Abraham, Itty

Independent Visions: Defining Indian Citizenship, Identity, and Ideology in the 1950s.

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in analyzing historically the different projects that were critical in the constitution and construction of a post partition national order in India. This panel aims to contribute towards this emerging scholarship. It examines the debates and processes through which the Indian nation-state negotiated and represented citizenship and national belonging, community identity and human rights within and outside its political borders. In doing so, the panel also seeks to question the artificial end/begin date of 1947 which differentiates between India’s colonial ‘histories’ and its post-colonial ‘politics’ while moving away from purely structuralist explanations of the Indian state.

Haimanti Roy draws upon sources from India and Pakistan to examine the emergence of documents such as passports and the ways in which they were linked in the project of fashioning Indian citizenship and redressing the problem of post-partition refugee migration.

Manu Bhagavan’s paper locates the fashioning of India’s place in the new world order through a critical examination of the current debates on citizenship, nationality and human rights from the 1940s to 1956.

Aparna Vaidik focuses on the contested status of the Andaman Islands after Independence and examines the implications of belonging to India on the island’s inhabitants.

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Acciavatt, Anthony

The Wiles of Infrastructure and Urbanism in the Hinterland of north India

Entrenched within the crust of the ground or drilled to the depths of the nearest aquifer, hydraulic infrastructure permeates the physical environment of the Gangetic Plains of north India. The proliferation of these mechanisms and their effects on the city and the perceived countryside have largely gone untracked since Indian independence in 1947.

This paper explores the visualization of this built environment through drawing and design schemes that sought to retool and seamlessly urbanize the hinterland in post-colonial north India. In order to urbanize the countryside, infrastructures were needed that could synthesize diverse tracts of land into networks that form a larger whole. Canals, tube wells, and water pumps were deployed to format ground and social mores to construct a productive countryside across vast geographical holdings. These instruments were promoted as the means to expand and maintain arable land through the mediation of time and value. As these infrastructures multiplied across the landscape in tandem to the unprecedented growth in human and non-human populations (primarily livestock), they have triggered new spatial and social inversions between cities and their vast peripheries. The fracturing of the countryside due to hydraulic infrastructure and farming has lead to many pastoral practices like cattle grazing to take place in the densest enclaves of cities like Allahabad, Mirzapur and Varanasi in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The mediation of time and value are rarely captured or viewed in real time but in the surrogates of the real—pictorial imagery. Combining field research
over the last two years with historic data and contemporary visual imagery, this research constructs a visual profile of the ways in which the overuse of hydraulic infrastructure has impacted agricultural production, local and regional customs, and the agency of design to engage these largely ignored conditions of growth. Visually tracing a number of these inversions will bring into focus how the retooling of the hinterland is today transforming space and urbanism in the Gangetic plains of north India.

Adcock, Cassie

Identity, Intolerance, and “Wounded Feelings”: Controversy in North India, ca. 1880-1915

Historian Neeladri Bhattacharya has recently remarked on the “predicaments of doing ‘secular’ histories: the need to simultaneously critique communal frames and transcend the limits that such a critique imposes.” In order to counter communal histories, secular historians’ treatments of religious identity, for example, are constrained to emphasize syncretism and tolerance. As a result, they succumb to ethnocentrism, projecting the ideals of the present into the past.

Extending this observation, this paper explores Arya Samaj controversial practice in order to revisit the historical narrative which would trace the religious nationalism of today to the propagation of a new and divisive conception of religion in the nineteenth century. This narrative describes a colonial transformation in religious identities by reference to the “Semitization” of Hinduism, a process initiated by reformers like the Arya Samaj and taken up by nationalists after the 1920s. “Semitized” Hinduism is said to consist in a new conception of religion, based on doctrinal rigidity and exclusive religious identities, and characterized above all by proselytizing. “Semitized” religion, in short, is “intolerant” religion. Controversy has been accorded an important role in disseminating this conception of religion.

This paper argues that the “Semitized religion” approach to north Indian controversy captures neither the shifting nature of local alliances between organizations, nor the nature of competition and conflict. The picture that emerges from Arya Samaj accounts of controversial encounters is not of clearly demarcated communities arrayed in clear stances of mutual opposition. Identities or alignments were not fixed -- but neither were they “syncretic.”

The culture of controversy was agonistic, provocative, and often violent. To view controversy as an expression of intolerance, however, is inadequate, for controversy was inseparable from the colonial policy of tolerance and of religious freedom. When representations of controversial practice in the press are recognized as strategies internal to controversy, it becomes clear that mutual accusations of offensiveness and provocation, protestations of wounded religious feelings and violent outrage barely contained, invoked provisions of the Indian Penal Code in order to enlist official opinion against opponents. This paper documents how the strategic negotiation of colonial laws for maintaining public order by regulating expression and protecting “religious feelings” informed the relationship between controversy, provocation, and violence. In doing so, it aims to “critique communal frames and transcend the limits” of that critique by stepping outside narratives of tolerance and intolerance.
Ahmad, Tania

Grounding Politics: Everyday Imaginaries in Pakistan

In this interdisciplinary panel, we investigate how political structures are imagined in Pakistan. Drawing from the scholarship of Charles Taylor, Cornelius Castoriadis and Akhil Gupta, we look for the meanings of institutions in the lives and works of the people implicated in their processes. In particular, we focus on non-state and non-military accounts of what the state and the military do in Pakistan. How do rural Pakistanis think about the military presence in their communities? How is the Pakistani state imagined through literary work?

We examine these issues across spatial, social and affective contexts. What can we learn about how institutions are constituted in imaginations and practices when our focus is not the institution itself, but its obverse?

This panel brings research from key contexts into explicit dialogue. We discuss English-language literature alongside sociological and anthropological work on rural Punjab, the Northern Areas and Karachi. Using both ethnographic and textual approaches, we can begin to trace broader parameters of analysis that are grounded in the manifold perceptions and understandings of political structures in Pakistan.

Ahmed, Talat

Sepoys and World War One: A subaltern perspective.

Nearly one and half million Indian soldiers fought for the British Empire in the First World War. 47,000 were killed and 65,000 wounded. One half of the Indian army was drawn from the Punjab, a region that had proved indispensable for the Raj in terms of army recruitment since the 1857 Rebellion. The concept of ‘martial’ race was used to describe Punjabis and as such they were viewed as loyal and reliable constituents for the colonial state.

The experience of Sepoys in Europe has been documented from archival sources such as letters sent home from the front. These provide a valuable insight into some of the conditions, perceptions of, and attitudes to, the Indian presence in Britain and France. However, heavy censorship was applied by the military authorities and the majority of correspondence was written by scribes as most soldiers were illiterate. This raises an important issue relating to historical gaps in the experiences of Indian military life in Europe. Outside conventional historical sources, imaginative literature has provided an additional and insightful window into social life. Mulk Raj Anand’s novel Across the Black Waters depicts the experiences of Indian soldiers as they arrive in France 1914 to defend the ‘motherland’. Published in 1940, the novel forms the middle section of a trilogy that traces the life of young Lalu Singh as he grows up in rural Punjab, joins the army and finally returns home to engage in revolutionary activity against the British.

Anand had personally witnessed thousands of men enlist into the army and was acutely aware of how few returned home. He had heard stories about Europe, the war and army life from
returning soldiers and their families whilst he studied at the University of Punjab. The historicisation of the First World War and its impact on Indian soldiers resulted in huge critical acclaim for this novel. Perhaps this explains why Across the Black Waters was adapted by the British Council as a play in 1998 to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the end of the war. The aim of this paper is to explore the representation of trench warfare and the experiences of Indian soldiers in relation to war, gender, race and religion within this novel. It will examine the interplay of history and literary genre in the context of wider debates about these disciplines.

Akhtar, Rita

Muslim Personal Law in the West: Testing the Limits of Multiculturalism

The ideological fault lines on the issue of religious personal law in the West are far from clear with progressive and conservative proponents found on both sides. Advocates of universal human rights, generally found on the left, and religious adherents of universal moral law, often found on the right, take a universalist stand against religious personal law. Advocates of multiculturalism, generally found on the left, and advocates, often conservative, of the particular religious personal law in question, will argue for tolerance of religious difference in personal law. This paper reviews the arguments for and against recognizing Muslim personal law in the West and suggests that, whatever the immediate practical effects, incorporating Muslim personal law into western legal systems crosses the limits of legitimate toleration of religious and cultural difference. The intense controversy following the Archbishop of Canterbury's remarks suggest that multicultural policy in the West is undergoing some reconsideration. This paper contributes to the discussion by comparing the US and common law approaches to personal law questions and asking whether the line of argument followed in the US might adequately cope with the tension between human rights and religious freedom elsewhere.

Ali, Daud

Padmasri’s Nagarasarvasva and the Evolution of Kamasutra

This paper will assess the importance of a little studied text on erotics called the Nagarasarvasva for understanding changing features of the ‘kama-world’ in early India. The Nagarasarvasva, or ‘Complete Townsman’, composed by one Padmasri, probably in the tenth or eleventh century, is the oldest surviving text in the genre of kama sastra after Vatsyayana’s Kamasutra. It therefore forms an important ‘bridge’ between the earlier sastric learning on this subject and what might be loosely called the later or ‘medieval’ tradition of kama sastra. As such the Nagarasarvasva introduces a number of novel concerns and differently inflected themes which represent notable departures from the conceptualisation of kama as found in Vatsyayana. These include not only modified sexual typologies and new physiological ideas, but more importantly, new courtship practices which reveal distinctive relations with other fields of knowledge, including poetics, religious esoterica, and various ‘arts’ like the study of jewels, the interpretation of signs and knowledge of astrology. This paper will outline the distinctive and formative features of this text and reflect on the social meanings of the changing contours of sexual knowledge in early medieval India.
Ali, Daud

Religious Landscapes and Socio-Political Formations in Early India: Archaeological Perspectives (Session 1)

The aim of this panel is to explore ways in which the renewed archaeological and art-historical examination of wider contexts of religious sites can contribute to the historical understanding of early historic and early medieval India by presenting the findings of six ongoing research projects on Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jain sites.

Traditionally, art-historical approaches to the study of religious sites have tended to focus on iconographic, architectural, and stylistic aspects of monuments and sculpted images in and of themselves, while archaeological studies have concentrated on the chronological and architectural reconstruction of sites and monumental remains from vertical excavations and detailed analysis of artifacts. Despite yielding a large amount of useful information, such focused studies have rarely attempted to bring their findings on the field to broader historical contexts and explore them in relation to (1) the wider archaeological/environmental landscape in which monumental structures are found, and (2) the regional contexts in which sites developed. In addition, the role and functions of building religious institutions in the formation of socio-political compounds remain under-investigated.

In an attempt redress this shortcoming, this panel brings together six papers, presented over two sessions, focusing on the ‘historical’ reconstruction of particular archaeological sites in early historic and early medieval India. This session of the panel (session one) will focus on three early Buddhist sites (Amaravati, Bharhut and Junnar). The second session will include sites with Brahmanical and Jain temples (Badoh-Pathari, Aihole, and Gaya/Bodhgaya). These papers together will demonstrate that monuments, along with their archaeological contexts in their landscape, embody important religious and socio-political contexts for understanding early India. The papers will draw primarily from field-data gathered during archaeological surveys of sites. Combining this data with existing archaeological, art-historical and epigraphic sources, the papers will show how the examination of the wider archaeological, art-historical and regional setting of religious sites can inform the socio-historical contexts of their formation, and shed new light on issues such as religious patronage networks, linkages between religions, society and state, state-formation, and the nature of inter-religious dynamics in the context of the early India.

Ali, Daud

Religious Landscapes and Socio-Political Formations in Early India: Archaeological Perspectives (Session 2)

The aim of this panel is to explore ways in which the renewed archaeological and art-historical examination of wider contexts of religious sites can contribute to the historical understanding of early historic and early medieval India by presenting the findings of six ongoing research projects on Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jain sites.

Traditionally, art-historical approaches to the study of religious sites have tended to focus on iconographic, architectural, and stylistic aspects of monuments and sculpted images in and of themselves, while archaeological studies have concentrated on the chronological and
architectural reconstruction of sites and monumental remains from vertical excavations and detailed analysis of artifacts. Despite yielding a large amount of useful information, such focused studies have rarely attempted to bring their findings on the field to broader historical contexts and explore them in relation to (1) the wider archaeological/environmental landscape in which monumental structures are found, and (2) the regional contexts in which sites developed. In addition, the role and functions of building religious institutions in the formation of socio-political compounds remain under-investigated.

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Ali, Daud

Pleasure Principles: The World of Kama in Early India

Although examination of the sensible, sensual world of material reality formed a substantial component of premodern South Asian scholarly practice and intellectual concern, texts that treat of such subjects have been largely understudied by modern scholars of South Asia. This panel seeks to redress this neglect by exploring knowledge practices organized around what we would like to call the “kama world” of early India. Within this world of art and music, precious gems and metals, colorful flowers, luxurious fabrics, and enticing perfumes, the urbane and cosmopolitan sophisticate cultivated his or her physical, mental, and affective capacities in order to optimize and succeed in experiences of pleasure, beauty, passion, attachment, sex, courtship, and seduction. Drawing upon the disciplines of kamasstra, gandhasastra, and Buddhist monastic handbooks, the papers in this panel seek to fulfill several objectives. First, they will serve to broadly outline the contents of this worldly discourse by describing the range of subjects that fall within its domain, as well as analyzing specific elements that illuminate its premises and principles. Second, they will mark the shifting contours of this world and will suggest possible explanations for these changes. Third, they will address novel perspectives on the interaction between literary culture and material culture that emerge from the texts under discussion. Finally, they will address the wider significance of this material for scholars of South Asia, the challenges and promises it offers in relation to key problems in the social and intellectual history of South Asia.

Ali, Nosheen
Spirited Developments

Recent decades are witness to an apparent transition from modernization theory's rhetorical distrust of culture and tradition towards neoliberal development's enthusiasm for taking culture into account. The establishment of the World Commission on Culture and Development in 1992, the publication of widely read books such as Amartya Sen's Development and Freedom (and The Argumentative Indian), and the initiation by the World Bank of volumes such as Culture and Public Action, give resounding institutional legitimacy for 'culture' within development imaginaries. Such spirited developments build on a long history of complex claims and practices around secular modernity and formal commitments to building inclusive nation-states. Yet, how is secularism in nation-building accomplished? When secularism itself produces exclusions, how are we to approach and apprehend its exemplary status in modern democracies? What does the recognition of culture in the era of neoliberal development mean in practice? What, if any, are the conceptual limits of 'culture' in development's turn to culture? The papers on this panel are motivated by what Saurabh Dube has called 'enchantments of modernity', or the monumental yet embodied storyline that poses a rupture between an enchanted past and a reasoned present. The papers explore subjects such as reasoned deliberations by gurus and Gandhi as they produce notions of Hindu subjects, the rationales for worshiping snake-goddesses in locations entailing defunct rural health systems and frequent snake-bite deaths, and the problematic, top-down insertion of 'culture' into development projects aimed at inculcating belief in law among citizens in Nepal. Are these practices variants that rework the ideological distinctions of modernity and tradition, ritual and reason, individual and collective - ongoing elaborations that hold up a mirror to the enchantments of modernity? Together the papers raise questions about the meaning of religion and culture in politics and development in South Asia by variously querying development's spirited turn to culture, grounding the presumed transition in historical particularity, and underscoring tensions in ready claims regarding secular polity, moral deliberation, and cultural practice.

Ali, Kamran

Cultures, Hegemonies, and National Formations: A Session in Honor

James Brow's decades-long work in Sri Lanka links focused, multi-layered ethnographic inquiries into the formation of the local and national community with the conceptual and theoretical formulations of scholars such as Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall. Brow's locally-grounded analysis takes full account of the ways in which cultural hegemonic processes continually (re)structure social, class, gender relationships and identities and inform the conduct of everyday life, historically and contemporaneously. A commitment to re-articulating the responses of subaltern social groups and marginalized people to nationalist hegemonic forces lies at the heart of Brow's nuanced and rich contributions to scholarly research into South Asian societies. More broadly, his rich methodological strategies and interpretive frameworks breach extant disciplinary boundaries and provide extraordinary latitude for research on a wide range of topics and subjects. The papers in this session underscore the extent to which scholars have fruitfully extended Brow's theoretical and ethnographic explorations into the constitution of, and the contest over, 'community' in their own research areas. Sandya Hewamanne's paper analyzes how Sri Lanka's former global factory workers negotiate new identities in rapidly changing Sri Lankan villages while engaging in a contested process that is slowly reshaping the ideal of
‘good married woman.’ Ritu Khanduri focuses on how Dalit political activists understand and articulate ethical representations of their religious images in print media, while analyzing the hegemonic pressures to become ‘good citizens’ in India. Rachel Myers’s paper explores how middle class women in Varanasi, India, make use of the contradictions created by the clash of modernizing and traditional forces in order to subvert hegemonic norms that seek to govern their everyday lives. Guha Shankar's work on the South Asian diaspora in the Caribbean situates public cultural events – ethnic festivals, music and dance performances - as conflictual spaces in which rhetorical claims about (in)authentic cultural forms simultaneously reproduce and contest hegemonic ideas about racial identity, cultural purity, and who belongs to the nation-state.

Amar, Abhishek Singh

Negotiating Co-existence: A study of Inter-Religious Dynamics in the Bodhgaya Region

Located in the Bihar province of India, Bodhgaya has been the paradigmatic Buddhist site, being the place of enlightenment of historical Gotama Buddha. The beginning of studies on early Buddhism and the re-discovery of Bodhgaya as an important ancient Buddhist site in nineteenth century led to a number of works on the issue of disappearance of Buddhism in India, linking it to the competition/contestation from the emerging sects of Hinduism. In this context, most of the works on Bodhgaya have focussed on the nineteenth century contestation over the control of the temple site between the Buddhists led by the Mahabodhi society and the Hindu Mahant whereas a few works have pursued a comparative approach linking emergence of ‘Hinduized Gaya’ with simultaneous decay of ‘Buddhist Bodhgaya’ within a broader historical pattern. Almost all of these works have adopted a site-centric study, treating Bodhgaya or Gaya in relative isolation from their surrounding environs.

This paper, based on an archaeological survey of the broader Bodhgaya region, will examine the intricate nature of interaction between Buddhism and various newly emerging sects of Hinduism to study the processes of historical developments between the sixth and the twelfth centuries CE. The survey confirmed the existing idea about the emergence of Vaisnavite Gaya and Saivism in the broader Bodhgaya region during the study period and their simultaneous co-existence with Buddhism. The paper therefore examines how this co-existence was also characterised by strands of tensions and contestations in the domain of doctrinal debates and religious landscapes to analyse the mechanisms of negotiation for the co-existence of Buddhism and various sects of Hinduism in the study-period. In addition, the paper will also show that how this negotiation was informed by the existing polity and constantly evolving religious landscapes. In doing so, this paper will attempt to develop a different approach by integrating archaeological, sculptural and epigraphic data along with the literary and religious texts to study these issues, the interpretation of which, so far, has been dominated by a heavy reliance on religious and literary texts in previous works.

Anjaria, Ulka

Realism, Magic and Power: Literary Imaginations of the Pakistani State
This paper investigates literary imaginations of the Pakistani state in the context of larger discussions around realism, magic and power in the successive governments of the postcolonial Pakistani nation. Drawing links to theoretical paradigms generated by the Latin American and African ‘dictator’ novels, I argue that literature serves to register the profound and absurd machinations of authoritarian power in Pakistan through an ambivalence around the role of character and agency that distorts an otherwise straightforward literary realism. Like its counterparts in other part of the postcolonial world, the Pakistani state is represented in terms of a deep disillusionment with the paths taken by the modern nation-state. Yet in a unique way, the novel of Pakistan shares with its other South Asian counterparts a certain attention to the everyday workings of the ‘magical state’ that characterizes South Asian modernity as unique from other parts of the world. Through a reading of Salman Rushdie’s Shame, I focus on the novel’s thematization of questions of realism, magic and power and its deeply perverse and fascinating account of the Pakistani state. Using anthropological accounts of the state such as those of Michael Taussig and Veena Das to situate my analysis, I conduct an interdisciplinary reading of Shame that establishes it as both paradigmatic and pushing the boundaries of this genre of authoritarian realism.

Arabandi, Bhavani

‘Neighbors Envy, Owners Pride’: Identity and Consumption in Post-liberalization India

One of the prevailing topics of discussion in the popular media in India recently has been the expanding spending power and rising consumption of the Indian middle class. The Gandhian ideals of austerity and “simple living, high thinking” suited the tightly controlled economy (1947-mid 1980s) where affordable consumer goods were hard to come by. In contrast, Rajiv Gandhi’s dismantling of the license-permit raj in the 1980s and the push towards liberalizing the economy in the 1990s by subsequent Indian governments opened the market to an influx of consumer durables. As a consequence, many observers note that today consumption holds a central position among India’s middle class life. Some even argue that the Indian middle class identity in the post-liberalization period is built around consumption and its capacity to consume. Using ethnographic fieldwork, this study finds that individuals actively participate in the global economy, and consume not just goods and services but also ideas and lifestyles that are presented by both the local and global media. Further, in a culture that is invested in setting distinctions (based on caste, class, religion, region, etc), consumption adds yet another dimension that sets status boundaries between groups.

Asthana, Vandana

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES IN COLONIAL AND POST COLONIAL INDIA

South Asia is a region with diverse ecological contexts and human cultures, differing environmental traditions and lively debates about alternative futures. However, over a period the region has seen much environmental degradation and controversies over development of large-scale projects. Some believe that the deterioration in the environment is of such magnitude that all development must be stalled for the planet to survive. Another point of view dismisses the entire environmental movement as one that stalls growth and progress. Making sense of these claims over environment and development issues require a social,
historical and political perspective that allow us to understand the major changes that occur in the current environment overtime. Many of these recent controversies have their historic roots back to the early colonial beginnings. The panel will not only focus on the colonial period and its aftermath on ecological transformations and conflicts in the region, but seeks to place these events in larger perspective in postcolonial India. The subsequent emergence of conflicts and projects related to controversies over environment and development in the twenty-first century and its historical connections to the past forms a major theme of the panel. The papers deal with historic ecological legacies of India, and enable one to gain an understanding of why things are the way they are today, and how did these transformations come about. The panel will focus on imperial rule and its consequences for a largely peasant society and its multifaceted ecological impact, the cultural dimensions of conflicts relating to the abuse of nature in current developmental projects based on choices of technology and patterns of resistance and the impact of these political decisions on the landscapes and peoples in independent India and Pakistan.

Bailey, Martha

Muslim Personal Law in Ontario?

