’s paper discusses the construction of ethnicity in South Asian American writing through the othering of white American characters.

Representations of the Himalaya

From Kailash, to Shambala, to "martial races," to Shangri-la, to the erotic pleasure grounds of Hindi cinema, for millennia the Himalayas have served as a vast canvas ready to reflect the projections of cultures in need of radically Other places and peoples. This panel brings together a range of perspectives on the historical processes by which the Himalayas have been used as a symbolic resource. Hussain examines the influence of Victorian "race science" on the British colonial "discovery" of Himalayan "martial races." Lutgendorf follows erotic stereotypes of Himalayan peoples from the Sanskrit epics into modern Bombay films arguing that the Himalayas have long been a realm of uninhibited romantic fantasy for Indic peoples. Liechty looks at the role of the Himalayas in the Western countercultural imagination and how this spatial imaginary helped generate mass tourism on the subcontinent. These papers show that representations are historically consequential.

Restructuring the Indian Economy: Internal and External Dimensions

The papers on this panel deal with aspects of the political economy of the 1990s attempt to restructure production and exchange in India. The effects of the new economic policy are, inevitably, mediated by contextual factors. In their papers, Sunila Kale and Emmanuel Teitelbaum discuss this process in the electricity and labor relations sectors respectively. Both authors use comparisons across regions to reveal the interaction of state policy with local dynamics. The contribution by Latha Varadarajan and Bakirathi Mani highlights the imagined role of the ‘Pravasi Bharatiya’ or ‘Non-Resident Indian’ in
political and economic ‘reform’. Karthika Sasikumar’s paper examines the impact on India’s stance on nuclear nonproliferation, of greater integration into the world economy.

**Rethinking the Diaspora: The Politics of Race and Place Between India and the US**

This panel sets out to question current theories about the role of the Indian Diaspora in the US as well as its relationship to a steadily globalizing India. Drawing from interdisciplinary scholarship in Communications, English, History, Political Science and Sociology, each paper examines the complex and historically grounded process of identity formation and its political and cultural outcomes. The papers offer original research that raise new questions about the process of racialization in the US, the propensity for “long-distance nationalism” amongst migrants, the notion of the enduring importance of “home”, and the shifting weight of “local” culture and identity.

**Revisiting the History of Partition: A Conversation with Gyanendra Pandey**

The devastation of the partition of India in 1947 has spawned an industry of history writing. In Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India Gyanendra Pandey, of the collective of subaltern historians, attends to those histories that aspire to a diagnosis of religious violence. He shows how these histories repress the affective force of events in the process of delineating them. Thus he questions the very possibility of writing histories of Partition given the non-indexical nature of trauma, the stutters that express collective suffering, and the historical amnesia made necessary for re-making communities. Pandey confronts these challenges by asking anew: what is the responsibility of history to the post-colonial present? Scholars, including Kamala Visweswaran, Ghaoutam Ghosh, Najeeb Jan, David Gilmartin, and Anna Bigelow, will take up this question bringing their own work into conversation with Gyanendra Pandey's. Professor Pandey will be present to take part in the roundtable discussion.

**Risky Business: Sexuality, Governance and the Colonial State**

This panel examines discourses of sexuality as the key grids through which colonial anxieties around governance and civility can be mapped. To elaborate this relationship, the panelists look closely at the paradox and political consequences of categories of sexuality that were precise and protean, received and malleable, all at the same time. Each panelist focuses on technologies of sexual management in at least one of three areas: law, historiography and finance. What happens when the establishment of colonial sodomy statutes is read against the backdrop of native insurrections and finance? What transformations and contradictions emerge when we link the philosophical project of historiography with that of sexual taxonomies? The panel, thus, not only offers a localized, historical genealogy of the emergence of categories of sexuality in discourses of colonial rule, but also critically complicates and contributes to contemporary debates on the intersections of race and sexuality in South Asia area studies and queer studies.

**Roundtable: Teaching the Anthropology and Geography of the Himalaya**

The aim of this panel is to discuss strategies and material for teaching the anthropology and the geography of the Himalaya in undergraduate courses. The roundtable will discuss teaching this material in the context of more general regional or thematic courses (e.g., on South Asia) or as specialized courses focused on the region. How do Himalayan materials help to illuminate theoretical issues in these two disciplines? How should syllabi be organized and what topics should they cover? What are innovative strategies for teaching this material to students? These and other questions will be the focus of this panel’s discussions.

**The Routes and Roots of Indian American Identities**

More than 2 million Indians live in the United States. While these Indians may have roots in India, the salience of the home land within the cultural locations and identities of diasporic Indians varies by community, perhaps even by individual. As a result, the routes by which Indians in America come to live, work, and interact with one another and with the community at large are structured by specific histories of migration and by spaces of interaction. Among the many issues of concern to scholars studying Indian immigrants are the extent to which individuals or communities construct ties to India and the United States; the extent to which and how those constructions shape Indian American social and political life; and the extent to which and ways in which the constructions of home (whether Indian or America) influence inter-generational interaction.
Self-Definitions and Re-Definitions of Womanhood: Three North Indian Case Studies

Though equality between men and women is guaranteed in the Indian constitution, societal reconstructions of gender continue to subordinate women irrespective of their class, caste, or community. Since independence, concerted efforts have been made by various governmental and non-governmental agencies in urban and rural settings to redress social and cultural inequalities affecting women. Within the last three decades, eastern India has witnessed the emergence of numerous non-governmental agencies and movements—many begun and administered by women—dedicated to women’s issues. Our panel examines the conceptual frameworks, methodologies, goals, strategies, and programs adopted by three non-profit grassroots women’s organizations in North India that endeavor to redefine—each in its own distinctive way—womanhood in contemporary India. Based on recent field-research, the three panelists, who come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, will offer fresh ethnographic data and critical interdisciplinary reflections on their respective organizations.