Ontario’s faith-based arbitration debate occurred in a post-9/11 environment of heightened concern over religious fundamentalism and fears relating to Islam. The debate took place in a charged atmosphere and led to many misunderstandings about what had been proposed. Many were under the misimpression that the Ontario government was considering the introduction of "Sharia courts" or the adoption of "Sharia laws." Many were unaware of Ontario's laws and policies relating to private ordering of family law disputes. Many were also unaware of the limits on the power of arbitral tribunals and of how faith-based arbitration fit within the existing family law regime. This paper corrects the misinformation that continues to circulate about Ontario's debate on this issue. It examines the law reforms that were introduced after the extraordinary protests regarding "Sharia courts." These reforms include a requirement that Canadian law be adopted in family law arbitrations. The principle invoked by the government when it introduced this requirement is that there should be "one law for all Ontarians": This paper points out the extent to which norms other than Ontario law always have been applied. Ontario law itself calls for application of foreign laws when there is an identified link between the foreign state and the issue to be resolved. This is an inevitable state of affairs and true everywhere. Given the strong policy in favour of private ordering, private international law, and existence of at least some religious norms that are consistent with Canada's law and polices, private ordering of family law disputes in accordance with religious norms, by arbitration or otherwise, should be accepted. Courts will not enforce settlements or arbitral awards that violate Canada's public policies or mandatory laws. Engagement with the normative plurality of Canada's religiously diverse population makes it possible to address problems arising from any inconsistencies between Canada's laws and policies on one hand and the norms of religious groups on the other. The current approach focuses on the positive law enacted by the state and ignores normative plurality.

Banerjea, Niharika
Special Economic Zones: Economic Reforms, Nationalism, and Globalization in Contemporary India.

In early 2007, Nandigram, a rural district in the Indian state of West Bengal, captured the international headlines for witnessing violent clashes between the police and farmers who were reported to be protesting against the democratically elected communist administration’s plans to set up a chemical hub and industrial zone in the area. A collective of local farmers, well-organized activist groups, and some opposition political party representatives were involved in an intense and successful campaign to stop the proposed project. The chemical and industrial hub was one in a series of economic zones that is being proposed by several state administrations across India. The clashes in Nandigram brought to international limelight and sharpened a debate around one of the most controversial economic reforms in contemporary India. Special Economic Zones (SEZs), production sites that are exclusively geared toward exports, is currently one of the most divisive issues in India’s socio-economic landscape. While some sections of the transnational classes, including members of the state and industry consider these export zones as the key to India's rapid economic growth, others, including activist, non-profit and select interest groups criticize SEZs as a land grab instrument wielded by the state and industry in the interests of global capital. In these debates, genuine issues around foreign investment, employment generation, displacement and rehabilitation are being raised either in full or partial support of or against SEZs. Against the backdrop of these issues, this paper discusses how nationalism in contemporary India frames discourses and policies on economic reforms in particular and globalization in general. I argue that the debate over SEZs is not a neutral moment in the history of the shift from a state-driven to a market-driven industrialization and growth, but a contest over nationalism and national development in a ‘structurally adjusted’ global platform.

Baruah, Bipasha

Gender and Globalization: Women in the Indian Construction Industry Negotiate the ‘Local’ and the ‘Global’

The construction industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in India. After agriculture, it is the second largest sector generating employment. It is estimated to employ about 30 million Indians, of whom 51 percent are women. The construction sector contributes to about 5 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and about 8 percent of the country’s capital formation. However, unlike other industries, where women are increasingly employed in semi-skilled and skilled occupations, in the construction industry they are engaged almost exclusively as casual manual laborers. Very rarely do women in India gain access to opportunities to acquire skills in more lucrative, but predominantly male-dominated, trades like carpentry, masonry, plumbing and electrician training.

India is of course not the only country to discourage women from participating in skilled occupations in the construction sector. The experiences of women working in the construction industry differ widely from country to country but there are common themes underlying their different situations. The construction labour market is segmented along gender lines in both developed and developing countries, with women concentrated in low paid jobs, or working without remuneration, while men undertake the more highly paid skilled work. Furthermore, there exists an almost universal scepticism of the ability of women to undertake skilled
construction work and almost everywhere there are numerous barriers to their entry into the skilled construction trades.

This paper identifies challenges and opportunities faced by women in the construction industry in India through empirical research conducted in Ahmedabad in collaboration with the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) - a trade union founded in 1972 to organize women in the informal sector for better working conditions and social security provisions. Two surveys - of 250 individuals each - were conducted in 1998 and 2003 to understand the needs and priorities of workers. A third survey of 193 women was conducted in 2006 to assess the impacts of training programs conducted by the SEWA Housing Trust (MHT). While enthusiastically endorsing the role that such training can play in providing skilled women with quality employment opportunities, this paper emphasizes the need for wider policy intervention and affirmative action legislation at the state and national level to ensure that such efforts have replicable, sustainable and gender-equitable results.

Beaster-Jones, Jayson

Reworking Class in India: Gender, Caste, and Labor after Liberalization

More than a decade after the institution of liberalization policies in India, the face of the class and gender roles in both large cities and rural areas has changed significantly. Previously, middle class status was achieved through a stable government job or through management of a family-owned business. Yet in this post-liberalization context, middle class status has come to be defined in new terms. In India’s metropolitan cities, for example, the upper middle class has become associated with high-end service sector jobs, even as the retail service sector clamors for an aspiring middle class to fill entry level sales positions. In rural areas, young women imagine themselves in other power-laden positions – in the police force and Indian Army. Each of these roles are at odds with older models of class and gender that constitute the foundation of the national imagination. Even so, subjects constituted in these new socio-economic conditions strive for new social statuses, which especially in rural areas remains connected to caste. This panel seeks to explore the ways in which new forms of work shape and are shaped by gendered subjects to achieve a particular class status, even as the meaning of this status changes in the process. New and newly imagined cultures of work created in these contexts draw upon scripts of femininity and masculinity that hearken back to nationalist ideals even as they assert and mediate between “global” norms. Drawing from ethnographic analysis, this panel will detail some of the ways in which discourses of gender and gendered workers come to make up both the everyday relations of work, as well as new class and caste configurations. From the village of Kothariya, Rajasthan; to the textile designers and printers of North India; to the call centers of Delhi; to metropolitan retail stores across India, the papers in this panel address a variety sites of both imagined and actual gendered work to explore the interconnections between gender, caste, class, work, media, and a shifting notion of “Indianness.”

Beaster-Jones, Jayson

Selling Middle Class: Gendered Labor in India’s Retail Service Sector
While conducting ethnographic research in a large chain of urban music stores, the dearth of female employees on the shop floor was immediate apparent. While young women had a significant presence in back offices as managers at the regional and corporate level, few stores of this chain had more than one or two women of the staff interacting directly with customers as customer service agents. Book, apparel, and departmental stores, on the other hand, had many more women present on the shop floor. Why is female labor in certain retail contexts acceptable, but not in other contexts? How do these differential conceptions of “proper” labor articulate with the production of the new Indian middle-class? Based upon interviews from twenty-six stores in nine cities of this retail chain, this paper critically examines the gendering of music store labor in urban India. Exploring the narratives explaining this lack of female customer service agents in India’s most “cosmopolitan” cities, the paper analyzes a variety of rationalizations from managers and staff, ranging from issues of personal safety to a disdain of “shopkeeping” and forms of “heavy labor.” The paper suggests that work in music stores is, in part, a normative reproduction of middle-class feminine modesty in this nascent service economy. I suggest that differential conceptions of “the public” play a role here, as do expectations that the women should interact only with particular sorts of people in the marketplace and that popular music, in particular, remains a subversive site of the performance of an aspiring middle class identity.

Beck, Brenda

The Legend of Ponnivala

A major oral folk epic (locally known as the Annanmar Story) was once very popular in an upland, outlying area of Tamilnadu. We are currently animating this legend in 26 half hour episodes using an HD format combined with a 2D folk style for the colors and basic "look." The presenter will briefly describe this large production project and then proceed to talk about a number of core themes contained in the performance itself. Several episodes from the story will be "displayed on a monitor" in the exhibition area, allowing conference attendees to examine the legend in more depth.

A 38 hour performance of this story tape recorded in 1965 oral epic has been analyzed in depth. It is basically a three-generation legend. The 1st generation in the family are the region’s initial agricultural settlers. In the second generation their offspring become small local rulers that gradually develop links to the great Chola monarchy. In the third generation, as the great Cholas wane, the twin grandsons of the initial farmers become warriors. They now attempt to defend their small kingdom from numerous intruders. In sum, the legend first describes the experiences of a settler/farmer, then that of a small king, and finally that of two warrior-brothers. In the end both grandsons die heroically and without issue. Like the general Hindu concept of periodic renewal, the two heroes’ deaths are followed by great fires and floods. The kingdom of Ponnivala is no more and we are left with a lush natural world from which (it is assumed) there will soon be new beginnings.

This rich Ponnivala tapestry provides the viewer with a unique perspective on Indian history. The local family's evolution roughly parallels 500 years of medieval history in the this area – approximately 1,000 to 1,500 AD. It looks at the great Chola monarchy as if it were a huge umbrella seen from underneath. Hence one sees "laid bare" the many mechanisms by which the kings' great canopy was repeatedly opened and closed. It is as if the “support wires” or struts that held up the whole are here exposed. This colorful story is rich with sociological
and cultural detail. The 26 episodes (soon to be made available on multiple Blue Ray discs) are well-suited for use as a classroom teaching resource.

Bedi, Tarini


Most examinations of contemporary Hindu nationalist politics focus on ritualized communal violence against non-Hindu minorities. It is through these brutal displays of majoritarianism that many argue, Hindu nationalist politics locates its power. This paper, based on fieldwork with women of the Shiv Sena party in Pune city, suggests a somewhat alternative examination. It finds that for Shiv Sena women, the fashioning of power and their perceptions of political agency are located in more informally produced action, much of which is enacted in urban spaces that are marginal to the centers of formal politics and government. Further, this power gets expressed in often violent ways that are outside the parameters of propriety conventionally expected of women. This paper is most concerned with this intersection of women’s unconventional behavior and its enactment in morally marginal spaces. It suggests that it is in urban spaces that are considered morally marginal where gendered political community is produced. It examines the ways in which the moral margins of Pune city associated with sex-work, become sites for the expression of political rebellion, informal urban power, public activism and ultimately, electoral platforms for women who belong to the Shiv Sena party. It argues that it is the marginality and violence in these urban spaces that allows particular personalities to emerge as caretakers, and protectors through the complex intersections of party politics, personal commitments to social justice, and shared gender. The paper is an attempt to illustrate that while the broader discourse of “social work” derives its political intent from Hindu nationalist politics, the ways in which this politics is actually expressed and the ways in which power is constituted in local settings varies greatly. It is also an attempt to illustrate the varied expressions of political practice within Hindu nationalist politics, many of which are often at odds with the dominant notions of religion, morality, and gender.

Bednar, Michael

Borrowing the Past, Reflecting the Present: Literary Constructions from the Delhi Sultanate

When panegyrists, poets, and historians write of historical events, they create a narrative that retells the events of the past for an audience in the present. The appropriation of themes, imagery and tales out of time reveals as much about their idea of the present as it does of the past. In effect, the past lives in the present and the present writes the past. This panel begins with a paper by Blain Auer that examines how historians used prophetic tales surrounding Joseph (Yusuf) to incorporate the pre-Islamic past into the Delhi Sultanate present. The second paper, by Michael Bednar, explores how Amir Khusrau twisted tropes of classical Persian poetry to create a space where he cultivated thirteenth-century Indian imagery into the Persian landscape. The panel ends with Alyssa Gabbay's paper on how Amir Khusrau himself, as a result of his contradictory statements about Hindus, became part of a contested historical narrative about the Delhi Sultanate and an Indo-Persian past.
Behal, Monisha

Current Challenges of the Women's Movement in Assam: From Gandhi to Rights

India's struggle for freedom brought Assamese women out of their homes in large numbers to fight for the country’s freedom. Gandhi's popularity in Assam enhanced the position of the Congress Party, which became a mass political organization with no other party to challenge it. As Congress gained adherents, support for women's participation in the freedom movement increased and women were encouraged to reach out to women in the rural areas.

Post independence, the women's movement focused on welfare measures and ignored larger issues of women’s empowerment. At the same time, their support for Assamese culture, especially literature, gained them a secure place in the state.

It was in the 1980's that two parallel processes took place in Assam. First, the rise of insurgency brought violence and in its wake, counter-insurgency violence. The violence shook civil society to its core, and no organization, including women's groups, challenged the insurgents or the para-military forces for several years. The second process began with the Indian government's decision to integrate women into development in its Seventh Five-Year Plan. This plan promoted gender equality, women’s participation in the economy, and encouraged research on women and Women’s Studies programs. India’s major women's organizations reacted favorably to these initiatives, and worked to secure more government support for their agendas. Marginalized by centre politics and unable to work on problems stemming from the insurgency, Assam’s women’s organizations lagged behind in developing a feminist approach to salient issues.

This paper looks at the current work of two women's organizations: the Assam Mahila Samata Society (a government sponsored unit of the Mahila Samakhya), and North East Network that have linked the issue of development for women with advocacy for good governance and security. In developing their goals and ideology, these organizations have borrowed heavily from the goals of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Working for gender equality in an environment rife with ethnic and inter-tribal tension, these organizations have found the concept of “rights,” as propagated by international organizations, an effective strategy to pursue women’s empowerment. This paper discusses the strategies employed by these organizations to influence the state for better governance and gender justice in Assam.

Berry, Kim

Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan: Single Women, the Fight for Land Rights, and the Creation of a New Sasural

Single women in Himachal Pradesh have formed a new social movement to craft lives of dignity outside of the institution of marriage. Refusing the neo-liberal paradigm, Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan has articulated its primary demands: land rights for landless single women, increased state support for health care, and an increase in the single women’s pension. Their integrated economic strategy involves the creation of a new marital family (nya sasural) in
which an older single woman partners with a younger single woman and her children to jointly farm a 2 acre plot of land, focusing on subsistence agriculture.

This new collective identity as single women (formed across numerous axes of difference) provides a position for “imaginary re-identification” that challenges the naturalized category Women so popular in development discourse, nationalist imaginings of woman as wife/mother and the patriarchal family as the basic unit of the nation, as well as the locally hegemonic reduction of the good woman to the suhagan (auspiciously married woman). Single women’s struggle for land rights poses challenges to the mutually constituted categories and relations of the heteropatriarchal family, class, and the state. As they demand land rights from the state, single women contest the capitalist state’s fundamental guarantee of an exclusionary property regime through its institutions of record keeping, courts, police, and military; they contest the construction of a neo-liberal state that outsources its development commitment to citizen-subjects; and they call forth - and legitimate - an earlier construction of the post-colonial development state. ENSS members are also disrupting some of the key operations of heteropatriarchy, both by contesting the stigma of living outside the institution of marriage and simultaneously fighting for an alternative material base for economic security. Yet when the category of the good woman is simply broadened (as opposed to a queer rejection of the construction of normative and deviant subjects) and when the nya sasural is an accommodation of the marginalized rather than a determined redefinition of the center, then we can understand why many single women remain invested in - and continue to reproduce - the core institution of marriage through their literally backbreaking struggles to raise money for their children’s weddings.

Bhagavan, Manu

New Hope: India, the United Nations, and the Making of the Universal Declaration of

This article explores India's role in the development and design of the United Nations, refracted through the Commission that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Through an analysis of sovereignty, citizenship, nationality, and human rights from the 1940s to 1956, the paper discusses what India hoped the UN to be, and more generally what they intended for the new world order and for themselves. The paper challenges existing interpretations of international affairs in this period. It seeks to reform our understanding of Jawaharlal Nehru's intellectual vision, and in the process attempts to recast the very concept of postcoloniality.

Bhan, Gautam

Contested Politics and Millenial Urbanism: Democracy, Citizenship, and Rights to the City in Delhi and Mumbai

Urban India is currently in a moment framed by multiple transformations: global and national economic restructuring; changing sites and forms of urban government; changing visions of urban residence and citizenship, and new forms of political mobilization emerging in response to a changing set of values and logics shaping urban space. Evictions of informal settlements, large scale privatization and development of urban space and systems, changing aesthetic
forms, and controversies over migration and “authentic” urban dwellers are just some visible manifestations of these shifts. The papers in this panel are attempts to enter into contemporary urban India from a particular perspective: that of a politics of democracy and social justice.

Gautam Bhan’s paper looks at the increasing number of informal settlement evictions that have marked Delhi’s urban landscape since the millennium and argues that these evictions must be read as markers of a shift in the way that the urban poor are represented, perceived and governed. He further locates this shift as partly originating a new site of urban government: the courts. What, he asks, are the possibilities of articulating a politics of social justice in this context?

Sapna Doshi’s paper takes on the issues of resettlement and evictions in Mumbai. Resettlement, she argues, offers slum dwellers both opportunities to participate as well as the danger of exclusion. Ethnographically mapping the eviction process in one particular neighborhood, Doshi shows the lived experiences of displacement and exclusion based on class, region, and religion to argue that the mutually constitutive processes of participation and exclusion must be understood in a relational view of popular mobilization.

Liza Weinstein broadens the scope of the panel and asks a critical question of contemporary global development: under what conditions do globalizing forces acting at the local level either hinder or facilitate democratic participation? She takes on the question through a historically-grounded case study of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, looking at both the potential and actual implementation of the project in Mumbai and its impact on democratic participation for the poor.

These papers address the broader transformations reconfiguring contemporary urban India, but also how these transformations are manifesting themselves in two particular sites: Mumbai and Delhi. Such located comparisons enable us to see both convergences and divergences in not just the theory but the form in which urban India is changing.

Bhatt, Rakesh

Kashmiri Language in Diaspora: Folk Beliefs, Evaluation, and Attrition

During various points of the history of Kashmir, different languages have served as “legitimate language,” creating conditions where the acquisition of symbolic and cultural capital meant the acquisition and use of a language other than Kashmiri, the mother-tongue of the majority of the population of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. After India’s independence (1947), Urdu language has gained its legitimacy from state sponsored institutions which inculcate, in subtle ways, the authority of the “chosen language,” and impose it even on speakers of dominated classes who rarely ever master it (Bhatt 1990). This produces and reproduces, as Gal (1988: 249) argues, “a familiar asymmetry between knowledge and evaluation of language: a respect for linguistic varieties one does not speak, a depreciation of one’s own language.” Thus, the combined effects of various institutions and their mechanisms, mother-tongue Kashmiri speakers were encouraged, if not forced, to collaborate,

In the diaspora context, the problem is further exacerbated by the presence of other linguistic hegemonies, of Hindi-Urdu and English, which further devalue and marginalize the functional efficacy of Kashmiri. I will present qualitative and quantitative evidence of linguistic attrition of Kashmiri through a detailed examination of language myths (folk beliefs about Kashmiri) and language identities, and an analysis of language attitudes (evaluation) and (cross-generational) patterns of language use among members of the Kashmiri speech community in New Delhi. These analyses will account for the linguistic acquiescence of mother-tongue Kashmiri speakers to Hindi and English that is manifestly against their interests—a result of hegemonic incorporation. I will argue that this hegemonic incorporation is made possible by confusing myths about Kashmiri language with the reality of its acquisition and use. The analysis will demonstrate important aspects of representation and social cognition of the Kashmiri community, especially as it establishes links between language socialization and folk theories of language acquisition and linguistic practices.

Bhatt, Amy

“Oral History as Methodology in Documenting South Asian Experiences in the Pacific Northwest”

As the primary oral historian of the University of Washington Libraries South Asian Oral History Project, I will discuss the use of oral history as yet-uncharted methodology for capturing contemporary experiences of migration among South Asians to the United States. I will talk about the process of collecting these histories, and the challenges in defining a vast and diverse South Asian ‘community.’ In considering the history of South Asian migration to North America, and the Pacific Northwest in particular, there is no singular or easily characterized “authentic South Asian experience.” While today South Asian as a category represents both the geographic region that encompasses India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives, it is also a political marker of a pan-ethnicity, which binds together a diversity of people. The importance of how this racialized identity has been constructed in the U.S. cannot be emphasized enough. South Asian American history is at once a history of race in this country that has resulted from actions as disparate as the banning of Asians from immigration to the U.S. to the popular media representations of South Asians as ‘model minorities.’

While several contemporary studies of South Asian diasporas have contended with diverse issues related to immigration, our project uniquely centers the voices of migrants as the primary site through which understandings of assimilation, identity, gender, class, and generational shifts are traced. This project deeply engages questions of space, geography, community, and transition through first-hand accounts of migration. With over 100 years of immigration to the region and the exponential influx of South Asians following the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, this community continues to build a significant legacy in the Pacific Northwest. With the establishment of several technology powerhouses in the area and the increasing numbers of young South Asians coming to work in those industries, the diaspora continue to grow and diversify at an unprecedented pace. I will thus show how such histories recount legal and cultural obstacles experienced by early migrants arriving in the 1940’s and 1950’s while also documenting individual experiences with building the scientific,
technical, educational, and social fabric of the Pacific Northwest Region. The use of oral history shows the breadth and diversity of the South Asian experiences, even among what might outwardly appear to be a homogenous and regionally bound community.

Bisht, R. S.

New Research and Changing Perspectives on Seals and Sealing in the Indus Civilization

The stamp seals from the Indus civilization have long attracted a great deal of attention as supports for inscriptions in the Indus script. However, the study of seals, their iconography and the functions that they may have served has not been as wide-ranging as research conducted on their inscriptions. This panel will bring together recent discoveries and new approaches to the stuffy of the Indus seals and sealings from sites in Pakistan and India. The first paper by Dr. R. S. Bisht will provide an overview of previously unreported seals and sealings from the site of Dholavira, India. The second paper by Marta Ameri, will present an art historical perspective on regional styles of seals from the major Indus sites that have been published. The third paper by Dr. J. Mark Kenoyer will present the results of recent research on the seals and inscribed tablets at Harappa in order to better define the technology of production and the implications for control in an urban context. The final paper by Gregg Jamison examines seals from several major Indus sites in order to determine distinctive production workshops and potential linkages between major Indus sites.

Bond, George

“The Ethnic Conflict and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement's Buddhist and Gandhian Campaign for Peace”

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has been one of the most active groups working for peace in Sri Lanka during the long running ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya has organized peace marches and peace meditations since the conflict began in 1983. However, Sarvodaya did not begin as a peace movement but began instead as a Buddhist village development movement, seeking to uplift the "poorest of the poor" in the most depressed rural villages of Sri Lanka. But when the ethnic conflict erupted in the early 1980s, Sarvodaya was drawn into the process of conflict resolution along with other groups in the country. This paper examines Sarvodaya's work for peace by tracing the evolution of the peace campaign and comparing and contrasting Sarvodaya’s views on peace with those of other movements. In its analysis of the problem, Sarvodaya has at times reflected the discourse of various groups in Sri Lanka such as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the nationalistic Sinhala Buddhists, but in its proposed solution, Sarvodaya’s peace plan blends Buddhist elements with elements of Gandhian idealism and new age or Victorian spirituality to call for a total, non-violent revolution. This paper examines Sarvodaya's campaign for peace and evaluates its idealistic vision of a non-violent social and economic revolution that is based on Gandhian and Buddhist values. The paper examines Sarvodaya's contention that only this kind of non-violent revolution will resolve the causes of both the conflict and the social injustice underlying the conflict.
In May 1951 Jawaharlal Nehru introduced before Parliament a Bill to amend the Indian Constitution, some fifteen months after it had come into force. Some of these amendments concerned important “fundamental rights”: the right to freedom of speech (Art. 19(1)(a)); rights against the compulsory acquisition of property (Art. 31); and rights against non-discrimination (Art. 15(1)). Each of these amendments was a response to judgments of the High Courts and the Supreme Court striking down legislation for violating these rights; and each amendment had the effect of nullifying the offending judgments.

My paper traces the history of the Art. 19(1) protection of free speech and expression through three phases: the Constituent Assembly Debates in 1946-49; the constitutional challenges in the Courts in 1950-51; and the Parliamentary debates of May 1951. I suggest that they illustrate the development of a new Constitutional idiom at this transitional time, and I attempt to elucidate that idiom to some extent.

This idiom can only be understood in the context of the peculiar circumstances in which the Bill was proposed. Since elections under the new Constitution did not take place until late 1951, the Parliament was accused of lacking the legitimacy to make sweeping Constitutional changes. But in another respect the legitimacy of this Parliament to discuss the Constitution was not in doubt: under the terms of the India Independence Act of 1947, the Constituent Assembly was to sit in a legislative capacity until the new Constitution came into force. So these constitutional amendments were debated by the very people who had framed the Constitution!

Who, then could speak for the Constitution? Was it the Courts, which were set up by the Constitution and explicitly given the power of judicial review? Or did the Framers, now sitting in their legislative capacity, have greater authority to interpret the Constitution they had written, and correct “errors” in judicial interpretation?

I argue that debates about legitimacy were ultimately cast in terms of the extent to which the institutions in question represented continuities with colonial rule. Was it the Courts, as Nehru suggested, which were still stuck with a conservative “colonial mentality,” manned as they were by judges who had been appointed by the British before Independence? Or was this charge more aptly pressed against the Government, which was seeking to enact the very same laws that the British had earlier used to suppress the Independence movement?
Domesticating the Harem:  
Reconsidering Representations of Colonial Indian Women and the Photographs 
of the Zenana of Osman Ali Khan, the Seventh Nizam of Hyderabad

The harem as a place of languid nude women, despotic rulers, and sexual deviance was the dominant construct popularized by Orientalist art, literature, and travelers' tales of the nineteenth century. The powerful exoticism propagated by these notions has been questioned by contemporary scholars (Alloula, Lewis, Mernissi), most predominantly for the regions of the Middle East and Turkey, while in comparison, the harem of India remains under examined. For the case of India, the term zenana (female quarters of the household), is often made interchangeable with the concept of the harem and is often confused with the Orientalist harem stereotype and therefore rendered as a static, unchanging, erotic realm, while the complexities of its domestic function are overlooked. Despite the correctives of recent scholarship (Burton, Grewal, Minault) to expose for India the bias inherent in the Orientalist definitions of the harem, its distinction from the zenana has not been made explicit. More importantly none have considered the impact of the visual record as a means to determine more clearly the roles of Indian women and the place of the zenana in Indian colonial culture. This paper will investigate the cultural mythology of the harem through an analysis of paintings, photographs and popular press (1820-1920) to establish the perimeters of how women's lives and female space are constructed in Indian colonial culture by Indian artists. In particular, the recent discovery of the photographs of the Seventh Nizam of Hyderabad's zenana taken by the studio of Raja Deen Dayal will form the focal point of an investigation into the roles of Indian women and the function of the zenana during the first half of the colonial period.

What effect did the pervasive stereotype of the erotic "Orientalist" harem have upon pictorial representations of women? What did it mean to be a member of a zenana at the turn of the twentieth century? What constitutes female agency within the zenana and how is it expressed? What is the nature of the erotic and the domestic in Indian society and how do these two elements coexist within the domestic sphere? This paper, a section from my dissertation, attempts to answer these queries to shed more light upon the bias and stereotypes about women's roles in Indian society that I argue have been shaped by harem mythologies and perpetuated in colonial visual culture.

Casile, Anne

Exploring temples settings, sacred landscape, and the formation of early medieval India in archaeological perspectives

Today, temple remains from the early medieval period look like dead body scattered in the countryside, and it is principally as monumental entities, that art historians and archaeologists have for a long time explored them in isolation from their contexts, with the aim notably of writing the history of architecture or reconstructing the chronology of a particular site, while
historians have generally focused their attention on epigraphic sources, neglecting sites and archaeological settings of temple building.

As suggested by inscriptions from all over India, temples did not exist apart from other social institutions, but were religious and cultural apparatus directly structuring economic relationships. Through a network of linkages, they functioned as instruments of legitimising structures of authority and power in the society.

In the context of early medieval Central India and with regard to the question of how temples defined the space in which people interacted and the society evolved, and how temples were involved in the economic and social practices and political developments, it seems significant to explore their setting in the archeological landscapes. To address this question, investigations were carried out on an important centre of the early medieval period – nowadays a village of the Vidisha district, named Badoh-Pathari (MP) –, and its surrounding countryside and rural units.

On this particular area, systematic explorations of the archaeological environment – including water structures –, and detailed investigations into the religious and iconographic dimensions of what a single or a complex of temples represented, were undertaken with several interrelated objectives: (1) to explore the sacred landscape defined by religious sites; (2) to examine patterns of socio-economic settings, spatial contexts and linkages in which temples figure; (3) to question the findings in the perspective of recent archaeological, theoretical and historiographical developments in the study of the early medieval and its buildings in India.

This paper will focus on few results of the ongoing research project.

Chaddha, Ashish

Changing the Subjected: Contest over the Identities and Politics of Indian Forest Dwellers

Small-scale forest and hill societies have traditionally constituted a marginalized “other” in the face of dominant civilizations; but the discourses of power associated with them have undergone ruptures and transformations depending on the temporal rulers of the day. In our work, the impact caused by external political agency on these societies struggling to maintain a modicum of autonomy is mapped on the four axes: social, cultural, economic, and ecological. This panel, taking the example of similar communities in western and central India, in particular the Bhil peoples of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, and research based on ethnography and archival data, seeks to chart the repeated contestations and negotiations these societies undergo as they increasingly encounter new outside influences. We argue that this history has been marked by deepening subalternity continuing from the late precolonial through the postcolonial periods as outside polities appropriate roles of leadership, and redirect the trajectories of communities. The entire process is enmeshed in the discourse of wildness and inferiority marked by struggle over the control of dwindling local resources. This holds true in the pre-colonial and early colonial period that bore witness to the Rajputization of local chieftainships, in the colonial period where tribal groups and their ecology faced a systematic assault, as well as in the postcolonial one that has witnessed right wing Hindutva engagements in the forest interior on the one hand and mobilization by the tribal groups for asserting their control over local resources on the other.
Vernacular Histories

This panel emerges out of an impetus to think about Indian history from the margins, rooted in the local, dealing with vernacular registers – linguistic and cultural. When transposed onto geographies, vernacular histories can be established as a heuristic category which provides us not only with multiple narratives but also offer insights into the ways in which the vernaculars emerge, relate historically to both global and local practices and undergo transformations. The panelists explore diverse archives and genres of texts - historical films, colonial histories and ethnographies as well as literary texts - to examine the category of the vernacular and theoretical accounts of vernacularization.

Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi examines the historical films of iconic film actor Dr. Rajkumar in the context of specific choices Kannada has had to make historically and the pressures exerted by global post-Capitalist movements. He argues that Dr. Rajkumar’s activism and artistic output present two contrasting visions of Kannada subjectivity - an anxiety-centric politics and a humanist politics - and between these two, lies the vernacular predicament of exclusivist existence and creative engagement. Manan Ahmed presents on Sindhi munshis working with the East India Company in mid-19th century. He explores the ways in which Company officials sought to use and channel the local knowledge and histories, even as they refused to trust these vernacular epistemologies. Bhavani Raman traces the emergence of Tamil munshis in the context of scribal practices and labor requirements of East India Company in the early nineteenth century Madras. She argues that the Tamil munshi emerged in conjunction with a new variety of “office” Tamil - which puts into question our received ideas on literary vernacular and challenges easy distinctions between oral and written registers. Purnima Dhavan places Punjabi in the literary cultures of the Sikh courts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. She shows that Punjabi authors weren’t merely imitating conventions of the classical courtly writing but were engaged in innovative approaches to representing the past with literary experimentation and the interplay of different linguistic registers.

Labor Migration and Social Change in South Asia

In today’s global economy labor migration is increasingly being used as a lens through which to view processes of social change. Our inter-disciplinary panel of scholars highlights research centering on labor migrants: what they do, where they go, and how they either instigate or contribute to social change. Labor migration here is defined broadly: it includes both temporary and permanent migration, and occurs either within a single nation or across national boundaries. Geoff Childs’ contribution considers changing gender roles and stereotypes in rural Tibet resulting from the recent increase of sending women outside of villages to engage in seasonal wage-labor employment. Sara Shneiderman contributes to the scholarship on identity politics by examining how circular migration among the Thangmi situate individuals in the ambiguous position of having both ‘flexible citizenship’ and ‘circular identity’ with respect to Nepal and India. Sienna Craig also uses the lens of identity politics by examining ways in which the Mustangi migrant community of New York has adapted to their new surroundings while maintaining intensive social and economic bonds.
with the communities in Nepal they left behind. Finally, Winifred Poster considers the
contradictory positions that India’s call center employees face due to the reversal of work
time that is necessitated by their places of employment serving a clientele in the West. The
overall objective of the panel is to provide a forum for discussing the phenomenon of labor
migration in South Asia, and the social, cultural, economic, and political consequences that it
has on both migration source and migration destination communities.

Choksi, Nishaant

How does one write “correct” Rathvi?: Orthographic politics and linguistic differentiation
among adivasis in Gujarat

In this paper, I examine certain orthographic disputes which have taken place in the Dhol
movement in Gujarat. Dhol is a set of magazines specifically designed by and for adivasi
communities, where adivasis discuss relevant social and political issues in their own
languages using Gujarati script. Dhol was started by the activist-scholar G.N. Devy, along
with adivasi intellectuals.

However, Dhol was started on the premise that adivasi “tribes” represent bounded speech
communities, and therefore each language may be represented transparently (with slight
changes) by the script. In addition to a widely held belief that “caste” or “tribe” forms the
stratified unit of sociolinguistic analysis, Dhol’s framework also derives from nativist literary
theory. Nativist theorists attempt to expand the notions of bhasha (language) and literature to
include adivasi traditions, challenging hegemonies, which, as exponents like G.N. Devy
argue, were imported from the West. In doing so, Dhol’s founders hoped to better reflect the
inherent multiculturalism and multilingualism of Indian society. Dhol’s program draws
inspiration from the political model set out by Antonio Gramsci. However, like Gramsci, in
order to accomplish his goals, Devy also tends to correlate definitively culture (adivasi
communities, multiculturalism) with language. While this approach on the one hand provides
a foundation for a cultural politics, it also fails to take into account different linguistic
practices within a particular speech community. This, I claim, leads to new forms of political
contestation and social exclusion.

In order to illustrate this, I will examine one particular orthographic dispute from Dhol in
the Rathvi language, spoken by the Rathwa adivasi community in Baroda district. One
contributor to Dhol was angry with the way his work was represented, arguing that the
editors, who were also Rathwas, did not “know the language.” He felt that Dhol did not
represent an authentic Rathvi, and too closely resembled standard Gujarati. However, I will
argue it is not a question of linguistic competence, but that different Rathvi speakers,
depending on where they live, their relationships with state institutions, and their patterns of
educational access, have a different attitude towards the linguistic and pragmatic distinction
between “Rathvi” and Gujarati. This reflects different language ideologies within a particular
“speech community.” I suggest that in political interventions, one should not begin with
“caste” or “tribe” but “ideology.”

Chopra, Deepta

Identity, power and representation: experiencing the state from the margins
Experiences of the state by India’s marginalised communities are variously influenced by issues of identity, power and representation. Ethnic minorities, tribal groups, displaced people, the poor, linguistic minorities, disabled, gays, unemployed, women etc. have typically struggled to represent their voices at the state level and experience different forms of marginalization in their everyday lives.

In its capacity as a developmental state, the Indian state occupies an intriguing position heralded as the protector and promoter of well being. It continues to play a central role in the lived reality and imagination of marginalized groups, offering both the possibility for hope and change but also as a source of oppression and fear. Despite these conflicting perspectives, expectations for ‘the state’ to deliver basic citizenship rights endure, especially as new spaces and modes of protest, pressure and participation emerge within civil society.

The interface between ‘the state’ and society may be understood as a complex and ‘messy’ site of interactions which are progressively mediated by both formal and informal civil society institutions. How the state is perceived and received by different individuals and groups is intimately related to issues of identity and power, but moreover state strategies may at times be subverted or reappropriated in turn transforming those identities and the articulation of power.

This panel moves beyond Corbridge et al.’s (2006) ocular impression of the state towards a full bodied understanding of experiences, both real and perceived, of the Indian state. Representing papers across disciplines, the panel explores four diverse case studies. Multiply marginalized, the experiences of Dalit women and the state are complex and contradictory. Radhika’s paper tackles these conflicting issues from the view point of a grass roots NGO and its mediations with state architecture. Through the lens of a National Award Scheme Mira explores how India’s marginalised crafts people may subvert state sponsored schemes and appropriate the politics of representation, shaping their identities and transforming power relations. Heather’s paper engages with the discourses of language and identity that inform social movement tactics with the state and how these shift across contexts to empower movements’ different strategies of representation. Finally, experiencing the state in its absence, Philippa demonstrates that although apparently missing in a Muslim community, the state is not entirely rejected. Individual and collective Muslim agencies are demonstrated in ‘filling the vacuum’, and at the same time continue to engage with the state to legitimise their actions.

Chowdhury, Md. Rashed

Climate Forecasts and Warning Response System in the Greater Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Basins—a participatory approach to seasonal flood management

Based on El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events and climate variability in the greater Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin system, the primary objective of this study is to demonstrate the potential implications of two major areas: i) basin-wide seasonal climate forecasts (i.e., rainfall and flooding), and ii) dissemination of these forecasts by strengthening the ties between the scientists, forecasters and users in a basin-wide participatory process of design, delivery, and evaluation.
The variability and predictability of seasonal flooding in Bangladesh, as revealed by large-scale predictors of the climate across the watersheds has been studied. To explore the source of predictability, accessible Bangladesh hydrological indicators are related to large-scale oceanic variability and to large-scale atmospheric circulation patterns predicted by General Circulation Models (GCM). Based on ENSO and sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the tropical Pacific Ocean, a flood prediction model is constructed for Bangladesh. This model provides skillful results; this is encouraging as it suggests that linkages with SST can be successfully recovered in a physical model of the climate system in Bangladesh and other countries in the co-basins areas. This predictability and skill level can be enhanced considerably with the information achievable from monitoring the downstream stream-flows (i.e., Bangladesh) – that are generated mainly from upstream rainfall (i.e., India) conditions – in advance of the flooding season. Therefore, enhanced regional co-operation for data exchange among the countries in the principal co-basin areas of GBM is deemed extremely important to achieve this goal.

As observed in other regions, the success of seasonal forecasts, in contrast to short-term forecasts, depends on consensus among the regional scientists, forecasters and users. Therefore, an ideal framework for the ‘Regional Climate Outlook Forum’ has been discussed to strengthen the ties between participatory institutions in the greater GBM basin system. Finally, the role of the Outlook Forum in implementing the 5-stage ‘Climate Forecasting and Warning Response System’—a) forecasting, b) interpretation and message formulation, c) warning preparation and dissemination, d) responses, and e) review and analysis—has been discussed as a comprehensive and participatory approach to basin-wide seasonal flood hazard management.

Key words: El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), Sea surface temperatures (SSTs), Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin, Consensus Seasonal Forecasts, and Bangladesh.

Cohen, Amy

Rule of Law Cultures

This paper critically examines a recent programmatic shift among law and development scholars and practitioners who have moved from building rule-of-law processes and institutions to building rule-of-law cultures. Over the past five years, rule-of-law promoters traditionally engaged in building institutions such as new courthouses and writing new laws are now increasingly arguing that “culture change” is required to revive these failing rule-of-law projects in developing and transitional states. This paper carefully considers how legal scholars envision culture as a tool to refashion the relationship between legal institutions and individual citizens. It traces the ways in which legal scholars use culture as a means to take law--general, universal, and acultural--and to make it specific, local, and embedded within the consciousness of ordinary people. It then argues that this turn from law to culture produces an impoverished conceptualization of culture uncannily analogous to the impoverished conceptualization of law that the turn to culture was meant to correct. This similarity becomes especially apparent when examining development projects. The paper therefore illustrates not only the potential ineffectiveness but also the potential dangers of development efforts to make people into law-believers by drawing on two ethnographic examples from Nepal--citizens demanding, via street protest, that the state allocate compensation for traffic accidents, and rural women who have cast their lot with Maoist insurgents in the name of
social justice. Building rule-of-law cultures, the paper suggests, is a top-down project of self-transformation that rests on erroneous assumptions about everyday life.

Cook, Matthew

Sindh’s Annexation, the Bombay Presidency and the Napier-Outram Debate

A strong archival link exists between the Bombay Presidency and Sindh. Sindh’s 1843 annexation by the British was largely supported by military and material resources from Bombay. Nevertheless, during the pivotal years following annexation, the British ruled Sindh through a Governor (Charles Napier) who reported directly to the Governor-General in Calcutta. This flow of political authority greatly impacts the study of Sindh: historical research on the region often relies on Calcutta-derived documents (from the British Library, the National Archives in Delhi and/or the Commissioner’s Archive in Karachi). This archival trail, by-and-large, circumvents collections associated with Bombay. Not consulting Bombay-associated materials and events produces a major gap in historical knowledge about Sindh.

This paper examines post facto criticisms of Sindh’s annexation by Bombay-based colonial officials. It focuses on differences between two key East India Company officers (i.e., James Outram and Charles Napier) regarding the legitimacy of British actions in Sindh. Through a combined anthropological and historical analysis, I illustrate how these differences are not just squabbles between individuals who publicly and privately disliked one another. I maintain that these differences represent an abrasive rift within the British East India Company regarding how to organize colonialism’s internal institutions and which of its competing discourses, guiding principles and legitimizing ideas should be preeminent. More than an element in a simple “turf war” between different centers of colonial authority (i.e., Bombay and Sindh), I illustrate how debates between Outram and Napier reflect a broader imperial conflict between liberal and paternal conceptions of power. I argue that the colonial state in South Asia manifests these competing conceptions by means of a historical dialogue between military and civil authority. I anthropologically examine how liberal and paternal British worldviews unbalance the historical integration of military and civil authority in the Bombay Presidency to facilitate a form of colonial rule in Sindh that is decidedly autocratic and despotic.

Craig, Sienna

Remittance and Remembrance: Identity and Economy Between New York and Mustang, Nepal

This paper begins with the assumption that today’s global economy and attendant flows of labor migration are giving rise to new iterations of what Benedict Anderson has dubbed “long distance nationalism,” as well as novel forms of social and economic organization. In this paper, I explore the dynamics of labor migration from Mustang, Nepal, to the United States – specifically to the New York metropolitan area – over the past decade. I examine different factors that have facilitated the migration of more than one tenth of the district’s population to
the greater New York area, and discuss some of the cultural, economic, and political implications of these migrations. In terms of sheer numbers, the Mustangis living in New York represent a small fraction of the American Nepali diaspora. However, this population has embraced a diverse array of socio-economic adaptive strategies through which they are navigating life in the United States. On the one hand, I argue that this nominal Mustang “community” in New York exemplifies the idea that geographic distance serves to consolidate alliances and re-cast identity politics and senses of national and local belonging. On the other, my research and analysis illustrates the ways that social divisions based on class, gender, generation, religion, and politics continue to shape how people from Mustang interact with each other in the context of New York, as well as how hard-earned remittances are apportioned back home in Nepal. Furthermore, I explore how, if, and when individuals conceive of returning ‘home’, and where this ‘home’ is situated. This paper is based on ethnographic interviews conducted with Mustangis living in New York and those living in Nepal from 1997 to the present.

Da Costa, Dia

Antidotes: Snakebites and Snake Goddesses

As the newly liberalized insurance industry in India, actively persuades a public about the rationality and morality of spending money to insure future life against bad health, uncertainty, and unhappiness, this chapter draws lessons from rural practices of healthcare and insurance. The paper follows a line from a political play performed mainly in rural West Bengal - 'Snakes live in the village, and the antidote lives in cities' - offstage into life-historical contexts where villagers respond to widespread death from snake bites, defunct rural health systems, and worship of Manasa the snake-goddess. Modernizing projects worldwide insisted that culture and tradition are antithetical to development. Today, spirited neoliberal projects want to take culture into account. They cannot fathom however, how snake goddesses can be antidotes for snake bites. When push comes to shove, the 'stubbornly superstitious' villager remains guilty of 'blind' beliefs. Drawing on field notes, secondary survey data, and interviews to situate the worship of Manasa in its social context, I argue that the secularism of development blinds critical examination of popular religion. Contemporary belief in Manasa must be understood in contexts of grief and material distress emanating from an unequal, if not absent, healthcare system, inadequate communication infrastructure, and lack of electricity. At the same time, belief in Manasa is not simply 'false' consciousness in the absence of 'real' medical advance. At heart, Manasa is an antidote and insurance because she helps form collectivity in the face of ultimately uncontrollable sources of illness and death.

Dar, Huma

Dangerous Desires: Sexualized Territories, Seductive Terrorists, and Castrating Women

Once constructed as a sublime mountainous “escape” from the heat of the Indian plains and the heat of political problems (Nehru), Kashmir has been politically conceived in India, since 1989, as one of the hot-beds of “terrorism.” This paper interrogates the production of territorially sexualized Kashmir, previously inviting and now menacingly seductive, and the sexualized, racialized, and queered “terrorist.” Dar explores the sexualized territoriality/corporeality of Kashmir and Kashmiri Muslims in the Indian cinematic
imaginary, focusing on the post-militancy period, when the “terrorist” is invoked only to be “disciplined and punished” via “expelling, selectively redeeming, marking, or confining” (Foucault, 1997: 23-26). The biopolitics of Indian nationalism normalizes the “terrorist” into docility as simply “abnormal,” as sexual-deviant, thereby moving the locus of trouble in Kashmir from actual political grievances to the pathologized body of the individual Kashmiri. In the Indian nationalist fantasy projected par excellence in Urdu-Hindi films, and in works of fiction coming out since the insurgency, this neutralizing/neutering of the Kashmiri Muslim “terrorist” takes place, with a few exceptions, via a betrayal, punishment or rejection at the hands of the Kashmiri woman, and is thus doubly emasculating to the Kashmiri Muslim man. Dar argues that such an enactment of wish-fulfilling fantasy also colonizes and appropriates Muslim women, constructed to be sexualized and sexualizing. This paper is a study of these discourses that shift, converge, and simultaneously articulate the fascination with the “abject edged by the sublime” (Kristeva), a deep-seated queerphobia and Islamophobia, the yearning to discipline the queerness in the Self and queers in the body of the nation, and the desire to neuter/neutralize/appropriate the Kashmiri Muslims (Bacchetta 1999; Puar & Rai, 2002: 117-148).

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**Das, Debjani**

**Women in Native Lunatic Asylums in Bengal**

This research is an attempt to understand why women were put in asylums in colonial Bengal. Was it for their medical treatment of insanity, or was it to discipline them so that they fit into established norms of femininity? This paper is an exploration of women diagnosed as 'mad' in native lunatic asylums in Dullunda, Berhampore, Dacca, and Patna in the Bengal Presidency in the nineteenth century. While 1858 marked the transfer of rule from the East India Company to the Crown, it also witnessed changes in asylum management across India. This study is an attempt to situate lunatic women in the asylum under the rule of both the East India Company and the Crown. The paper investigates the medical classifications of different forms, types, and causes of insanity among women. Although the category of insanity remained without definition, the British Raj produced multiple institutions for the confinement of lunatics. Between men and women, it seemed more difficult to define madness in women because, in most cases, the causes of madness in women remained ‘unknown.’