South Asian women in sites of violence: Questions of agency, power structures, and social transformation

Through in-depth investigations of three sites, the session will raise questions about women's agency and the potential for their empowerment as they survive and resist the impact of violence. Working with the premise that the experience and implications of sociopolitical violence are different for men and women, the papers will analyze how multi-layered power structures—from the local to the national to the global—constrain and enable women's existence at discursive and material levels in the three contexts under scrutiny: Afghanistan; Orissa, India; and Karachi, Pakistan. Based on intensive qualitative research, the presentations will foreground women's voices, but these voices will be embedded in analyses of socio-historical formations and geopolitics underpinning the violence in specific spaces. The ultimate goal is to explore the possibilities for peace, justice, and equity through non-oppressive processes which take into account the lives of actual women and their families in sites of violence.

Teaching South Asian Archaeology and Ancient History

Texts, Discursive Practices and Court Culture in Premodern India

This panel illuminates the critical role played by textual and discursive practices in the formation and articulation of court culture in premodern India. Daud Ali shows how inscriptions and other texts from the Gupta and successor courts (4th-7th centuries C.E) reveal the rise of a new “courtly” political and cultural order. Sumit Guha explores the impact of a 17th-century lexicon, commissioned by Shivaji and giving Sanskrit equivalents for Perso-Arabic/Hindustani terms of state, on the cultural politics of the Maratha courts. Kumkum Chatterjee shows that the Mangalkabya poems produced at the courts of 18th-century Rajas embody discursive shifts in the political culture of Bengal courts. Indira Peterson argues that the Maratha kings of 18th-century Tanjavur deployed theater as a key instrument for enunciating local identity and courtly perspectives on cultural issues. The papers document and critically examine the “languages” and "vocabularies” of the culture of Indian courts at formative moments in their histories.

Theatre North and South: Canada, South Africa, and South Asian Diaspora Performance

This panel will bring two practitioners of South Asian diaspora theatre—Rahul Varma from Canada and Logan Shunmugam from South Africa—together with two scholars of diaspora theatre—Aparna Dharwadker (UW-Madison) and Neilesh Bose (Tufts U). The four presentations will be arranged in pairs. Varma will discuss the writing and reception of BHOPAL, his recent play about the 1984 industrial accident in the eponymous Indian city. Focusing on the same play, Dharwadker will discuss Varma's collaboration with leading Indian playwright-director Habib Tanvir, and the multiple locations of performance (Montreal, Toronto, and six Indian cities, including Bhopal) as significant new directions in the development of South Asian diaspora theatre. Both these presentations will also be connected to the proposed staged reading of BHOPAL as a Conference event on October 16. Shunmugam will address his theatre practice in relation to the geographical and cultural move from South Africa to the U.S., and …

Theologizing Experience: Commentary in the Srivaisnava Community

This panel takes as its subject the complex commentarial world of the Tamil Srivaisnavas as a site for the practice of traditional hermeneutics in medieval South Asia. Francis X. Clooney, in his paper, “Commentary and the Future of
Tradition” understands the exegetical process as a living conversation among successive generations of commentators. As an example, he examines the multiple commentaries upon Vedanta Desika’s Srimadrahasyatrayasara. Ajay Rao’s paper “From Manipravala to Sanskrit: The Theologization of Vibhisana’s Surrender” analyzes commentaries treating the episode of Vibhisana’s surrender in the Ramayana as an exploration of the relationship between local and translocal realms of discourse in the Srivaisnava community. Archana Venkatesan in her paper entitled “Divining an Answer and Inventing a Goddess,” applies the Srivaisnava understanding of commentary as anubhava granta (text of experience) to the araiyar cevai (ritual of recitation) at the Srivilliputtur Antal temple to uncover the local theology of Antal.

**Transversing the Public/Private: Haram Folk, Women Undone, and Sahaba Jinns**

We, in very different ways and in very different settings, wish to locate the category of "domestic" within the discourses around the public/private. The "domestic" provides us a way to attend to the transversality of affective relations, codes of etiquette, political strategies, and articulations of kinship. The idea of the panel is not to necessarily destabilize the categories of "public/private" but to show how these are mutually constituted in relation to the "domestic." Ruby Lal in her paper will lay the theoretical grounds of the above argument in thinking about a history of early Mughal domestic life. By focusing on the poet/philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, Faisal Devji will trace the undoing of gender, as a category of distinction in early and later debates on women in South Asia. Naveeda Khan will examine how sectarianism is woven into domesticity through a familial encounter with jinns, thus entering the above debates from an anthropological perspective.

**Varieties of Hindu Nationalism: Past and Present**

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Hindus have struggled to articulate the relationship of their religious tradition first to India as subcontinent dominated by a colonial power and subsequently as a religiously pluralistic independent democratic nation. The very nature of the Hindu tradition as a diverse melting pot of religious beliefs and practices has complicated this task. This panel will present a variety of conceptualizations of "Hinduism" and its relationship to India as a nation. During the colonial period, Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy and the Arya Samajists related traditional Hindu values to rationalist values such as the morality, health, economy, and well-being of the people and nation. In recent years, an aggressive movement to define India as a Hindu nation modeled on an interpretation of Ramraj has emerged. This movement which affirms Hinduism and denigrates other religious traditions has not been universally accepted. There are other voices in India today that advocate tolerance in that religiously pluralistic nation.