This paper will question the social background of these mad women in the asylum in order to understand the multipled causes behind their being institutionalized. Further, it will question the relation between women's 'madness' and child birth, puerperal mania, or simply because they were found wandering on the streets. The paper will ask several questions: Were women deemed to be prostitutes institutionalized with the intent to discipline as well to 'civilize' them? What was their class composition? What kind of labor were they involved in before they joined the asylum? This research explores what happened to these women's after they were discharged from asylums. This paper seeks to understand women's lives in relation to prevalent definitions of insanity in colonial Bengal.

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**Das, Sonia**

**Politics of Sociolinguistic Diversification in the Montreal Tamil Diaspora**
This paper investigates how the political and social diversification of Montreal’s Tamil diaspora is achieved through the strategic exploitation of its linguistic resources. The Tamil diaspora is currently comprised of several religious, caste, and ethnonational sub-groups which participate in segregated social and institutional networks. These social groups possess different, if not competing, political agendas for transnational or cosmopolitan belonging. In this analysis, I compare how speech events at one Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu temple and during another Indian Tamil Hindu celebration are laminating different linguistic levels to index divergent social values and personas. Together, these speech events provide evidence or how competing nationalist and status politics can be successfully transplanted within a single diaspora setting.

The nationalist politics of Sri Lankan Tamils require that they maintain linguistic distinctions between pure and impure varieties of Tamil. In Tamil historiography, morphology and phonology are identified as the primary linguistic levels through which classical Tamil has degenerated. Within Montreal’s Murugan temple, Sri Lankan Tamil speakers laminate literary Tamil morphological patterns onto oral Sri Lankan Tamil phonological patterns to convey “classicist” and “purist” values. For Indian Tamils, social status and identity are conveyed through one’s familiarity with different regional styles of modern Tamil. Currently in Tamil Nadu and abroad, prosody and lexicon are identified as the linguistic levels through which cross-cultural contact is recorded. During a Deepavali celebration in Montreal, Indian Tamil speakers laminate English or French prosody onto Tamil lexicon, as well as English or French lexicon onto Tamil prosody, to index varying “local”, “urban”, “national”, or “cosmopolitan” personas. Both of these speech events thus signal the emergence of differing sociolinguistic personas and political values which, given their institutional segregation, can co-exist without conflict.

Dasgupta, Deepanwita

Building a New Research Tradition from a Colonial Periphery: S.N. Bose and Bose-Einstein Statistics

The objective of this paper is to explore the formation of an independent tradition of scientific research in natural sciences in the early 20th-century colonial India. The colonial beginning in sciences and technology in India consisted mainly of field sciences, such as Geology or Botany, but rarely of pure university-based sciences that include laboratory research. This changed somewhat during the last decades of 19th century when isolated scientists like P.C. Roy or J.C. Bose began to contribute to the disciplines of physics or chemistry. But it is during the first three decades of the 20th century that an independent research tradition in science arose in India based mainly around the University College of Sciences, Calcutta. This small group of scientists included names like S.N. Bose and C.V. Raman, whose contributions to scientific knowledge have become common-place terms in physics textbooks today—terms such as the such as the Bose-Einstein statistics or the Raman Effect.

Yet, how did the business of making scientific knowledge proceed from a colonial periphery? What was the dynamic of this small scientific community vis-à-vis their metropolitan colleagues in various European centers of scientific knowledge? Did such peripheral scientists ever possess any true intellectual authority or were they simply dependent on their European colleagues for the generation of scientific consensus? In my paper, I discuss these questions.
with the help of the case study of Bose-Einstein statistics when S. N. Bose, a young Indian
scientist, sent his paper to Einstein in 1924 suggesting a new revolutionary idea on the nature
of light. The rest of my paper develops an account of the processes through which such
peripheral scientists are able to produce scientific knowledge, and yet how their efforts can
frequently end in failed research programs.

David Butz, Nancy Cook

Life in the fast lane: Traveling a new road in Shimshal, Pakistan

Shimshal is a farming and herding community in Pakistan’s Northern Areas. For most of the
community’s 400 year history, travel from the village required more than a week’s walk along
difficult mountain footpath. In 1983 the community began to construct a road from the
Karakoram Highway to the village. It was completed in 2003, at least a decade after roads had
been constructed to most other permanent settlements in the region; it reduced travel time to
the Karakoram Highway to three hours. The resulting increase in accessibility is having
important implications in Shimshal for the movement of people and goods, the introduction of
ideas and technology, the infiltration of bureaucracy and commerce, and the community’s
incorporation into a regional economy and political structure.

In this paper we examine thirty-five oral testimony interviews that Shimshalis recorded and
transcribed in 2001 and 2002, in which they talk about their hopes and worries for changes the
road will bring, and their ideas for how to manage those changes to benefit themselves and the
community. We also draw on interviews we conducted in Shimshal in 2007, and our
ethnographic work in the community since 1988. These data allow us to analyse the
progression of people’s preoccupations regarding the road and its effects from well before it
was finished to a few years after motorised transport became the main way people travel to
and from the community. As might be expected, community members are ambivalent about
the road’s effects, even as they incorporate the changes it brings into their daily lives and self-
understandings.

The results of this research are important for several reasons. First, road building is a
significant aspect of development work and government infrastructure initiatives in northern
Pakistan and throughout the developing world, but with little attention to the perspectives of
the people whose lives have been most affected by drastically increased accessibility. Second,
few studies of accessibility in rural regions of the developing world address its implications
for different groups within a community. In Shimshal, the road affects people unevenly,
especially in terms of gender, education, wealth and occupation; some relations of inequality
are weakened and others strengthened. Third, Shimshalis themselves are clearly concerned
about the road’s implications for their lives. Our research, undertaken in the context of a long-
term collaborative relationship with the community, can help Shimshalis shape those
implications.

De, Rohit
Judges, Nationalists and the Colonial State in South Asia: Courts and the Quit India Movement, 1942

By the summer of 1942, the Japanese were advancing towards British possessions in India, the Indian nationalist parties had launched a civil disobedience movement which was spiraling out of control and discontent was rising due to famine and severe rationing. The colonial government had issued a series of ordinances which gave the government the power to arrest people and detain them without trial. In a surprising move, the two Indian judges of the Federal Court wrote a judgment striking down the colonial legislation as ultra vires. While this was eventually overruled by the Privy Council in London, in the interim it was followed by several High Courts in restricting the actions of the provincial governments.

The colonial state in South Asia has been described as an authoritarian one with the central government headed by the Viceroy controlling most levels of power. Historians have pointed to the repressive nature of colonial law and the double standards applied to challenge British claims of bringing the rule of law to South Asia. Most accounts of law in colonial India have tended to treat courts as a part of the larger apparatus of the state, an analysis which has also been extended to the postcolonial states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This paper examines the Federal Court judgment in 1943, and the response to it by both the colonial state and Indian nationalists to interrogate the new spaces of negotiation and resistance which were being opened up in the late colonial state. Using court documents, government memoranda and judicial biographies, it hopes to excavate the foundations of judicial independence in South Asia.

Dean, Melanie

Exchanging glances: the evil eye and conspicuous consumption in post-liberalization Tamil Nadu, India

The ubiquitous presence of apotropaic media throughout the urban and rural landscapes of the state of Tamil Nadu bears witness to the fact that averting the evil eye (kan drishti, literally meaning “eye-sight”) is a critical concern for many people. Because the envious gazes of others are thought to bring harm both to persons and property, most people in Tamil Nadu take care to avert this gaze through the prominent display of amuletry and rituals. But while conspicuous consumption might make one vulnerable to kan drishti, there have always been venues for the prominent display of wealth in India. In a liberalized economy, foreign and luxury consumer goods are an indispensable means of displaying symbolic capital. Acts of conspicuous consumption may be considered dangerous for certain individuals, but there are also times when refraining from showing off one’s wealth is considered inauspicious and potentially destructive for the community at large. When engaging in public acts of consumption, individuals must tread a fine line between “adambaram” (being ostentatious) and "kanjan pisanari" (being a miser). Contrary to most theories on the evil eye, it is not the envious gazes of the “have-nots” that are the most feared, but their acts of conspicuous consumption. People who “come up too fast” are most likely to be envied, and the consumptive acts of poorer individuals, and even darker-skinned women, come under greater scrutiny and are likely to be envied by the public at large. This project seeks to understand how the evil eye is mediating acts of conspicuous consumption in contemporary Tamil Nadu,
by focusing on lower and middle-class individuals in a Madurai community consisting of Dalits and Thevars. This paper investigates the ways in which glances assume a material form that is transacted between groups and across differences in class, caste and gender, and seeks to understand why the envious glances of those within your own group (caste, class, or family) are considered to be the most dangerous.

Desmond, Laura

The Pleasure is Mine: the Changing Subject of Erotic Science

Pleasure, the defining object of kamasastric scholarship, is harmonious sensory experience, the product of a “good fit” between the self and the world. It comes about when one moves in a world of fitting sense objects, and one has made oneself fit to enter that world. The bulk of kamasastric literature is devoted to developing, enhancing, and enacting specific bodily and sensory capabilities in order to maximize one’s ability to affect and be affected by the world. This paper examines the model of subjectivity implied by kamastra, tracking two sorts of changes to the self assumed by this body of texts. First, it considers the ways in which the social actors described in this literature come into being in and through the cultivation and performance of particular bodily and social acts; such a self might be described as artificial in nature. Second, it presents and analyzes the changing set of acts that are described and prescribed over the course of kamastra history, paying particular attention to the increasing place of physiognomy and of magico-medical alterations of the body, and the gradual elision of the social sphere of sensual activity. Finally, this paper will situate the kamastra model of subjectivity in relation to the larger sastraic project, drawing out the model of empiricism in which it operates. It thus seeks to address questions of the scientificity of sastraic discourse, and to gesture toward serious contributions it might offer to debates surrounding subjectivity/objectivity and nature/culture.

Dewey, Susan

"We Indians Have to Stick Together": Constructing Indo-Fijian Kinship

Ethnic difference is routinely employed in Fiji as a rhetorical device in struggles for political power by both indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. This paper specifically examines how Indo-Fijian children in ethnically mixed orphanages build networks of support with one another and conceptualize ethnicity and culture in the absence of family socialization. Even in intact families, Indo-Fijian kinship ties have been fragmented by both the experience of indenture and post-coup emigration. Many individuals thus envision themselves as a permanent Other, and this is further complicated for children in orphanages who must construct their own kinship ties and notions of cultural heritage. Contemporary political discourse on racial and cultural difference is actively absorbed even by children who do not have parents and my research in ethnically homogenous orphanages revealed stronger ties of fictive kinship between children, whereas children in ethnically mixed orphanages clearly demonstrate fewer uses of racial and cultural stereotypes regarding other ethnic groups although they do not evince the same degree of fictive kin solidarity. This research is significant in its capacity to illuminate: [1] how colonially constructed ethnic inequalities are both negotiated and perpetuated by contemporary societies [2] how ethnic groups use or manipulate broad conceptions of "history", "tradition" and "culture" in the maintenance or
pursuit of power [3] how the understanding and preservation of cultural heritage intertwines with discourses of adaptation among diaspora populations [4] how all three of these complex phenomena intersect with child and adolescent conceptions of ethnicity and national identity.

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Dhulipala, Venkat

Debating Pakistan in the Public Sphere: Critiques of the Lahore Resolution from the United Provinces

This paper seeks to understand as to what Pakistan meant to the Muslims in the United Provinces after the AIML passed its 1940 Lahore Resolution. The paper therefore examines the enunciations on Pakistan by the UP Muslim League and its allies, and the critiques that were leveled against the Pakistan demand by the ulama of the Jamiatul Ulama-i-Hind. A perusal of these discourses shows that Pakistan was primarily visualized as a sovereign territorial state in the Muslim majority areas of British India. While Pakistan was also portrayed as only the second Islamic state in human history following the one first established by the Prophet in Medina, what was conspicuous was the significance of non-religious issues while debating the Pakistan demand in the UP. Both the supporters and opponents of Pakistan argued in terms of the military and economic viability of Pakistan, its advantages and disadvantages to the Indian Muslims in general, and its implications for the UP Muslims in particular. These debates were carried on in clear, rational terms in the Urdu press, public meetings and other political arena saturating the public sphere in the UP during the 1940s. They therefore call into question a dominant assumption in the existing Partition historiography that Pakistan was a vague concept in the public mind and that Muslims across India supported the demand for Pakistan based on either simple cries of Islam in danger or without quite understanding as to what it really meant.

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Doshi, Sapna

The Nation and its Displaced: Redevelopment, Politics and Citizenship in Neoliberal Mumbai

Millions of Mumbai’s slum dwellers are facing eviction and demolition of their homes as local and transnational elites strive to redevelop the city into India’s premier global finance center. Yet redevelopment-induced displacement is experienced differently across the urban landscape, producing very distinct political engagements. On the one hand, the city’s market-oriented slum redevelopment policies offer resettlement to slum dwellers that can prove eligibility and access representation through non-governmental groups. On the other, thousands of “ineligible” slum dwellers are confronting the most violent forms displacement and exclusion from compensation. As part of a larger project that examines the mutually constitutive nature of participation and exclusion of the poor in Mumbai’s redevelopment, this paper investigates the later scenario and the possibilities of a popular politics of justice in the face of state force and uncompensated eviction. The paper examines an anti-displacement movement emerging in response to one of the largest slum clearances in Mumbai’s history where 30 to 50 thousand homes were demolished within a month during the winter of 2004-2005.

The paper first situates the demolition sweep in a series of neoliberal interventions in redevelopment and displacement policy and practice. It then ethnographically presents the
case of one neighborhood that was evicted and subsequently earmarked as a resettlement
colony for displaced slum dwellers from another part of the city. Highlighting the lived
experiences of displacement and exclusion based on class, region of origin and Muslim
identity, this neighborhood study stresses the importance of a relational view of popular
mobilization. Finally, the paper considers political implications of the movement’s leadership
and linkage to the National Alliance of People’s Movements, a “Gandhian” anti-displacement
movement connected to transnational activist networks.

If recent scholarship (Chatterjee, 2004, Appadurai, 2002) posits Indian cities as sites of
popular politics that challenge bourgeois notions of citizenship and democracy, this paper
argues that the politics of the urban poor cannot be understood homogenously. The
differentiated positioning of slum dwellers in relation to each other and to broader forces of
urban transformation is central for understanding popular politics in the current moment of
mass displacement. The paper demonstrates that in this case evictees express land claims as
citizenship-based rights to the city and the nation. In so doing, these mobilizations confront
the uneven exclusions of neoliberal redevelopment by invoking the memory of anti-colonial
struggle.

Drewal, Henry

Traveling Images and Ideas: Hindu Gods and Water Deities in Africa

About the mid-20th century, Hindu merchants and their popular devotional images reached
West Africa. Within a very short time, these images were adapted and interpreted by African
devotees of Mami Wata (Pidgin English for "Mother Water") as representations of a vast and
growing pantheon of female and male water divinities. This paper explores issues of creativity
and agency in the reception of global images.

Dudney, Arthur

Sir William Jones and the Indo-European Hypothesis: the Prequel

Siraj al-Din Khan Arzu, an Indian poet and literary scholar of the mid-eighteenth century,
wrote in his treatise on Persian rhetoric, Musmir, and in two other works that Sanskrit and
Persian are sister languages. To anyone with the vaguest sense of historical linguistics, this is
a familiar fact, but it is not an insight we associate with now-obscure Persian texts written in
the 1740s in Delhi. Rather, for us, the history of modern linguistics begins when Sir William
Jones argued at the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1786 that Latin, Greek and Sanskrit along
with Persian must have sprung from a common source.

Jones was unquestionably a genius, but later scholars studying his work have been too willing
to subscribe to the fantasy that he and other great intellects of the colonial period drew their
insights out of thin air. Even geniuses change their minds: in a letter written early in his
career, before he had set out for India, Jones notes that there are many words common to
Persian and European languages but calls this coincidental, apparently disavowing the very
theory that would later make him famous. He seems not to have seriously considered the
historical relationships between languages before arriving in India. What changed? Perhaps the linguistic raw data he gathered while studying Sanskrit allowed him to reach his famous conclusion, but this commonly accepted explanation conveniently writes the theoretical insights of Indian intellectual systems out of the process by which modern linguistics was born.

What if, on the contrary, we examine the views on language held by Indians living in Jones’s time? Arzu’s work must have been known to Jones’s Persian informants even if there is no direct evidence to link it with Jones. Arzu’s linguistic analysis was influential in the great dispute of eighteenth century Indian letters: Was Indo-Persian (i.e., Persian written by Indians) as good as Iranian Persian? Indeed, Indians’ inferiority complex over the correctness of their Persian usage prompted explorations into the earliest history of Persian and created a vast archive of lexicographical literature, which has not been properly studied. The fact that modern linguistics may have been helped along by -- and then failed to credit -- this body of work is a compelling reason to better understand Arzu’s legacy.

Duschinski, Haley

Ethnographic Perspectives on Sovereignty and Statehood in Kashmir

This panel focuses ethnographic attention on the social causes, contexts, and consequences of violence and peace in Kashmir. Since 2004, India and Pakistan have been pursuing a peace settlement on the Kashmir issue. It is often claimed that any peace in the region must involve the people of Kashmir. It is less clear, however, who the Kashmiri people are, where and how they live, and what kind of peace they imagine for their homeland in the future. The papers on this panel clearly indicate that there are no straightforward answers to these questions. Historical and political contingencies have deepened and entrenched internal political affiliations and divisions among different communities of Kashmiri citizens, particularly along the lines of ethnicity, religion, region, and class. Kashmiri identity has fragmented into competing forms of political allegiance, producing multiple perspectives on the meanings of nation, homeland, and sovereignty. These competing forms of political allegiance illuminate the complex interplays of religious and regional identity that have been, and continue to be, important in definitions of Kashmiri subjecthood and citizenship. This panel posits that ethnographic theories and methods contribute to a greater understanding of violence and peace in the region by shedding light on the processes of identity formation among specific Kashmiri communities. The contributors to this panel approach the situation from different vantage points, but they all come together in their commitment to the project of sustained ethnographic engagement at the local level with Kashmiri people whose lives have been greatly impacted by violence. In this sense, the ultimate aim of the panel is to illuminate and make sense of local perspectives on the dynamics, complexities, potentials, and perils of everyday life for differently-positioned Kashmiris at this period of critical transformation in the region.

Eaton, Richard

Marginality and Modernity: Transitions in Northeast India
The purpose of this panel is to challenge the popular notion of northeast India as an isolated area. The image of northeast India as marginal to India, and the world, ignores the historical record. Although this region resisted foreign control, it is apparent that outside influences had and continue to have a major impact on the region. In this panel, we examine four cases where outside influences, defining themselves as modern, have had an impact on the northeast. However, these intrusions have not taken place without conflict and tension.

These four papers speak to marginality and modernity. Chandra, examining Muslim documents in the Sylhet Nagri script, argues that the Cachar region experienced a movement to promote Shariat-based Islam over the syncretism of Sufi-influenced Islam. Pathak’s paper on women missionaries focuses attention on the domestic sphere of missionary work. Women, although they were marginalized by missionary organizations, worked as hard as their husbands to spread the gospel. At the same time they stepped outside of conventional roles, they promoted Western domesticity among their converts. Forbes examines the career of Samuel Perrine, a missionary in Nagaland who began a successful school to train young Naga men to spread the gospel. Back in the USA, Perrine abandoned his goal to modernize the Nagas and became a showman, presenting the Nagas as irredeemable savages. In the final paper, Behal comments on the women's movement in contemporary Assam. Shaken by the violence of insurgents and government counter-insurgents, women’s groups have come to embrace the global concept that women’s rights are human rights to work for the dual goals of development and peace. Richard Eaton, well known for his path-breaking work on Islam in Eastern India, is especially well suited to chair this panel. His article, "Comparative History as World History: Religious Conversion in Modern India," asks why some communities convert while other do not, and seeks answers in the historical records of the conversion of different Naga tribes.

Ebeling, Sascha

Figurations of (hyper)real masculinities in Tamil literature and cinema

The present paper is an attempt to examine constructions of masculinity, maleness and manliness found in Tamil literary and cinematic texts from a longue durée perspective. I begin by raising a number of general questions as to how one might make sense today of historically shifting ideas and imaginaries of masculinity in South India. I then proceed to illustrate these theoretical questions with individual examples drawn from a variety of sources reaching from the earliest extant strata of Tamil poetry, a corpus of poems commonly known as Sangam literature (especially the anthologies Kuruntokai and Purananuru), to contemporary feminist fiction (Ambai), poetry (Salma) and cinema (particularly ‘college romance’ movies, such as Boys, dir. Shankar, 2004, or Enakku 20, Unakku 18, dir. A.M. Jothi Krishna, 2005).

Elder, Joseph

South Asian Americans in Politics: Money, Influence and Activism
Recently South Asian Americans have become increasingly visible in the political landscape of the United States. Though Congressman Dalip Saund Singh was elected to office in 1956, South Asians have remained relatively marginalized in local, regional or national politics until the year 2000. In 2006, Bobby Jindal was the second Indian American elected to Congress after Dalip Saund Singh and subsequently became the first Indian American governor in the history of the United States to be elected to office in Louisiana on October 20, 2007. We have seen an increasing number of South Asian Americans being appointed to key positions and also running for elected office. This panel would like to look at what accounts for the growing significance of South Asian Americans in politics. Are South Asians finding themselves negotiating new positions within the shifting framework of the politics of identity? How important are these political constructs within the politics of race in America? What can we learn from past voting patterns of this community? What role do non-citizens play in leveraging influence on policy issues? Finally, what agency role is the community playing in the 2008 elections from fundraising, policy-making and grass-roots organizing?

Evans, Rosalind

The Impact of Political Conflict on Bhutanese Refugee Concepts of Childhood and Youth

This paper will explore the impact of becoming refugees and living in long-term camps on cultural concepts of childhood and youth amongst Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. The refugees arrived in the early 1990s following the Bhutanese government’s ‘one nation, one people’ policy which imposed the cultural practices of the ruling ethnic group on the Nepali Bhutanese. For the last 17 years, they have been living in refugee camps administered by international agencies. These agencies promote concepts of childhood and youth prevalent in the global north, where children are viewed as politically incompetent. However, these concepts contrast with those of refugee political groups, who actively seek to engage children and youth in achieving their political goals.

The camps are currently extremely politically tense due to differences in opinion concerning the future of the refugee population. These differences relate to whether the refugees should accept offers to resettle in the United States or wait for return to Bhutan to become possible. There is also disagreement concerning the means (peaceful negotiation or armed struggle) adopted to improve their situation. Inspired by the political impact of the Nepali Maoist movement, Bhutanese revolutionary groups have become influential in the camps. Members of these groups have led attacks on the huts of resettlement supporters and are active in promoting their ideology in the camps through music, dance and drama. Many young refugees engage in political activities. These include threatening political opponents, taking part in demonstrations, performing songs and dramas about the need to take up guns to return to Bhutan and physically attacking refugees who support third country resettlement. This has resulted in many agencies and refugee adults claiming young people are being manipulated by political leaders.

This paper will explore changes in the social categories of childhood and youth amongst the refugee community. It will do so by examining how childhood and youth are defined and mobilized by various actors (e.g. international agencies and political groups). Despite their seemingly oppositional understandings of the roles of young refugees I will draw comparisons between the international relief agencies’ and political groups’ use of young people to disseminate their messages and ideology. This will be contrasted with young refugees’ own definitions of childhood, youth and their actual social roles. The paper will demonstrate the
ways that political issues, such as ethnic conflict and intra-communal violence transform cultural understandings of childhood and youth.

Faries, Meghan

Yes to Renunciation, No to Enlightenment: The Portrayal of Women in the Twenty-First Chapter of the Manimekalai

Over the past fifty years or so, a variety of scholarship has been written regarding the Tamil bhakti poets and saints of the medieval Hindu tradition. In recent times, scholarship has begun to broaden its focus to include other areas of Tamil literature, including Tamil Buddhist poetry and narrative. One of the only extant Tamil Buddhist texts from the early medieval period is the Manimekalai, a narrative that recounts the life and renunciation of a young courtesan. The Manimekalai is a complex rhetorical work that employs various themes, characters, and motifs as a way to instruct and promote Buddhist doctrines and practices. An important feature of the narrative is its promotion of Buddhist renunciation, particularly female renunciation. The author of the narrative, Cattanar, not only addresses women in monasticism, but also explores other issues of gender in his work. The goal of this paper is to explore ideas related to women and gender as they are found in the Manimekalai, particularly the twenty-first chapter entitled, ‘The Predictions of the Statue on the Pillar.’ This chapter expounds upon female renunciation, notions of sex change, as well as enlightenment for women. These notions shall be studied against contemporary scholarship on women, gender, and Buddhism, and will be pitted against recent feminist critiques of the Buddhist tradition as a whole. Though some Buddhist scholars argue that the Manimekalai is a text that promotes women and their religious quest, there is evidence to suggest that the text allows women only certain religious privileges. One of the most astonishing dichotomies of the narrative, which is addressed in the twenty-first chapter, is the promotion of female renunciation and the denial of feminine enlightenment. It is the goal of this paper to explore the advocacy for, and the promotion of, female renunciation in the Manimekalai, while simultaneously analyzing the qualified attainments of female renunciation found in the text. This apparent contradiction invites recognition of an ambivalent stance toward female renunciation in Tamil Buddhist traditions.

Farmer, PhD, Victoria

Regulating India’s Markets and Messages

Both markets and media policies in South Asia are evolving through complex interconnections of historical, political, and cultural processes. These include historical commitments, sometimes rooted in colonial freedom struggles, to national development policies; official nationalist responses of independent states to global communications technologies and hegemonically structured information flows; and culturally influenced market forces shaping, for example, genre, language, and censorship. While structures and policies that shape media messages, and particularly advertising, are generally under-researched, this is particularly true of scholarship on national media policies. While there is a growing body of research on the cultural content of media messages, often through local or regional studies, and of research that emphasizes the global nature of emerging
communications technologies and the asymmetries of international media production, the national level, and particularly the imbrication of state media policies in broader national development goals, is often obscured. This paper addresses the evolution of the role of national-level legal and policy initiatives shaping media and marketing infrastructures in pre- and post-liberalization India.

Fattori, Marco

Between Protection and Blackmail: Bhil Little Kingdoms in Western and Central India

This paper aims to focus on a scarcely explored issue, this is the cultural and political interaction between between the Bhil "little kings" of Western and Central India and the colonial discourse of pacification. I assume that the minimal chiefs of local warrior authority – generally known by the loose terms of grasiyas and bhumiyas – used to legitimate themselves through local circuits of protection much more than through genealogical claims or landed status. Customary rights (haqs or tankas) were to be established as a due for protection on villages (commonly known as rakhwali) or on travelers (known as bolai in southern Rajputana), and protection was culturally linked with the pan-Indian theme of warrior sacrifice in battle and the representation of the good king as a quintessential protector. In fact, protection practices of this kind used to be the primary tool of the so-called Rajputization of minimal chiefs in hill or forest polities. Early British administrators as James Tod and John Malcolm interpreted these practices respectively as a corruption of specific “feudal” institutions or as an effect of the Mughal administrative collapse in Central India. Grasiyas and bhumiyas (and their practices) in Central India and southern Rajputana were thus identified with the prevailing notion of social and institutional anarchy. Many of these local protectors (in fact, their vast majority) were to be pacified – fought, disarmed, and transformed into ordered, peaceful yeomen, their protection practices being invariably labeled as “blackmail” and “highway robbery”. On the other hand, some minimal chiefs in Bhil areas were to be crystallized as local police chiefs, on the assumption that they still retained their “traditional authority” on the Bhils. In fact, the enrollment of the bhumiyas as local police chiefs meant a drastic loss of authority for their alienation from their own ancient regime of protection practices and polity. At the same time, the bhumiya families began to claim insistently a genealogical Rajput purity – exactly when their authority on the Bhils was vanishing forever. Drawing from local iconography and colonial sources, this paper will thus highlight the old polity of mobile protection practice against the colonial administrative discourse, and then explore how the new colonial order was to transform the self-perception of some bhumiya families.
'Falling through the gap': theorising the persistent failure of anti-poverty policy to benefit poor adivasi women

This paper examines the discrepancy observed between the increased attention of anti-poverty policies to the empowerment of adivasis and poor women in India, and the persistent failure of such policies to benefit poor adivasi women. Typically, these failures are explained as due to the ‘gap between (well designed) policy and (poor) implementation’. This conceptual separation between policy ‘design’ and ‘implementation’ ignores, or fails to adequately confront the reasons for persistent failures, thus allowing them to typically be blamed on ‘bureaucratic resistance’ or ‘lack of political will’. I argue that it is necessary to unpack the actual policy practices within this policy-implementation gap. That is, although the intended activities are not happening, other processes are, and an analysis of policy practices that do occur is perhaps salient to an understanding of why even well-designed policies often fail. Departing from conventional impact analyses therefore, my research focuses on the actual process of anti-poverty policy construction. I use empirical case-studies of policy processes in the Suvarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), the flagship anti-poverty policy in India in one tribal district each in the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

My paper argues that a nuanced analysis not only of state and society hierarchies, but also of how policy alternatives are foreclosed and escape hatches (specifically ‘gender escape hatches’) are deployed by these hierarchies is a vital precondition to sharpen strategies for making anti-poverty policy more accountable to adivasi poor women. I move from this analysis towards the construction of a new feminist theoretical framework for the analysis of anti-poverty policy in India. This framework analyses policy as four interlinked components of constitutive contexts, policy representations, policy practices and consequences. I establish how policy consists of an iterative relationship between these components, at different levels (village, block, district, state and central). Within each component, I attend to multiple intersections of marginalization, and place specific analytic focus on the role of gender, class and ethnic identity in policy processes.

Triangulating Culture's Value: Traditional Knowledge, Modern Science, and the Digital Archive

The numerous issues surrounding the preservation, protection, and exploitation of traditional knowledge through intellectual property rights (IPR) are increasingly debated. One of the most interesting proprietary relationships emerging from these debates is that positioning the state as guardian over cultural knowledge. This paper will explore the social construction this relationship in the case study of the Indian government’s Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL). The TKDL is a state-sponsored initiative prompted by what key government officials consider the piracy of valuable national cultural treasures --- the traditional medical systems of the South Asian subcontinent.
Specifically, the objective of this paper will be to examine how the architecture of the TKDL is predicated on a perception of traditional knowledge as a marketable resource requiring legal management and protection. The paper will begin with what the TKDL team has labeled the “Golden Triangle,” a conceptual framework which links traditional medicine, modern science, and biomedicine. It will then explore how the digital library format is structured around this three-sided relationship that attempts to translate traditional cultural practices into modern, objective, and valuable knowledge. Additionally, it will discuss how the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a United Nations agency, has become involved in spreading the traditional knowledge digital library format to other developing communities. WIPO has been active in the development and implementation of the Indian TKDL and considers this techno-legal tool to be an effective means of both safeguarding and marketing developing communities’ traditional knowledge from private ownership claims.

The paper will draw from ethnographic fieldwork and archival research conducted between 2005 through the present. Research took place in India, the United States, and Switzerland. The main purpose of this paper is to chart the unfolding of international intellectual property law and information management techniques triggered by events connected to the Indian context.

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Fisher, Michael

Cultural Choices in North India: Sardhana, 18th-19th centuries

Within the princely court of the famous Begum Sombre of Sardhana during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, men and women made sophisticated choices and combinations from among the Mughal, European, and regional cultures available. This court thrived in a complex historical context as the Mughal empire fragmented and the English East India Company aggressively conquered across north India. As one of the wealthier "little kingdoms" in the Delhi region, Sardhana and its courtiers had the resources to relocate between these two imperial powers and cultures.

The people of this court expressed their cultural choices through many media. Their clothing, language, names, religion, patronage of art and architecture, and general deportment all reflected their self-determined positions. For example, in Delhi, the Sardhana court maintained two main centers: a traditional haweli and a Palladian palace. Sartorial styles within the court varied widely even in the same social setting. Nor did they remain constant over time.

Using the private diary of D.O. Dyce Sombre, works of art and architecture produced by this court, and other primary source materials, this paper will analyze these crucial cultural choices. It will embedded these expressions of culture and their ultimate implications in their complex historical context. It will argue that each of these cultural choices had imponderable political consequences for the principals and for the state of Sardhana as a whole.

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Forbes, Geraldine

New Christians and Bloodthirsty Savages: Samuel Perrine's Visual Presentations of the Nagas
This research developed from an unlikely archive: a box of glass plate negatives, lanternslides, negatives taped to glass, and ordinary negatives, all pertaining to India. Given to me by a colleague, the box contained photographs from famous studios such as Bourne and Shepherd, copies of Mughal miniatures, and missionary photographs of the Naga Hills from the 19th century. Among them were lanternslides used by Samuel A. Perrine in his 'infotainment' talks for the Dunbar Chautauqua Bureau of Chicago circa World War I, as well as photographs from Perrine's years as a missionary to the Ao Nagas in the last decade of the 19th century. Some of Perrine's photographs were published in missionary magazines along with articles about the steady work of the American Baptists in the Naga Hills. In contrast, Perrine the public lecturer, a profession he turned to after his retirement and pursued during the period of the first World War, presented his audiences with "bloodthirsty savages" incapable of changing their ways.

These photographs have led to questions about history and memory, archives, and visual evidence. Samuel Perrine and his archive attracted my attention because he used images from his decade in Northeastern India to create two different stories for two different audiences. Writing articles for missionary magazines, Perrine supplied them with documentary evidence of a people undergoing change. Some of his photographs show the pagan customs the missionaries wanted to change, while others show schools, new Christians learning their lessons, and a different world emerging in the hills. This documentary evidence verified the on-going success of the historic Christian mission to conquer the world for Christ. Later, Perrine constructed a narrative that abandoned history to focus on the heroic man navigating a chaotic world. Perrine’s transition from missionary to popular lecturer drawing from the same visual evidence points to the need to study the contextualization of images rather than images separate from the negotiation between visual document, presenter, and audience.

Forbes, Geraldine

Colonial Medicine And/Beyond Borders

The goal of this panel is to use ‘border’ as an analytical and descriptive platform to explore the ways in which knowledge and power underscored trajectories of medicine in the colonies. Through four historical studies we will put into broad relief how even though medical practices and knowledge production were parasitic to and constrained by the colonial rule, they nevertheless were negotiated and articulated in different ways in different contexts. ‘Border’ will therefore be used by this panel not just as an analytical framework but also to describe/analyze translation and negotiation across a variety of geographical and cultural locales in which colonial medicine was practiced. In particular, we will use the notion of border(s) to understand the ways in which medicine was conceptualized and practiced within and through a frame of colonial difference. ‘Border’, for example, will be used to signify the limits of elite discourses on infant and maternal health and for an analysis of how such boundaries were challenged. It will also be used to analyze transnational genealogies of colonial medicine and to show how support for particular medical institutions came not only from the country where such institutions were located but from across national borders as well. ‘Border’ will also be explored to identify some of the common strategies through which ‘public health’ and ‘hygiene’ became objects of knowledge and practice within diverse colonial settings.
More broadly, papers in this panel will explore the ‘border(s)’ of colonial medicine through a focus on questions such as: What kind of ‘borders’, both as ‘imaginaries’ as well as ‘visible practices’, were constructed in the context of colonial medicine? How were medical practices developed and translated across borders? What kind of political implications did these ‘borders’ have within the changing context of medical ideologies, from public health to personal hygiene?

Gill, Navyug

Portraits of Bhagat Singh: How Else to Think Through Discrepancy?

I examine the historiographical questions arising from how disciplinary history engages with the contradictions in the representation of historic ‘Sikh’ figures. Two images of Bhagat Singh, perhaps the most famous Punjabi anti-colonial revolutionary, provide an entry point into this discussion. One is from a Ghadr Party poster in 1931 and the other is from a Toronto-based community magazine in 2007 (see appendix). How do we make sense of this difference, of Bhagat Singh shown clean-shaven and wearing a hat alongside him with a turban and nascent beard? Fortunately, and revealingly, Louis Fenech has dealt with a similar difference between representations of another notable figure, Udham Singh. His analysis draws on the work of other historians who have challenged our understanding of the importance of the late nineteenth century in defining who exactly is a Sikh. The writings of Harjot Oberoi and W. H. McLeod, working against orthodox and colonialist histories, have pointed out the centrality of the Singh Sabha movement in delineating and standardizing what became known as the Sikh tradition. Along with their interventions, however, this mode of history-writing has produced its own teleological knowledge systems, especially evident in Fenech’s analysis. Thus every ‘sikh’ is viewed as a Sikh and nothing else, every turban is an axiomatic expression of the Khalsa, and every contemporary act has its history already written for it. By critiquing the presuppositions that inform this historiography, I attempt to uncover what is erased through such uses rather than provide a definitive methodological alternative. I want to try and imagine if there are other ways of reading the Bhagat Singh portraits, neither as simple inconsistency nor as inevitable religiosity.

Through this discussion, I acknowledge how discipline of history is invested deeply in rhythmic and exhaustive narratives. History-writing privileges clear lines of continuity and progress, the conventional reading of the conventional archive, and the singular focus on causes to determine ‘their’ effects. This produces histories that seem able to satisfy the most important requirement of the discipline itself, the ability to explain. I argue, however, that our satisfaction rests on omitting from scrutiny the assumptions, methods and implications that underpin such explanations. Questioning the historiographical process is not to immobilize ‘history’ to the extent of preventing it from being written. Rather, I draw attention to the power of the historical narrative in shaping our present understandings of the past in the ineluctable service of the future.

Gilmartin, David

Discussant
Gilmartin, David

Religious Boundaries in North India, 1830-1930

Each paper in this panel strives to go beyond what are commonly understood ‘boundaries’ – between different religious and cultural practices, forms of argumentation and political practice. Thus Anshu Malhotra’s paper examines the writings of Peero Preman, a woman whose life-history and experiences of multiple religious practices sheds new light on the cultural world of pre-colonial and early colonial Punjab. Cassie Adcock’s paper treats the culture of controversy in colonial north India in order to revisit “‘Semitization’ of religion” narratives of changing religious identities and combative polemic practices in the nineteenth century. Finally, Neeti Nair’s paper suggests that an examination of Swami Shraddhanand’s role in the Non cooperation-Khilafat movement of 1919-21 is crucial to understanding the broad world within which arguments both for and against ‘communalization’ were worked out.

Gilmartin, David

Paper Jihadis: Colonialism and the Construction of “Terror” in South Asia, 1869-1946

This panel probes how the British colonial state constructed the categories of the “terrorist” and the “jihadi,” noting the shifting strategies whereby the Raj sought to contain and control South Asian Islam. In particular, our papers suggest how local conflicts between the British and South Asian Muslims participated in the emergent globalizing discourse of terrorist Islam.

From the Uprisings of 1857 until the eve of independence in 1947, the colonial authorities regarded Islam as a fundamental threat to British rule in India. This concern stemmed not only from the strong historical legacies of political Islam in the subcontinent, but from the challenge posed by Islam’s universalist message. These fears were matched in intensity only by the Raj’s efforts to manipulate Islamic communities, leaders, and institutions in hopes of quashing dissent and buttressing state power. We investigate how the British, despite their policy of “non-interference” in religious matters after 1857, continued to rely on religion to establish the rule of law, especially by conjuring the specter of radical Islam to extend the jurisdiction of the imperial state apparatus.

Our panel explores the interrelationship between local movements, imperial legal encounters, and emerging ideas of global Islam. The three papers all relate to the territories that now constitute Pakistan, with special attention to the effort to tame the North-West Frontier. Alongside their grounding in a particular region, our papers also suggest pan-regional connections between the northwest and colonial capitols (i.e. Calcutta) and imperial connections between colony and metropole. We grapple with how the nexus between local movements and the universalizing ambitions of the bureaucratic colonial state became a site for the articulation of ideas of global Islam. Taken together, however, the papers also suggest that despite the long history of imperial fears of global Islam, the definition of terms such as
“jihadi” and “terrorist” remained unstable. This very instability opened up avenues for the articulation of alternative interpretations of the relationship between religion, revolutionary politics, and global geographies.

We present three different case studies of British imperial responses to Islam. The first is the so-called “Great Wahabi Trial” of 1869, in which Calcutta businessman Amir Khan was accused of supporting anti-colonial uprisings on the North-West Frontier. The second is the uprisings of the Hurs, devoted followers of a Sindhi Sufi saint, who plagued the colonial state in the 1930s and 40s. The third examines attempts by the colonial administration to influence religious feeling and leadership on the North-West Frontier following the Waziristan revolt of 1936-37. Each case highlights a different facet of the mutual constitution of colonial authority and anti-colonial Islam.

Gopinath, Gayatri

Gendered Imaginaries: Shifting Masculinities and Femininities in South Indian Public Culture

This panel explores shifts and variations in representations of masculinities and femininities across South Indian literary texts, media, and musical performance. Although South India is well known for its diverse cultural production and rising consumer lifestyles, most research on gender and public culture so far has concentrated on North Indian case studies. The viewpoints from the South offered here thus participate in a newly emerging conversation concerned with regionalizing gendered cultural expression against a backdrop of transregional socio-historical dynamics. The approaches move between diachronic and synchronic perspectives while remaining focused primarily on urban social milieux. A common thread across all three projects is the idea that available gender roles in narrative settings are always more than a set of stable positionings. Drawing on poetry, fiction, newspapers, films, and popular songs in Tamil and Malayalam, the three papers discuss multiple ways of imagining gender and sexuality in the face of adverse limiting conditions. While some representational strategies reinforce heteronormative/heterosexual assumptions about gender roles, others create new spaces for alternative figurations. Finally, we also problematize the relationships between imaginary worlds and lived social realities, addressing differences and similarities within a shared South Indian frame of reference.

Goswami, Manu

Tradition After Romantic Nostalgia: Late Colonial Imaginings

This paper argues that a specifically romantic notion of tradition arose in late colonial India. Investing tradition with all the meaning modernity was felt to lack, romantic intellectual currents in Hindi and Urdu, like those in other parts of the Asian sphere, provided compensation with sentiment and solace through imagination. The past that was remembered through the romantic rendering of tradition was tangential to the positive past unearthed by philological, numismatic, and archeological researches of colonial institutions. In an age when the latter gave rise to quandaries, dilemmas, and controversies, often times deflating the claims of religious faith, the romanticized past was meant to provide timeless certainties. Romanticism in late colonial India sought to contain a tumultuous present and the threatening
Abstracts of modernity within the bounds of a newly devised tradition. Late colonial Romanticism can be considered the conduit, then, through which a particularly distorted yet persistent vision of the Indian past came into being. Ultimately, I suggest, late colonial Romanticism should be understood as the catalyst for the form of tradition that currently informs religious dissatisfactions with modernity in different parts of the world. The paper concludes with some methodological reflections on the relationship between concept history and the history of material practices.

Goswami, Manu

Early/Late Colonial: Conceptualizing Periodicity in Indian Historiography

For the renowned philosopher of history, Reinhardt Koselleck, "the question of temporal structure" is the genuine domain of truly historical thought. For Koselleck, thinking about the temporal structure or period makes clear the logic of related events and articulates the relevant dispensation of constitutive material factors. Furthermore Koselleck understands the historical period to be internally divided by the possibility of a distinct future. The internal contradictoriness of historical periodicity is best captured by Ernest Bloch's famous coinage, "the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous" (Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeiten). Each era allows for the anticipation of events "which are certainly rooted in the present, and in this respect are already existent, although they have not actually occurred." The question of periodization thus certainly brings into focus beginnings and endings, change and possibility (as well as the political stakes involved in the decisions made in historical reconstruction).

This panel considers questions of periodization to be essential to the interpretation of India over the course of colonialism. The rise of the colonial state proper and the moment of its departure are central for our investigation. A sense of historicity and periodicity are implicit in distinctions between what is modern and what is not. This sense also serves as the cohering factor in recent scholarship for determining any specific phenomenon as specifically "early" or "late." We aim to bring to light the underlying patterns connecting distinct social, political, and cultural levels and the specific logic of a temporal structure that is assumed to permeate these different levels. We also wish to draw out implications in different periodizing schema as well as not periodizing or historicizing at all. Spencer Leonard takes us directly to the question of the beginnings of colonial rule in India, weighing the perspectives of long established and contemporary scholarship. G.S. Sahota's paper, "Tradition After Romantic Nostalgia," argues that the late colonial period gave rise to a historically determinate notion of tradition which generated and made sensible a particular orientation toward the future. Venkat Dhulipala argues that the concrete anticipation of the possibility of Pakistan as a territorial state marked the end of colonial rule, and asks how this political imagining was specifically conditioned by the rise of newly constituted public domains.

Govinda, Radhika

Mobilisations at the margins: Reflections on the state, NGOs and Dalit women in north India
Dalit and women's movement organizations, like most social movements involving those on the margins of the society, have inevitably referenced/targeted the state in their struggles given that it possesses the resources and the opportunities required for bringing about change that they themselves don't. In recent years, political parties, like the BSP, having a distinctly Dalit voter base, have come into prominence. Dalit women have been mobilized by many such Dalit and women's movement organizations and political groupings. The postcolonial Indian state, for its part, has positioned itself as the harbinger of development and change, and the protector and promoter of the well-being of the marginalized. It has introduced and implemented a number of development schemes that are aimed at ameliorating the condition of the Dalits and of women. It has also taken certain legal measures in this direction, the most notable of which are, perhaps, the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, which guarantee reservation of seats for women and the Dalits in bodies of local self-governance in rural and urban areas. Dalit women are increasingly contesting for elections on such seats. But this is only part of the story. Agents of the state can and, at times, do operate in ways that further oppress Dalit women. Police atrocities are, perhaps, the most evident example of this.

This paper proposes to unpack such complex and often even contradictory ways in which Dalit women imagine and experience the state in their everyday lives. The paper will draw on a series of interviews, observations and documentation collected and analysed as part of the case study of a grassroots women’s NGO in rural areas of southern Uttar Pradesh towards my doctoral research on contemporary women’s movements in India. Specifically, the paper examines: (1) the dynamics of the perceived and real relationship between the state and the Dalit women as a result of the latter’s association with the NGO; (2) the Dalit women’s engagement with the state as voters and as supporters of the Dalit-based Bahujan Samaj Party currently in power in Uttar Pradesh, north India; (3) the Dalit women’s experience of the state somehow as a manifestation of the way in which they contest for the Panchayati Raj elections in Uttar Pradesh. Each of these reveals different facets of identity, representation and power with respect to the Dalit women at the margins of the state and society in Uttar Pradesh.

Gururani, Shubhra

Constructions of Nature: Revisiting Feminist environmental studies

In South Asian ethnography and historiography, there are now rich and impressive accounts that map the complex and sedimented processes through which expert knowledges of plants, animals, forests, caste/tribes, and racialized bodies were mutually constitutive of the social categories of difference in diverse colonial settings at different historical conjunctures. While due attention has been paid to these questions of difference, there is an awkwardness about the question of gender. Gender is clearly not missing from such accounts but there remains a tendency to view gender either as a special interest group or focus on the sexual and gendered attributes of femininity and masculinity of science or technology.

The discourse of gender and environment tended, initially, to circle around the question of women; most general claims about gendering slipped quickly into claims about women’s participation (and this trend continues as a strong one in the gender, environment, development scholarship). Critical engagements with this trend have offered more complicated gendered readings of discourses, revealing ways in which “nature” was gendered female, sexualized characteristics assigned to tribes, and the bodies of communities or nations
were mapped onto masculinized/feminized constructs of modernity. We welcome these efforts to extend gender analysis, but we wish to ask, also, what new directions might emerge from feminist readings of nation, caste, tribe, nature, that do not see gender as a concern separate from “more central” concerns of nation and modernity. We suggest that nature as a category centrally constitutes the nation, and that in such a reading of nation, all categories (e.g. planning, modernity, law, state) must be re-read. Rather than see nature as a dead place, and its gendering as a backdrop or effect, we attempt to read geographies of nation and nature together. In other words, it is not the case that “nature” is stabilized in some archaic time and place, and arrives, dead backdrop, for modern histories of nations and subjects. Nature, nation, and gendered/raced subjects are continually and dynamically co-produced. A sustained feminist reading must go beyond the uncovering of gendered and sexualized tropes, to situated engagements with the historical operations of notions of work, mobility, land, property, nature. Rather than being external to, or byproducts of, the process of nation formation, particular dynamics of gender, race, and nature have been central to and indispensable for the project of nation building from the 19th century to the present.
The Changing Face of Ethnic Movements in Nepal

Since the people’s movement of 2006 in Nepal re-established democracy, creating an “inclusive democracy” that reflects the multi-ethnic composition of the population is now the stated priority for all of the main political actors in the country. The interim government has made many symbolic statements in the interim constitution that work towards creating a more inclusive state. The government thus appears to support many of the demands that the movements of marginalized ethnic groups have been making since 1990. Although we might have expected these movements to dissipate in response to these moves, there has in fact been an upswing of ethnic political action in the country since 2006. Ethnic political movements have become increasingly prominent; they have adopted increasingly confrontational and violent political strategies, and demands for territorial autonomy have become more prevalent. This panel examines the surge of ethnic movements in Nepal since 2006, focusing on cases of indigenous nationalities, Dalit, Madhesi (the peoples of the Tarai) and Muslim mobilization. The papers seek to understand how identities and goals are articulated by each of these groups and how and why the strategies of these movements are shifting in the context of Nepal’s political transition. Hangen examines how and why the indigenous nationalities movement has increasingly adopted confrontational political strategies. Kantha examines the recent rise of the Madhesi movement, its demands for regional autonomy and inclusiveness, and its external and internal dimensions, mainly its dynamic interactions with India and the United States. Dastider’s paper on Muslims who live in the Tarai addresses the complexities of the Madhesi identity and asks how this group regards the Madhesi movement, which has a largely Hindu leadership. Pyakurel asks why the Dalit movement has not gained as much national attention as other identity movements, and proposes internal competition within the movement as one possible cause. By bringing papers on these various movements together, we seek to produce a deeper understanding of the trajectory of these movements, the roles that they will play in the ongoing democratization process, and the possibility for these groups to cooperate.

Haq, Farhat

Institutionalizing Democracy in Pakistan

Discussions of political developments in Pakistan often focus on particular political personalities and thus we continue to talk about the Ayub or Zia or Bhutto periods and ignore transformations in institutional patterns. Thus the pendulum swing between civilian and military governments is often explained by the failures of particular leaders or primacy of certain events that made it possible for an ambitious military leader to grab political power. Obviously military coups have played a central role in destroying democratic governments in Pakistan but it is important to go beyond the conventional wisdom that sees the military juggernaut determining all political outcomes.

An examination of the evolution of political institutions is timely given the changes in the political landscape since March, 2007, that led to the dramatic rise of the lawyers’ movement for independence of judiciary and the emergence of democratically elected national unity government. The panel will examine both the hurdles in institutionalizing of democracy in Pakistan and changes in the last decade that can facilitate the process of democratization. By focusing on evolution of three key institutions: Political Parties, the Judiciary, and the Media, the panel will explore factors that have contributed to the weakness of these key institutions.
and will outline the changes on the horizon that may help or impede deepening of democratization in Pakistan.

Hasnie, Kashif

The Controversy over the Kalabagh Dam in Pakistan: A deep divide

In Pakistan’s climate of divided politics and deep distrust among the four provinces, the general acceptance of the need for better water management and storage has not translated into practice with endorsement of the big dam projects like the Kalabagh Dam. The Kalabagh dam is controversial for several reasons. There are questions of water availability, environmental degradation in the Indus basin, flood control, sustainable development, displacement and rehabilitation but a key reason has to do with the decision making process that is highly centralized, politically coercive and technically flawed. It reflects a crisis of governance, where decision-makers are at odds with an increasingly vocal society. This paper argues that apart from the above issues the Kalabagh dam issue has to be seen in the context of the inter-provincial harmony and the center, provincial and local government that has been a contested issue in Pakistani politics. A coercive central government and the demand for provincial autonomy is a reflection of the uneven division between these three sets of governments under a poor federal system based on the principles of allotted roles for the three sets of governments. The issue of Kalabagh dam needs to be seen in the larger framework of Pakistani politics and is only the manifestation of a malaise that afflicts the role of federal government towards the provinces.

Hawkes, Jason

The Social and Economic Dynamics of the Buddhist Stupa Site of Bharhut

This paper presents the findings of recent research on the Buddhist stupa site of Bharhut, and the ways in which it was related to the wider social and economic spheres through examination of its wider landscape setting.

Since its discovery, the site of Bharhut has occupied an important place in the archaeological and art historical study of South Asia. The remains of the Bharhut railing constitute a benchmark in the study of early Indian sculpture and epigraphy, and have provided the basis of many important findings regarding ancient Buddhism and the early historic period. As a result, previous scholarship has concentrated almost exclusively on the sculptures and inscriptions from the main stupa monument.

However, this exclusive focus on the carvings from the stupa monument has impeded the examination of the wider archaeological contexts of the site of Bharhut, and the region within which it was situated. Indeed, the wider site and its surrounding region have never been explored systematically. Interpretations about the site, and the ways in which the Buddhist
community there were engaged with the wider society around them, have thus always been made with reference to universal models of Buddhism derived from the ancient Buddhist texts.

Addressing this, I carried out extensive archaeological surveys of the site and the region, which has enabled me to situate Bharhut within its wider landscape context for the first time. The discovery and spatial analysis of over 300 new sites in the surrounding area has enabled me to construct the first historical outline of the wider Bharhut region, identifying both the broad socio-political and economic processes that took place in the region during the lifespan of Bharhut, and the ways in which the monastic community at Bharhut was involved in these processes. This paper will present some of the main findings of this work, and highlight some of the main questions that arise. Primarily, I will show how these findings have not only filled a conspicuous gap in our knowledge of this important site, but how in doing so this has opened up new avenues of research in the study of early Buddhist sites and the histories of the periods in which they existed.

Hertel, Bradley

“The Archies success story – What have they done and how did they do it?”

Archies Ltd. -- by far India’s largest and most influential greeting card and gift company -- introduced Valentine’s Day to India in 1988. That occasion quickly took off propelling February into the country’s biggest consumerism month not only for cards, candy, flowers, and vacation packages, but for less obvious items such as clothing and kitchen appliances. The company has introduced and popularized other western occasions including Mother’s Day and Father’s Day and greeting cards on Hindu occasions, most notably Diwali and Holi. The company has helped greatly expand the popularity of celebrating birthdays.

Archies outlets sell a wide range of gifts many or most imported from China. Since 2006, Archies has outsourced its cards to many foreign countries including Russia, Holland, Finland, and South Africa.

Numerous factors account for the success of Archies. The officers are very adept at appealing to the modern tastes of their largest market -- young, educated urban individuals -- while incorporating elements of Indian culture so as to look Western but be Indian. To illustrate: The vast majority of Valentine’s cards do not mention V-Day. And, specialized V-Day cards are made to give to mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and even brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Thus, all the while adroitly responding to Shiv Sena’s opposition to the occasion, Archies has enlarged the nature of the Valentine’s Day celebration, expanded its market, and lent 365-day shelf life to its Valentine’s, Mother’s Day, and still other cards. The report details many other examples of glocalization, i.e., importing but transforming western culture so as to reflect and fit with local culture.

This report is based on field work each year between 2002 – 2007 at Archies headquarters in New Delhi as well as visits to Archies stores in Delhi, Varanasi, Kolkata, and still other cities. The report draws on many hours of interviews with Archies officers; dozens of hours of observing the creative processes involved in the production of cards from the early stages of design and writing sentiments to printing, and discussions with employees involved in each of these stages; the company’s annual reports from 1999 onward; and the cards themselves. The report is illustrated with representative cards from my extensive collection.
Holt, Sree Padma

The South Indian Goddess in European Narratives

The study of popular goddess religion in south India, the main object of my concern, can be traced to the 18th century work entitled “Genealogy of the South-Indian Gods,” composed by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, who lived in south India in his capacity as a Lutheran missionary. As detailed and as interesting as Ziegenbalg’s descriptions were, his ecclesiastical superiors in Halle, Germany, refused to publish them. Yet, a century and half later, this same work was regarded as so valuable by Halle clergy that a project was undertaken to translate, publish (in both German and English) and disseminate. What circumstances led to the acceptance of Ziegenbalg’s once rejected work? Answering this question constitutes one of the central themes of my paper. After looking into the background and context in which Ziegenbalg had undertaken his work and the reasons why his superiors at Halle came to reject it, I will then proceed to discuss the changes that took place in the next century and half within Indological studies and how these changes, in turn, influenced European missionaries in such a way as to eventually welcome Ziegenbalg’s work. This paper is part of a larger project I am working on that involves surveying western accounts written on Hindu religion and south Indian culture from the 16th through the 19th centuries, analyzing the tone and tenor of interpretations, examining their motivations, in order to assess the perceptions of western authors towards popular religiosity, especially that of goddess cults.

Iyer, Nalini

“Designing and Analyzing South Asian Oral Histories”

In the first part of this paper, I will discuss the design of the project, particularly its focus on three phases—pre-1965; 1965-80; and 1980-2000. While these three phases reflect the legal and economic influences on immigration, they also coalesce the experiences of these groups producing very distinct differences among the narrators with regard to national identity, experiences with departure and arrival, and their understanding of gender and ethnic identity. I will also discuss the pre-dominantly middle class nature of this immigrant experience and problematize the role of class as it is shaped by socio-economic forces in the US and in South Asia. In the second part of the paper, I will briefly summarize what we have learned by listening to these oral histories and how these histories reframe popular understandings of South Asian American experiences as represented in popular cultural narratives including fiction, film, and television.

Iyer, Nalini

In Their Own Words: Oral Histories of South Asians in the Pacific Northwest.

In 2005, the University of Washington libraries began collecting oral histories of South Asians who had migrated to the Pacific Northwest since the 1950s. This project has documented the lives of diverse South Asians and their impact on the region in the second half of the twentieth century. In listening to the voices of these immigrants in their own
words, we have discovered the heterogeneity of their experiences. Their stories of departure and arrival, their experiences with work, their shaping of national, ethnic, and gendered identities emphasize the need for scholars of the South Asian diaspora in America to rethink some of the assumptions that underlie our projects. For example, while it is necessary to analyze the experiences of South Asians as a whole in the United States, we have understated the importance of location in diasporic studies. Our oral history project uncovers the importance of local racial and ethnic formations in the shaping of immigrant identities. The region also experienced a dramatic shift in South Asian demographics with the emergence of the high-tech industry in the 1980s. Our oral history project, therefore, takes into account generational differences (what we call phases of migration) in its analysis. Consequently, we have divided our study into three phases: pre-1965; 1965-1980 (post Hart-Cellar); and 1980 to 2000.

Our first presenter, Deepa Banerjee, will discuss the role of the University of Washington libraries in spearheading this project in the Northwest. She will speak of the importance of oral histories and the need for libraries to archive such stories. Her talk will outline the genesis of the project, its process, and the future directions. Our second speaker, Amy Bhatt, will discuss her role as oral historian and emphasize the uniqueness of this project in focusing on the voices of the immigrants themselves. She will show how such histories recount legal and cultural obstacles experienced by early migrants arriving in the 1940’s and 1950’s while also documenting individual experiences with building the scientific, technical, educational, and social fabric of the Pacific Northwest Region. Our third speaker, Nalini Iyer, will discuss the design of the project in terms of the three phases and the diversity of narrators. She will then briefly discuss the history of South Asian migration to the Pacific Northwest and what stories the immigrants tell of departure, arrival, work life, and gender and national identity. Nalini Iyer will also be the discussant.

Iyer, Nalini

Discussant

Jaitla, Punnu

Linguistic practice and the politics of language in South Asian Societies

Studies of societies in South Asia and South Asian societies abroad have continually stressed a one-to-one correlation between group identity and language. Speech communities are often assumed to be monolithic wholes, based on region or caste affiliation. This assumption ignores the immense amount of variation in actual linguistic practice between and among South Asian societies. Linguistic anthropologists have long argued against the strict correlation between language and culture, claiming that one should attend to the "communicative relationships among persons and groups" (Hymes 1968:24). In highly multilingual areas like South Asia, the mapping of language and culture has been a highly charged historical and ideological process, whereby linguistic features which are shared across groups come to signify social difference.
Consequently, language use has practical political consequences both within and between South Asian societies. This panel, by presenting in-depth case studies from a wide spectrum of South Asian communities and regional languages, examines how linguistic practice both constitutes and is constituted by political ideologies. From Tamil-speakers in Montreal to politicians in New Delhi, from Tibetan-exiles in North India to adivasis in the West, the panel illustrates how language is never a neutral, transparent reflection of culture or society. Rather, the accounts show how linguistic action and political action are inseparable, informed by highly charged, often conflicting ideologies, and fraught with social consequences.

Jayasena, Nalin

Religion, Culture and the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka

Despite the growing popularity of cultural studies as a discipline, sufficient scholarly study has not been extended to Sri Lankan literature and film, especially its present preoccupation with the military conflict. While Qadri Ismail’s Abiding by Sri Lanka: On Peace, Place, and Postcoloniality (2005) and, more recently, Neloufer De Mel’s Militarizing Sri Lanka: Popular Culture, Memory and Narrative in the Armed Conflict (2007) have defined the parameters of potential study of the Sri Lankan conflict, this panel proposes to extend their important work. Taking to heart Ismail’s injunction that literature (and, by extension, film) represents a more inclusive mode of understanding the conflict, Nalin Jayasena’s “Sri Lankan Cinema and the Bounty of War: Vimukthi Jayasundara’s The Forsaken Land,” argues that illicit sexual relations represent an alternative to conventional relationships that are untenable; such transgressions, moreover, are a means of contesting the status quo shaped by a war economy. Focusing on Sri Lankan literature of the conflict, Pascal Zinck’s paper “Fractured Selves and the Frailty of Memory in Michael Ondaatje’s Anil’s Ghost and Ambalavaner Sivanandan’s When Memory Dies” argues that these two novels expose the ethical complexity and ambiguity that characterize human relations during the civil war. Moreover, this paper interrogates the extent to which the imposition of Western values and standards of justice—denounced by Said and more recently by Zizek—undermine national identity and thwart reconstruction. Likewise, Maryse Jayasuriya’s paper entitled “Scripts for Reconciliation?: Role-playing and dialogue in Neil Fernandopulle’s Shrapnel and Nihal de Silva’s The Road from Elephant Pass” examines how two contemporary writers of Sri Lankan fiction promote dialogue as the basis for reconciliation between Tamils and Sinhalese. While much has been written about Buddhism’s complicity in Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict, far less has been written about Buddhism’s potential as a basis for reconciliation. As such, from literary and filmic representations of the ethnic conflict, George Bond’s paper, “The Ethnic Conflict and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement's Buddhist and Gandhian Campaign for Peace” will turn its attention to a historical re-examination of an anti-war movement. This paper examines Sarvodaya's campaign for peace and evaluates its idealistic vision of a non-violent social and economic revolution that is derived from Gandhian and Buddhist values.
Jayasuriya, Maryse

“Scripts for Reconciliation?: Role-playing and dialogue in Neil Fernandopulle’s Shrapnel and Nihal de Silva’s The Road from Elephant Pass”

What does it mean to live in the midst of a long-running and evolving conflict and face acts of violence on a daily basis? Is it possible for individuals to make a difference in such a situation? These are some of the questions addressed by Neil Fernandopulle in Shrapnel, his collection of short stories, and by Nihal de Silva in The Road from Elephant Pass, his first novel. Both Fernandopulle and de Silva have won the Gratiaen Prize for their respective works but have received little scholarly attention either in Sri Lanka or elsewhere. In his short stories, Fernandopulle targets all those who are involved directly or indirectly, wittingly or unwittingly, in the continuation of the ethnic conflict. Through the role-playing, the putting-on of various personae that he does in the stories, Fernandopulle is able to instigate the kind of contrapuntal reading advocated by Edward Said. De Silva’s novel revolves around the interactions between a Sinhalese soldier and a Tamil woman who is an LTTE cadre. Thrown together, they begin to explore their different interpretations of the conflict in Sri Lanka and to challenge each other’s versions. De Silva suggests that personal contact between individuals from the warring groups could do much to ameliorate the ethnic conflict by enabling them to recognize the extent of their prejudice toward and misconceptions about the other, even to take responsibility for the suffering that each has caused the other. My paper will examine the possibilities for reconciliation offered by Fernandopulle and de Silva in their fiction.

Kumar, Satendra

Slippery Caste, Vernacular History-writing and Globalist Homogenisation in Western Uttar Pradesh, North India

Caste in contemporary India is thought to be losing its significance, mainly due to a homogenizing set of global economic processes leading to a change in the mode of social production. It is commonly argued that caste has become relevant only in politics, and has lost most of its social and economic significance. Contrary to this, I argue that caste continues to play a crucial role in defining people’s identity, albeit in changing ways. Using ethnographic data from field research on the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in a north Indian village and its surroundings, I show how caste is indeed losing its stranglehold on everyday practices of commensality and its standing as a religiously sanctioned system for the division of labor, but is still an important frame of reference for defining social identity in rural and urban western Uttar Pradesh. Caste associations are asserting caste identity and cultural differences among castes through their active involvement in rewriting vernacular caste histories, in order to challenge hierarchies of the caste system. These histories, published during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, revolve around caste heroes and the role of caste members during the freedom struggle against the British and are guided by the discourses of egalitarianism and citizenship. A result is the reconsolidation of the power of caste in conceptions of the self and others. These histories are assuming multiple meanings in the ways they are used by political parties and caste associations. They form a basis on which communities are being formed to resist state hegemony and its predatory developmental schemes; the economic, consumerist, market-based homogenization that globalization produces; and local power hierarchies.
Kumar, Prakash

Technology in Diaspora: Indigo Plantations in South Asia

This paper problematizes the conjoining of science/technology with agricultural improvement in the constructs of progress and modernity in South Asia, and the British and Dutch Empires. The dominant historiography in South Asia describes the methods of cultivation and production on the indigo plantations in Bengal as antiquated and backward. The references to plantation technologies are unanimous in proposing the imposition of an exploitative labor system that used debt-trapped Indian agriculturists and coolies to produce a commodity for the international market. The critique of the labor system appears in the company of a similar critique that the planters were conservatives who did not wish to employ labor-saving but costly methods and operations.

This analysis loosens the straightjacket constructs of “colonial” and “imperial” in the process of explaining technological change on the indigo plantations in Bengal. To explain the efforts made by the European indigo planters in Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who were trying to save their agricultural product against the competition of synthetic indigo this study invites attention to several additional variables that complicate the simplistic understanding given by conventional paradigms. It raises interesting questions about the power of Indian peasants whose restlessness made it impossible for the planters to consider wage cuts. In addition, the paper speaks to the contingencies in the market relating to consumer behavior: What exactly was “pure” indigo? Why was purity desired and by whom? Seen as standing in the way of the forward march of a key technological transition the planters readily invited charges of conservativeness. On the contrary, this study sees the planters as “agents” who were as deeply embedded in the context provided by imperial politics and colonial society as they were guided by other factors independent of them. In particular this paper enriches the analysis of colonial and imperial constructs by referring to processes taking place on the edge of empires. Here the analytical gaze turns to the diasporas of planters that moved not only between the western hemisphere and the British Empire but also between the British and Dutch Empires. The paper specifically puts spotlight on correspondences between British planters in colonial Bengal and the indigo and sugar planters in Dutch Southeast Asia in order to meet the challenge of the synthetic technology.

Kushal Punjabi, Bharat

Dry Fields and Wet Canals: The Political Economy of Water in the Mumbai Countryside

Over the last four decades, several action groups and social movements have mobilized the tribal community in Thane district on issues around land reform, forests and displacement from industrial and dam projects. In a district where the tribal community constitutes more than thirty percent of the population, these issues have acquired a new significance with the expansion of Mumbai’s metropolitan boundaries, the setting up of Special Economic Zones and the pressure on the district’s water resources due to urban demand.

My research on canal irrigation in the Surya multipurpose irrigation project in Dahanu taluka of Thane district shows that the costs of this metropolitan expansion is borne primarily by the tribal community. The Surya irrigation project was funded primarily by funds from the tribal
sub-plan and was intended to irrigate 24,000 hectares of tribal land in Dahanu and Palghar blocks. So far, the project has been able to irrigate only ten percent of land. In ethnographic and survey research, I conducted in two villages of the project in Dahanu block. I discovered that the urban demands for water from the Surya project had intensified water scarcity for small and marginal farmers with land holding of (0-2 hectares) in this tribal belt. Drawing on a geographically stratified sample of farmers surveyed from the head to the tail end of the canal minors in two villages. I also found that this problem of scarcity was especially acute for farmers at the tail end of the canal minors in the two villages and has also been exacerbated in recent years by the pressures on water resources from orchard owners at the head and the middle reaches of the canal system. While focusing on the political economy of canal irrigation in these two villages, I will also draw on the experiences of the Kashtakari Sanghatana, a social movement representing tribals in Dahanu taluka. Over the years, the Sanghatana has struggled to get a share of irrigation water for the original beneficiaries of the irrigation project - the tribal community. My field work found that the capture of local irrigation institutions by a nexus of urban and rural capital and the corruption in the Irrigation department of the Surya project has led to the small and marginal tribal farmers forgoing their share of water from this irrigation project.

Lal, Ruby

Discipline, Cleanse & Control: Institutionalising Medicine and Gender in Colonial India, 1837-1901

Examining the means by which the colonial state understood and established systems of medical control provides important insights not only into the workings of the colonial state, but into broader and often conflicting understandings of gender relations and Indian women. Through an exploration of different aspects of Company and Crown medical control, this panel seeks to investigate how practices in imperial medicine produce constructions of gender and the feminized body. Each of these papers will contribute to our understanding of how medical knowledge and practice redefined understandings of gender and sexuality in India in the nineteenth century. By looking at how the imperial state sought to control the bodies of women often on the margins of society, including those deemed to be ‘prostitutes’ or ‘insane’, the papers emphasize the importance of medicine in imperial conceptualizations of Indian women.

Lal, Maneesha

“Punjab Pioneer(s): Paradoxes of Border Crossing at the North India School of Medicine for Christian Women, Ludhiana”

Whether in glowing obituaries published in The Lancet or the British Medical Journal or in flattering biographical portraits such as Punjab Pioneer, Edith Brown's life history has been readily incorporated into that genre of heroic adventure narrative so crucial to the medical missionary enterprise. Brown, the founder of the North India School of Medicine for Christian Women in 1894 in Ludhiana, Punjab, has attracted considerable hagiographic attention. Indeed she has been justly hailed as a visionary, struggling against innumerable odds to launch the "first medical school for women in the East.”
This unique institution challenged a number of conventional boundaries in Indian colonial medicine. At a time when medical training for women remained coeducational and under government auspices, the Ludhiana school was intended solely for Christian women, explicitly to protect them from “heathen” professors and students. The school was an interdenominational enterprise when much of missionary work was organized along competitive denominational and national lines. It relied on American as well as British mission organizations for financing and staff, and within a few years managed to construct a network of far-flung overseas auxiliaries based in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Toronto, New York, and Philadelphia. With its aim of providing Christian women medical personnel to missionary hospitals across India, the North India School of Medicine created new opportunities for many Indian women, who defied established norms of gender. Yet the border crossing institutionalized in the Ludhiana school was also marked by many paradoxes. Despite initially distinguishing itself from colonial government initiatives, the school later eagerly accepted designation by the Punjab government as the provincial medical school for women. As medical missions evolved to place less priority on conversion, Edith Brown continued to insist on strict theological avowals by staff. The school's interdenominational and international character resulted in dispersed authority and changing ideals about the nature of Christianity's appropriate relation to healing. Ludhiana graduates themselves often sought more lucrative jobs in government rather than missionary establishments, and in both were hindered by their lower status qualifications.

This paper thus explores the multiple ways in which the North India School of Medicine for Christian Women and its students and staff both traversed and reinforced certain boundaries of nation, religion, denomination, and gender. Based on annual reports, Punjab government records, and fundraising appeals, it also reflects on the border crossing of the school’s Indian graduates, themselves perhaps the true “Punjab Pioneers.”

Lawoti, Mahendra

Ethnicity and the State in the past, present and 'new' Nepal

The Nepali state played a significant role in the formation of identities of different groups in the country and their exclusion in the polity and society. The peoples’ movement in 2006 began to dismantle the old state and if the restructuring of the state is continued after the formation of the Constituent Assembly, the reformed state’s relationship to different groups may change as well. This panel analyzes the changes in different sectors in the ‘new’ Nepal and their implications for different caste, ethnic, and national groups. Lawoti’s paper provides a historical background using a path dependency framework. He argues that as the state consolidated and the ruling groups increased their hold onto the state, the non-ruling groups got further marginalized. Steinmann’s paper presents the Maoists as the catalyst for the transformation occurring in Nepal. Based on ethnography among different communities in the mountains, hills and the Tarai, she argues that the Maoists contributed in replacing the old networks of communities and the state with new forms of rituals and structures. The next two papers analyze two important sectors in the post 2006 transformation: the military and the economy. Adhikari’s paper analyzes the Nepali Army’s role in the exclusion and the transformation it is going through after the regime change in 2006. The army appears to be attempting to be inclusive and representative. Shakya’s paper analyzes the business sector dominated by a few ethnic groups and implications for it in the new Nepal that has witnessed
increased mobilization of ethnic and national groups. Overall, the papers in this panel attempt to make sense of the transformation the Nepali state is undergoing after the 2006 regime change and its affect on its diverse people.

Lehr, Rachel

Pashai Language: Vitality Begins at Home

Pashai, a western Indo-Aryan language included under the "Dardic" umbrella term, is spoken in the Hindu Kush region of eastern Afghanistan. With no reliable census figures, and very little scholarship it is difficult to access the vitality of the language. Pashai is a non-written language and even in exclusively Pashai speaking regions there is little prestige associated with it. Children are educated in the regionally dominant national languages (Pashto or Dari). Historically low levels of education have persisted resulting in high illiteracy levels. Few girls in this region have gone to school beyond 4th grade. Social and economic mobility requires acquisition of one or both of the Afghan national languages and varying degrees of multilingualism are high in the region, despite illiteracy. However, the female population, which is predominantly uneducated and lacking social and economic mobility beyond the domestic sphere, is for the most part exclusively Pashai speaking. Language planning and policy, in its infancy in Afghanistan, has already given rise to ethnic conflict. The new Afghan constitution explicitly states the right for all ethnic groups to be educated in their own language in their home regions. This mandate is neither economically nor politically feasible in a country with limited economic resources, a weak central government, and an urgent need for national unity through education and language. It is unclear how this policy, if enacted, would affect the vitality of Pashai. Since language transmission is in the hands of women, as long as women remain uneducated, the likelihood of intergenerational transmission is increased. However, if current expanded educational initiatives are successful, the likelihood of intergenerational transmission is decreased.

This paper is an assessment of the current risk factors for endangerment for Pashai. I will use a matrix of criteria based on specific linguistic variables from Edwards (1992) framework of typology of minority languages, such as the linguistic capability of the speaker, degree of language standardization, speakers attitude and involvement regarding education, state of education in the area. The additional literacy variables suggested in Grenoble and Whaley (1998) including the role of literacy in the community, acquisition of literacy, regional attitudes toward multilingualism, and the relationship of the regional language to the minority will be incorporated. Furthermore, I will introduce gender as a factor in the assessment of language vitality. The focus of my analysis is the Pashai speaking community in the valley of Darrai Nur.

Leichty, Mark

: An Exploration into Nepali Cultural Conceptions of the Category of Youth

Society has a particular investment in youth, as does youth in society. Yet “youth” is hard to define. The study of youth has been rediscovered and reformed several times, according to disciplinary conventions and theoretical fashions, most often with a focus on the processes of
social reproduction and transformation. Structural-functional approaches studied youth as a static category within life-stages. Later analysis has focused on youth agency and how youth interact with normative practices of socialization. More recently, youth has served as a conduit to track the impacts of modernity, free-market systems, development, and globalization on societies and local cultures. It has begun to serve as an analytic for tracking social change. Within the social sciences the factors that are considered when defining youth vary. Beyond disciplinary differences, there are also cultural discrepancies in the categorical definition of youth. When one takes seriously how this category is culturally defined, one finds that even within one culture, youth takes on different meanings in various social spheres. These variances highlight the constructive nature of youth as a category. Studying these shifts in the meaning of youth can reveal contradictions in the social that render the constructive processes of culture, the social and individuals more transparent. The papers in this panel analyze cultural conceptions of youth in Nepal, looking at university student activism (Snellinger); the marketization of traditional forms of music (Stirr); and the political consciousness of Bhutanese refugees (Evans), in order to understand how youth is defined, mobilized and deployed within these different social spheres. From our different research analytics and disciplinary approaches, we explore how the category is defined and what is at stake in the various definitions. This panel both highlights the varying notions of youth within different Nepalese social spheres, and examines how our different disciplinary approaches affect our analysis of this cultural category.

Lelyveld, David

Jute Hain Japani, Kapre Inglistani: Sayyid Ross Masood's Passage to Japan

In the Spring of 1922, Sayyid Ross Masood, Director of Public Instruction of Hyderabad State and grandson of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, spent three months in Japan studying the educational system there, in particular the uses of the Japanese language rather than the languages of Europe for all forms of contemporary scholarship and education. Although he did not know Japanese, he carried on an enterprising investigation, interviewing a wide range of educational authorities and visiting a number of institutions. He also kept a thorough diary of his trip. When he returned, he published a book, Japan and its Educational System, both in English and Urdu. Masood's project, funded by Hyderabad State, was designed to assist the newly founded Osmania University, India's first western style university to be conducted in an Indian language. The example of Japan, Masood thought, would serve as a model of how such a project could be conducted successfully. Masood was concerned not only with the work of translation of European language texts but also with the institutional format of Japanese education and the ways Japan sought to maintain its cultural independence while drawing knowledge from the rest of the industrialized world. Greatly attracted to Japan, he even thought that the veneration of the emperor might be carried over to the Nizam as a way of motivating student achievement. The paper will study what Ross Masood found in Japan and how he hoped to relate that to conditions in colonial India as part of fulfilling the project of the movement his grandfather had undertaken in Aligarh fifty years earlier.

Majumdar, Sarasij

PEASANTS AGAINST LIBERALIZATION: VEHEMENT OPPOSITION OR MEASURED AMBIVALENCE?
Much of anti-globalization activism against land-acquisition for industries in India is based on a narrative of an encroaching global capital and a victimized and undifferentiated local population with little power and voice. Such global political economic narratives, which locate the "impulse" of economic globalization in agencies outside the local communities, help build coalitions and counterpoints to challenge neoliberal models of globalization. But these narratives also hide tensions and complex expectations within the local. Fragile coalition of individuals and parties at the local-level that tend to absolutely reject industrialization or land acquisition turn blind to the multifaceted character of the local and complex relationships that the poor and the non-poor have among themselves with respect to agriculture and land. Through an ethnography of anti-land acquisition movements in villages of West Bengal, I argue that the complex and ambivalent attitude of the villagers towards industrialization and land has to be understood in terms of a multi-scalar politics of economic reforms. I show that these villages are not outside the global circuits of capital, as they are portrayed by activists. Instead, the villagers have complex subjectivities and attitudes towards land and work and diverse expectations from the state within the context of the continued sub-division of land, out-migration of the village youth and the absence of non-farm employment.

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Marsh, Brandon

Allies of a Kind: Religious Leadership and British Propaganda on India's North-West Frontier, 1935-1942

In May 1936 the Waziristan region of India's North-West Frontier erupted in revolt against the British Raj. Over the next year and half over 60,000 British and Indian troops were dispatched to quell the revolt. Led by a local mullah known as the Faqir of Ipi and predicated on the nullification of an Islamic conversion in a local court case, the Waziristan revolt constituted the Raj's largest armed conflict in the interwar era. Despite this show of force, the rebellion was never truly broken and British authorities remained obsessed with the possibility of another conflagration led by the Faqir or other religious leaders. The unsettled situation in the region coincided with the onset of the Second World War and the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, which further heightened British fears about what they still saw as the most important land frontier in the British Empire.

This paper examines the British administration's attempts to influence the inhabitants of the North-West Frontier's "tribal areas" via religious leadership between the Waziristan revolt and the early years of the Second World War. It argues that by the late 1930s the British were convinced that local religious figures, rather than "secular" maliks or headmen, provided the sole political leadership among the Frontier's tribal Pakhtuns. The British therefore sought to bolster their position and counter the influence of internal challengers such as the Faqir and external enemies, such as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, with a concerted propaganda campaign aimed at religious leaders.

Using private and official papers collected in London and Delhi, and drawing upon recent works by Ayesha Jalal and Sana Haroon, this paper focuses on three specific facets of the propaganda campaign on the Frontier. First, it investigates the ideological debate within the
British administration over the nature of political leadership in the tribal areas and the decision to use religious leaders as the primary avenue for propaganda. Next, it looks at the content and context of the propaganda communicated to and by local mullahs. Finally, this paper examines whether the propaganda was successful, what methods were employed, and how the British measured this success. Ultimately, the history of this campaign offers an important window into British perceptions about the nature of Frontier Islam and illuminates the methods and materials used to manipulate religious leadership in the final decades of British rule in India.

Mason, Kaley

Engendering Song and Sensibility: Singing out of Place in Malluwood

This paper explores how use of eclectic creative strategies in the Malayalam film song industry has expanded possibilities for gendered musical expression. Until recently, the voices singing the roles of female and male characters in Malayalam cinema followed a predictable set of timbral qualities, classical stylistic features, and prominent role in song textures. This was partly due to K. J. Yesudas and K. S. Chitra’s virtual monopoly over the field of playback singing over the past four decades. Now that a new generation of music directors, playback singers, and musicians are increasingly accessing positions of influence over the production of popular music, stylistic changes are evoking a wider range of feminine and masculine identities on and beyond the screen in Kerala’s public sphere. The emergence of a new musical sensibility has stimulated passionate responses by those who lament the demise of a golden age of feminine and masculine idylls in Malayali song on one hand, and a younger generation that embraces pop cultural forms which challenge normative conventions for engendering performance on the other. Characterized by stronger rhythmic emphasis, greater variety in instrumental timbres and textures, and declamatory vocal styles, the turn away from classically inspired film songs has created new ways of sounding masculine and feminine. Are polarized responses to these stylistic changes related to transgressions of gender roles in the songs? What larger historical forces have created the conditions for these changes in the first place? At issue are the shifting contours of patriarchy in the state’s distinct social imaginary—an understanding of the self in relation to others in Kerala society that weaves paradoxically between cosmopolitan worldviews and stifling conservatism. Combining ethnographic experience, media sources, and close music analysis of two contrasting film songs, the paper aims to show how regionally specific historical and cultural forces have both enabled and constrained options for crafting and consuming gendered musical sensibilities in Southwestern India.

McDuie-Ra, Duncan

Between National Security and Ethno-nationalism: state-building and land alienation in Meghalaya, India

Meghalaya is experiencing rapidly changing land relations: common land is being privatised, land quality is diminishing, the central and state governments are appropriating land to access resources, and landlessness is triggering unsustainable urban migration and increasing rural poverty. Despite this land issues are only fleetingly addressed by the state, local government
and civil society actors. This paper seeks to explore the constraints on politicising land in Meghalaya by focusing on three dynamics. First, the proximity of Meghalaya to international borders and to insurgencies of varying severity in the Northeast region mean that development is dominated by the national security approach of the Indian Government and Meghalaya Government. Militarisation has led to direct land appropriation for military forces and the formulation of development priorities aimed at generating revenue and attracting foreign investment with major consequences for land use. Secondly, the role of local level institutions of governance, dorbars, recognised by the Sixth Schedule as legal custodians over land allocation, land use, and land transfer among the Scheduled Tribes of Meghalaya, have undergone a significant shift in the last 20 years and have adopted many of the functions of the modern state. While they continue to preserve the position of rural power brokers and clans they are increasingly linked to the urban elite and formal political parties. Unlike village and district level institutions in other parts of India, the dorbars have not undergone reforms aimed at inclusion and transparency giving them virtually unchecked authority over land. Thirdly, the saliency of ethno-nationalism in civil society has meant that land issues are embedded in identity politics. The loss of land to ‘outsiders’; whether private businesses, the Indian Government, or migrant agriculturalists, is contested by civil society actors, often violently. Yet the loss of land from within Meghalayan society is rarely contested despite being a major catalyst of changing land relations. Indeed to contest loss of land by ‘insiders’ is to contest the way ethnic identity has been constructed around notions of egalitarianism and sustainable agriculture. This paper concludes by arguing that the land crisis in Meghalaya is shaped by social relations embedded in the dominance of national security and ethno-nationalism; neither of which are likely to be challenged unless those caught in between national security and ethno-nationalism have access to the diminishing political spaces where land allocation, use, and transfer are negotiated and contested.

McGuire, Meredith

"The Body Communicates Constantly": New Middle Class Bodies and Metrosexual Modernity

How do bodies become identifiably “new middle class”? This paper begins with an examination of the burgeoning popularity in Indian workplaces of corporate training programs focused on bodily cultivation. Often referred to as “Personality Development and Enhancement” (PDE), these programs were developed for use in American-process call centers, to produce in trainees a set of “techniques of the body” that would convey to their overseas customers an ‘American’ attitude of openness, confidence, and ease (Mauss 1973). These training programs’ growing purchase in domestically-oriented businesses—and even, occasionally, in NGOs that facilitate rights-claims for the marginalized—suggests that the bodily production of world-class service increasingly appears connected to the production of modern subjecthood and citizenly entitlement. A discursive analysis of training materials, corporate publications, and popular discourses on the world-class Indian body suggests that while conspicuous consumption has long been the watchword for describing new middle class constructions, a key aspect of the formation of the new middle class is the conjuring of a new sort of body, one uniquely suited to the fruits of the post-liberalization nation. Arguing that the production of this body entails the production of new gender regimes that trouble the moral authority of the middle class, I close with an examination of the assumptions and anxieties attendant on popular discourses about ‘metrosexuality’ in urban India.
Merrill, Christi

Constructing Communities: Dalits in Modern India

In contemporary academic discourse, the notion of community has increasingly been understood in terms of plurality and difference, such that social bonds are now regarded as the product of negotiations between competing interests rather than purely the expression of shared experience between actors. Such reevaluations of the political and social foundations of collectivities have both fueled vigorous debates about the nature of democracy and concentrated attention on the multiple levels at which such tensions appear—between competing social groups within a national framework, and then within individual collectivities seeking to articulate a particular identity. As much recent postcolonial scholarship has maintained, this recent focus on the polity as a sphere of contestation attests to processes of cultural and linguistic minoritization inherent to the experience of modernity.

"Dalit" political discourses—within either a national frame or specific "Dalit" communities—trace the shifts described above and call attention to vexing questions of religious affiliation, social hierarchies, and national belonging that are particular to modern India. Since the Dalit Panthers famously defined "Dalit" in their 1972 Manifesto as "A member of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, neo-Buddhist, the working-people, the land-less and poor peasants, women, and all those who are being exploited politically, economically, and in the name of religion," the idea of "Dalit" as an identity claiming space among in the modern Indian nation is one that has been multiply constructed by various interest groups. The papers in this panel explore the manifold ways the idea of "Dalit" continues to be articulated—across performative, literary, and print media—to shape ideas of modern Indian citizenship. Neil Doshi's paper interrogates
the tension inherent in the articulation of Dalit identity in Leftist Hindi-Urdu street theatre and poetry as at once both universal and exclusive to particular caste communities. Laura Brueck's paper explores the ways in which Dalit authors and literary critics construct the notion of a "Dalit consciousness" as a particular standpoint from which to intervene in mainstream literary discourse. In his paper, Joel Lee explores the operations by which two major non-ashraaf Muslim writers reconfigure the discourse of Dalit and Muslim belonging and propose a new regime of political solidarities. Finally Prashant Kadam's paper offers a critique of the representations of Dalit identity in commercial Hindi film.

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Metz, John

Managing Human Impacts on Forests in Highland South Asia

Forests provide new agricultural land, wood, livestock fodder and grazing, foods, medicines and other products to the subsistence farmers of South Asia, who constitute the majority of the people of the region. These traditional uses have converted forests to agricultural land or degraded them so severely that the ecological integrity and human services forests provide are compromised. The papers of this session will examine the impacts of human activities on forests and evaluate the management practices that have emerged to reverse the conversion and degradation processes. Keshav Bhattarai will use remote sensed data and GIS to analyze the forces driving deforestation in Nepal’s Central Development Zone. Teri Allendorf will describe the importance of and need for preservation of dry forests of south Asia. Krishna Roka will examine how political changes in Nepal have affected the ways local people manage forests. Ashok Regmi will explore the factors affecting the success of community forestry in the hills and plains of Chitawan district of Nepal and suggest how variations in the forest resource, in the characteristics of the forest user group, and in forest governance can improve forest management.

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Middleton, Townsend

Anxious Belongings: The History of Affect and the Affect of History in the Darjeeling Hills.

For subaltern historiography, the question of subjectivity has proven especially important and difficult. As a study of belonging at the margins of nation, this paper openly confronts many of the methodological and epistemological difficulties inherent to the question of subjectivity. However, it ventures a way through its impasses by calling upon experiential ethnography as a means to appropriately isolate and identify Affect as a topic of historiographic inquiry. Pairing a social flare-up (sparked by an ethnographic blunder of my own doing) with a similar crisis that occurred some 140 years ago, this paper explores the profound sense of unease that haunts the Gorkha peoples of Darjeeling vis a vis the Indian nation.

Despite having occupied Darjeeling since long before India as a modern nation-state came into being, the Gorkha population is perpetually dogged by a sense of non-belonging and subalternity within India. At once intimate and political, this collective affect continues to galvanize identity politics in this romanticized yet often forgotten corner of the nation. Local explanations pin the source of this anxiety to the ‘immigrant/outsider’ status pressed upon the people of Darjeeling. My research reveals a far more complex pedigree of fear—one that links
crucial 19th century phenomena such as the post-Mutiny framing of the Gorkha as the ‘anti-nationalist’, with the current fomentations of anxious belonging in Darjeeling (namely, the willingness of political leaders to play upon, and thus perpetuate, this complex of fear.)

What this paper attempts then is an historical and necessarily phenomenological critique of the politics and embodiment of anxiety. (Re)framing belonging as a viable historiographic question, I call upon ethnography as a window into the realm of subjectivity, and an opening into a more longitudinal understanding of the anxieties over belonging that perpetually affect the subjects of Darjeeling and their place within the Indian nation.

Mohammad, Afsar

Re-Reading Sita: Ramayana and the South Asian Literatures

This panel is interested in exploring the scope of the character of Sita in the Indian epic “Ramayana,” as it has evolved in interactions with multiple literary and artistic forms, influencing the sub-continent's religious, political and social dimensions and invoking multitude of audience reactions and responses. The panelists, in this regard, have assumed a “living epic”/ “many Ramayanas” approach to both the character of “Sita” and the epic text itself. They also contend that the multiple ways in which Sita has been represented within the South Asian literary and folkloric traditions, de-familiarize the dominant attempts to tie down the epic text to official, standardized versions. Through their examinations of the character of Sita in various South Asian literary and folkloric traditions, the panelists would also examine to what extent the “regional” and/or “local” narrative traditions have used the character of “Sita” to problematize the institutional ideologies of gender, religion, sexuality or linguistic identities.

Mohsini, Mira

Discourse and engagement from the margins: Perceptions of national and state awards schemes for highly skilled craftspeople

Despite the growing number of studies on craftspeople and crafts “communities” in India, there is a considerable lack of research on the intersection of State sponsored interventions and craft production. One such site of intersection is the National and State Award scheme, sponsored by the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts, Government of India. The objective of this scheme is to acknowledge highly skilled craftspeople in an annual competition (at both national and state levels), where the winner in each craft category (embroidery, woodwork, metalwork, etc.) is awarded a government issued certificate and a substantial cash prize. This paper will address the issue of how the state – and in particular, the state as represented through the award schemes – is perceived and experienced by craftspeople living and working in Old Delhi, and in turn how identities are actively (re)shaped by encounters with the state. Thus, the politics of representation with reference to handicrafts is not only framed within the discourse of “nation-building” and “cultural diplomacy”, but also within the various discourses emerging from the margins.

In arguing for a move towards the margins to better understand the interface between “the state” and society, I look at ethnographic material and discuss specific case studies where
craftspeople (men and women) I came to know well spoke about and experienced various state apparatus and how their engagements/disengagements with state interventions (i.e. award schemes, melas and fairs, etc.) were factors in (re)shaping identities and power relations. I conclude that the prestigious award schemes are not simply consumed by those considered as and relegated to the roles of “traditional”, “backward” or “in need of revival”, but instead many become agents by appropriating the “politics of representation” from the position of marginality.

Mullen, Rani
State-Building in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture today. After more than two decades of civil war the country has a democratically elected government and for the first time in nearly 30 years socio-economic indicators are showing improvements. Yet peace in this fragile democracy threatens to be shattered by not only the deteriorating security conditions, but also through the weakness of the underlying political, social and security structure.

This panel will examine the political structures in Afghanistan today with the aim of understanding politics at the central, provincial and local levels. It will also seek to analyze the current security structures and successes of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in particular, as well as explore the obstacles to the integration of women, in order to offer recommendations for what aspects of state-building the Afghan government and donor community should focus on. Understanding the state-building process, the prospects of enhanced security, and the possibilities for overcoming social barrier in order to enhance women’s political participation and ways to strengthen the democratic political system in Afghanistan are essential to peace and stability in South Asia. Understanding the successes and failures of the state-building effort in Afghanistan also holds lessons for other fragile democracies in the region.

Munshi, Sadaf
Language Endangerment and Language Death in South Asia

As globalization increases so does the loss of world languages and, with them, is lost human culture and history. According to a special report by the National Science Foundation, at least 3,000 of the world’s estimated 6,000-7,000 languages (i.e. about 50%) are in danger of becoming extinct. The two most common reasons for language endangerment are: (1) there are few living native speakers, and (2) many children do not learn the language of their parents because other languages are considered more helpful or powerful. While the first scenario leads to rapid extinction, with the death of the last speakers, the second scenario, which is quite common in South Asia, leads to slow language attrition and eventual death. Elena Bashir examines two languages of Pakistan, viz. Kalasha (about 5000 speakers) and Siraiki (nearly 14 million speakers), both of which are under pressure to differing degrees and in different ways in relation to language maintenance. An analysis of various risk factors in language endangerment is offered by Rachel Lehr, who provides an assessment of language
vitality among the Pashai speakers of Darrai Nur in the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan, using a matrix of different sociolinguistic variables. Based on quantitative as well as qualitative data, Rakesh Bhatt evaluates the use of Kashmiri among "old" and "new" Kashmiris in New Delhi (India) and discusses the influence of English/Hindi dominance on language use among Kashmiris who, he claims, are actively embracing a language ideology which disfavors language maintenance by their children. A different angle, focusing on documentary linguistics – a program intended to document, preserve, and revitalize endangered languages, is the focus of Sadaf Munshi’s progress report on an on-going project on the documentation and revitalization of Burushaski -- a language isolate spoken in the northern areas of Pakistan and by a small number of people in Srinagar (India). Sadaf Munshi presents the methods, techniques, and challenges involved in such work, stressing the need for an integrated framework to meet the goals of the project.

Munshi, Sadaf

Endangered Languages: Documentation, Transmission, and Revitalization

Many linguists across the world are seeking to document and preserve the so-called “endangered” languages. Taking advantage of the latest state-of-the-art technologies, documentary linguists are making efforts towards documenting and recording oral and written linguistic traditions, translating and annotating documentation materials, compiling grammatical descriptions and dictionaries, and preparing pedagogical materials for language teaching and learning for the ethnic population which claims ownership of the language. This paper presents a progress report of an on-going project on the documentation and revitalization of Burushaski. Burushaski is spoken in the Gilgit District of northern Pakistan, a region home to speakers of several different language families, viz. Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Tibeto-Burman, and Altaic. Burushaski is not related to any known language in the world and is, thus, regarded as a language isolate. There are three major dialects, Yasin (about 15,000 speakers), Hunza (about 18-22,000 speakers), and Nagar (slightly more speakers than the Hunza variety), spoken in Hunza, Nagar, and Yasin valleys (respectively). A newly emerging Burushaski dialect is spoken in Srinagar (India), with about 300 speakers. It has been in isolation from the mainstream Burushaski community for about 116 years and is systematically different from other dialects (Munshi 2006). Because Burushaski is primarily preserved orally, its survival is greatly threatened by language contact, multilingualism, and language shift. Documentation efforts have been conducted by western scholars, but because their publications are mostly in foreign languages (Berger 1974-1998, Tiffou 1999), they are inaccessible to Burushos who are literate only in Urdu and (to some extent) English. Recently, various Burushaski scholars in Pakistan have produced some pedagogical materials for the promotion of Burushaski. However, because of limited resources and lack of appropriate training, such efforts are yet to produce substantial results. Local rivalries have also resulted in a number of competing writing systems, and an official consensus about a standardized writing system has not been reached. In this paper, I discuss the various steps, methods, and techniques involved in the documentation and revitalization of Burushaski and present the proposed next steps in developing an integrated framework to meet the various goals of this long-standing work. I will also talk about the various challenges ranging from initial encounters in persuading the community to participate, social and cultural obstacles in data collection, and effective use of information technologies in meeting the project goals without disrupting community traditions and cultural practices.
Nair, Neeti

“om shantih, ameen”: religiously informed anti-colonial protest

Historians have studied the Gandhi-led non cooperation agitation in terms of its social bases and the vicissitudes and opportunities afforded by the Khilafat movement. This paper focuses on the role of the ardent Arya Samajist Swami Shraddhanand, as he addressed congregations at the Fatehpuri Masjid and Jama Masjid in Delhi. Remembering that moment seven years later, long after his shift to shuddhi and sangathan, Shraddhanand was ‘still impressed with its memory’ and hoped ‘that clouds of doubt will disappear and the bright light of the sun of Faith and Truth will shine forth again with all its splendour.’ Shraddhanand’s efforts towards Hindu-Muslim unity and defiance of the British Raj lend weight to the transformative potential of religion in politics and suggest insights very different from the standard and somewhat sterile contemporary debate between the ‘secular’ and the ‘communal’. They also call into question the stereotyped depiction of the 1920s as a time of ‘aggressive Hindutva’ and unalloyed ‘communal’ violence.

Naqvi, Syed

The Aesthetics and Politics of Historical Exile: Intizar Husain and Friends

This paper will read the motif of the destruction of experience together with the affects and dispositions of melancholy and nostalgia in the post-Partition writings of the Pakistani writer Intizar Husain, as well as some of his literary associates, especially the poet, Nasir Kazmi. Articulated in the wake of the catastrophic violence and displacement of the Partition, and against the humanist-realist aesthetics of the Progressive Writers, the oeuvres of these writers share an elective affinity in the unprecedented rigor of their exploration of moods of historical exile. Simultaneously, the experience of catastrophic loss engenders in these writers an acute sense of the historicity of experience, abyssal historical rupture, and longing for community and tradition. Even as he is scorned as a “reactionary” by the (vernacular) left in Pakistan, paradoxically, Intizar Husain’s nostalgic posture has not only afforded him insight into the comprehensive ravages of modernity, but also an ironic distance from Pakistani nationalism, even as he appreciates the tragic dimension of its trajectory. Finally, I will highlight how under the pressure of late postcoloniality, Husain’s singular historical sensibility erupts into textual moments of a unique apocalyptic vision that stands at the chiasmic center of ethics and politics, myth and history.

Naqvi, Syed

Politics of Urdu in the 20th Century

This panel will explore Muslim engagement with the major political events of 20th century South Asian history – from those issues raised by anti-colonial nationalism, and the political and educational models available in an era of modernization, to the violence and displacement
of Partition and the trajectories of newly independent nation-states. In her paper, Kavita Datla discusses the work of one Urdu scholar, Sayyid Hashmi Faridabadi, whose rendering of the subcontinent’s past in textbooks meant for students of Osmania University was an attempt to engage with the complex questions of political community raised by Indian nationalism. David Lelyveld, in his paper on Sayyid Ross Masood’s work on behalf of the Nizam of Hyderabad and Osmania University, explores the issues pursued by reformers of colonial India who looked eastward to Japan for a model of education and politics. Nauman Naqvi’s paper, on the post-Partition writings of Intizar Husain and his literary circle, explores the counter-humanist aesthetics and politics of historical exile in the traumatic thought of a later generation of Urdu writers, highlighting the immanent critique of nationalism and apocalyptic vision of modernity offered by them. Taken together, these papers hope to explore the political ideas and positions articulated by twentieth century Urdu authors as they investigated the relationship between language, history, and politics.

Narasimhan, Haripriya

Recreating ‘summer holidays’ through the year: Kinship among the Vatima Brahmans of Tamilnadu

Drawing on recent research in a Tamil Brahman village, this paper explores ways in which the Vatima Brahmans argue for closer ties to their native villages and thereby to the larger kin network. Once an orthodox and agriculture-based community of the Kaveri delta, the Vatima have become increasingly urbanised, even globalised in the last few decades. Until recently, the Vatima preferred kin marriage, and forged marriage alliances within a specified group of villages, thus enabling them to become a highly close-knit community. During summer months, children returned to their parents’ native villages which provided them with opportunities to experience rural life, to know their kin and to establish emotional bonds with them. For today’s Vatima children, however, summer holidays are increasingly spent in going for tuition classes, or more rarely, travelling to far off holiday resorts. As most households are now nuclear, children do not share their parents’ sense of nostalgia for ‘summer holidays’ or growing up with extended kin. The rapid decline of most villages, migration abroad and preference for non-kin and even non-Vatima marriage partners have accelerated fears among the Vatima of future generations ‘losing’ kinship links. This paper examines conscious efforts by the community to project the village itself as the larger kin network, draw interest in its welfare among transnational natives and bring the community closer. This involves moving certain festivals to weekends, forging marriage alliances within villages, packaging agriculture fields as picnic spots and engaging the younger generation in ‘development’ activities surrounding the village.

Narayana Rao, Velcheru

Tradition and Innovation in Sanskrit Poetry and Poetics

Classical Sanskrit literature and literary criticism have often been seen as driven by an overriding, and at times stultifying, reverence for inherited models of theory and practice, at the expense of meaningful innovation. Yet "newness" and change were recurrent and pervasive preoccupations of both poets and literary theorists from the very beginning of their respective enterprises. While Sanskrit poets and critics seldom if ever sought to
systematically cast aside or disparage the models provided by the monumental works of the past, they were carefully selective in what they took away from such models, and in how they appropriated, modified, and redeployed such elements in their own work. The result, in both the theory and practice of poetry, was almost always a complex negotiation and dialogue between drive for creative originality and the desire to respect and, where possible, maintain traditional concepts and practices. Sometimes this manifested itself as a kind of pseudo-traditionalism, in which authors sought to mask their own originality, reworking and reinterpreting existing forms without acknowledging that this was the case; sometimes newness was openly celebrated as such (though the parameters within which significant newness was desirable or even possible remained subject to debate).

The papers in this panel each address some aspect of this dialectic. The first two papers, by Bronner and McCrea, explore the tension between innovation and preservation in two different phases in the history of the Sanskrit literary theory: Bronner discusses the early attempts to provide a theory of figuration, before the dhvani revolution of mid ninth-century Kashmir, while McCrea charts the synthesis and historical awareness that came in its wake. Together, the papers demonstrate the processes by which the increasingly sophisticated analyses of poetic theorists gradually altered the understanding of specific figures of speech, as well as the manner in which the theorists' efforts to defend and rationalize traditional categories sometimes served precisely to promote rather than impede theoretical development. The third paper by Tubb, attempts to capture a moment of profound breakthrough in the poetic praxis, embodied in the poetry of the seventh-century author Bana. Despite the fact that many later poets canonized Bana, precisely for his innovations, the novelty of his poetry has eluded researchers for reasons that the paper explores. Taken together, the three papers illuminate the problematic of innovation in the Sanskrit literary culture, in different genres and eras.

Nicholson, Andrew

Doxography East and West: Defining a Sanskrit Philosophical Genre

"Doxography," literally "writing about opinions" of philosophers, was a neologism coined by the classicist Hermann Diels in 1879 to describe a number of works written in Greek and Latin. In the second half of the 20th century the term was adopted by scholars of Indian philosophy such as Wilhelm Halbfass and Olle Qvarnström to describe Sanskrit compendiums of philosophical tenets. In this paper, I attempt to shed light on the nature of doxography in India by examining the history of the term’s meaning in its Greek and Roman contexts--as used originally by Diels, and more recently as it has been developed by Jaap Mansfeld and David Runia. Scholars of Indian philosophy have failed to reflect on the character of doxography as a discrete genre in India, and as a result the term has been applied indiscriminately to a wide variety of texts. I maintain that doxography proper, such as Madhava’s well-known Sarvadarsanasamgraha (Compendium of All Schools) should be understood as distinct from polemical texts such as Bhavya’s Madhyamakahrdaya (Heart of the Middle Way) and Ramanuja’s Sribhasya (Commentary on the Brahma Sutra), despite the presentation of a wide variety of philosophical opinions by such polemicists. Furthermore, I explore the possibility that the origins of doxography in India lie not in the common
Numark, Mitchell William

Hebrew School in Nineteenth-Century Bombay: Reverend John Wilson and his Student Joseph Ezekiel Rajpurkar

Rather than “convert” India’s Bene Israel community to Christianity, Protestant missionaries in nineteenth-century Bombay played an undeniable role in fostering their “return” to Judaism and their acquisition of Jewish knowledge. Employing manuscript records from archives in England, Scotland, and India and periodicals and texts in Hebrew, Marathi and English this paper examines the missionary encounter with the Bene Israel community. While several Scottish, American, and Anglican missionaries interacted with the Bene Israel and taught them Hebrew and Biblical knowledge, this paper focuses on the Scottish missionary-Orientalist John Wilson (author of the first scholarly account of the Bene Israel) and his Bene Israel student Joseph Ezekiel Rajpurkar (the first and most significant Bene Israel scholar of Hebrew). The relationship between these two men encapsulates the broader relationship between Protestant missionaries and the Bene Israel community. This paper will first examine John Wilson, his ideas regarding the Bene Israel, and the reasons for and the ways in which he taught the Bene Israel Jewish and Hebrew knowledge. His 1832 Ibri Bhashaicha Vyakaran (Rudiments of Hebrew Grammar), which was the primary text used in the nineteenth century to teach the Bene Israel Hebrew, will be analyzed in detail. After discussing Joseph Ezekiel Rajpurkar’s importance as a Hebrew scholar, the paper will then compare Wilson’s interactions with Bene Israel to his interactions with Bombay Hindus and Parsis. This comparative examination will reveal a common nineteenth-century missionary method of Christian evangelization and how it was an integral part of the prehistory of religious revival and “awakening” among several Bombay communities.

Omar, Irfan

Religious Selves, Secular Space: Muslim Personal Law in a Non-Muslim Milieu

American Muslims from the Indian subcontinent are generally accustomed to a kind of religious practice which relies heavily on customary laws governing the religious life of most Indian Muslims. This Muslim Personal Law (MPL) has been the subject of critical debate in India itself since the 1970s and has been challenged from various perspectives and by different parties. On the one hand, certain practices pertaining to family law based on MPL are said to be "protected" under the minority rights; at the same time these same practices are challenged as"discriminatory" based on contemporary legal practice. In the United States this complicates the issue as minorities do have religious rights but they do not possess their own separate laws. There seems to be an "adjustment" made by many Indian Muslims living abroad with regard to the issues related to religious practices which in India would typically fall under purview of MPL. My argument is that this flexibility in adapting to "secular" laws
pertaining to otherwise religious" practices is an evidence of the generous elasticity that permeates all aspects of Islamic law (Shari'a). Those Indian or South Asian diaspora Muslims who insist on introducing elements of Islamic law to govern their affairs in the West may be challenged on two fronts: 1) on the basis of Shari'a itself in the way it allows the use of ijtihad to adapt to ever-changing social conditions; and 2) due to the claims made on behalf of reformist movements concerning preexisting discriminatory - mostly patriarchal- practices found in MPL in India, such as bigamy, inheritance and alimony (maintenance), registration of marriages, etc.

Orr, Leslie C.

Constructing the Religious Object in Colonial/Indian Knowledge

This panel focuses on the interactions among colonizer and colonized in 19th-century India as productive of concepts about religion – religious practice, religious heritage, and religious communities. All four of the papers illustrate how these distinct and diverse forms of knowledge emerged from encounters which were in varying degrees confrontational or collaborative. These encounters engaged multiple actors whose formulations of knowledge were addressed to particular audiences and had particular agendas; all the papers demonstrate the role of correspondence, communication, proselytization and persuasion in the generation of these knowledges. The four papers take up the religious object as it was delineated and debated in four different regions of colonial India: Bengal, Bombay, the Punjab, and Madras. The first paper considers the issue of idolatry in the writings of the Hindu reformer Rammohun Roy, in conversation with missionaries in Calcutta and England – which provides a context for both the redefinition of Hinduism and a critique of Christianity. The second paper examines the relationship of the missionary/Orientalist John Wilson with the Bene Israel community of Bombay, in which the reinforcement of a Jewish identity for members of this community was an aspect of his evangelization and education efforts. The third paper shows that, growing out of an array of European attitudes toward the Sikhs, the British increasingly represented the Sikhs as the dangerous other, in religious and gendered images that provided a justification for military intervention. The final paper treats the emergence in the Madras Presidency of new conceptions of the Hindu temple as a public space, and the competing definitions of that space and its significance presented by Hindu reformers and devotees, and Orientalist/colonial authorities. Having religion as an object of discussion and an object of knowledge seems to have sharpened the self-consciousness of both colonizer and colonized with reference to their respective agendas of imperial mission and assertion of identity. What we hope to highlight in this panel is the manner in which opposition and mutual critique on these issues could so readily shift into a dialogic mode of knowledge production.

Orr, Leslie C.

What is a temple and who does it belong to? Answers from colonial Madras

In the Madras Presidency of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, colonial administrators struggled to fix boundaries and sedentarize the Indian population, and collaborated with Hindu patrons in the glorification of the ancient temple as an emblem of the realm – evoking the regal and the territorial. In the course of the nineteenth century and into
the early twentieth century, the notion of the temple as a “public” institution, belonging to the
people or under the protection of the state, has been formulated in a variety of competing
ways. In this presentation, I will focus on two such conceptual and pragmatic complexes
functioning in the Tamil country: on the one hand the temple-centered neo-Saivism of
Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879) and, on the other, the emerging agendas of the Archaeological
Survey of India (founded in 1861) and those who shared (or resisted) its antiquarian interests.
Navalar believed that since temples were supported by the people, they had an educational
role in propagating Saiva doctrine, and should employ a Tamil liturgy rather than a Vedic one,
which would allow a fuller public participation; at the same time he sought to inculcate in
this Saiva public habits of comportment which would ensure an appropriate atmosphere of
piety, purity and solemnity in the temple. Among colonial administrators concerned with
India’s religious sites as “monuments,” a conservationist policy came to be dominant. By the
beginning of the twentieth century, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) found itself
engaged in struggles in South India against local temple authorities and wealthy Hindu
devotees (most famously, members of the Nattukottai Chettiyar community) whose plans to
renovate temples involved the wholesale destruction of the old stone buildings. Thus public
interest in and public use of such temples ran directly counter to the ASI’s notion that the
preservation of such temples in a state of “ruinous repair,” as a part of India’s historical
legacy, was an aspect of the public trust that had been placed in them. Issues of temple
ownership by the state and of temple building practices according to Agamic authority came
into play. I will conclude my presentation with a discussion of how the Hindu Religious and
Charitable Endowments Board (HRCE), established in 1925, has attempted to reconcile such
competing notions of public interest, and definitions of this public, up until the present day.

Ory DeNicola, Alicia

Knowledge Producers: gender and economic stratification among North Indian textile
designers and printers

The increased movement of material culture from local places – often marked and constructed
as "traditional" spaces – to global consumer markets has facilitated a growing class of
business owners and organizations designed to mediate between the global and the local. The
role of "middle-man" – whether NGO, for-profit business, or academic design consultant –
has been criticized by social scientists in the past as a parasitic institution that drains resources
from local businesses and laborers. More recent work has questioned this assumption,
suggesting that there is a growing need, not only for mediation of goods from place to place,
but also of risk. Drawing on ethnographic research in the traditional textile-printing sector in
North India, I argue that these mediating roles are socially as well as economically complex
and also serve as constructing frameworks of economic stratification. As researchers
increasingly identify an "emerging" middle class in so-called industrializing nations, it is
important to recognize the ways that occupation, especially cosmopolitan occupations that
mediate the space between the north and the south, are implicated in contemporizing and
reconstituting already existing social and economic stratification. In the context of traditional
textile printers, exporters and designers, caste is increasingly less useful as an acceptable
framework of social and economic stratification. As mobile, economically well-off bodies
continue to imagine themselves as part of a contemporary cosmopolitan social order, class
and occupation come to represent and often police the borders between "middle" and
"working" classes, encompassing a rich socio-linguistic field of class construction.
In what one might term the ‘internal’, as in the ‘external’ colony, violence (both physical and psychological) serves to maintain the boundaries between racially or socially segregated communities. This violence has been institutionalized in different parts of the world in practices of racism, slavery, untouchability, practices in which the lines between public and private violence have often been very hard to draw. A curious and insufficiently explored ‘double consciousness’ has marked the ways in which both the dominant and the subordinated have responded to the concomitant struggle for universal citizenship and human dignity.

It is the issue of double consciousness, and the blurred lines between public and private, overt and covert violence that I seek to focus in my presentation on the history of the dalits (or ex-Untouchables). I do so by exploring some of the distinguishing features of the history of the making of the dalit middle class? Are ex-slaves/ex-Untouchables allowed to be middle class? Can they allow themselves to be middle class? Members of the expanding dalit elite in India are continuously confronted by the question: am I dalit or am I middle class? The violence and the contradictions lodged in these questions may be demonstrated in a very wide range of arenas. I shall take up one that has not so far been carefully investigated – the question of the naming of lower caste communities and of individuals and families supposedly still belonging to them – to illustrate my argument about the particular burdens and expectations that go to make up the history of middle class elements emerging out of ex-slave or ex-untouchable populations.
Hindi. I argue that the primacy of Hindi is constituted through the political taxonomy of ‘language’ and ‘dialect’, which is maintained through metapragmatic and semiotic processes that promote the socio-political valence of one language while diminishing the salience of its siblings. For this study, I examine debates on language from the Parliament of India and evaluate the ‘mother tongue’ model of the Census of India within the analytic of metapragmatics offered by Michael Silverstein and the framework of semiotic differentiation of languages presented by Judith Irvine and Susan Gal. This analysis indicates that when Indian politicians discuss ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ they invoke a culturally-constituted political ideology that shapes ‘language’ into a taxonomic object. This metapragmatic construction of ‘language’ is predicated upon semiotic processes of linguistic differentiation and consolidation of regional languages, which occurred in the 19th century. These processes transformed a local form of Hindi into the national language by absorbing competing regional forms and recasting them as its ‘dialects’. Thus, debates on ‘language’ and ‘dialects’ are political actions governed by cultural assumptions about the power of languages. The tensions between Hindi and its taxonomic subordinates, then, arise from attempts to preserve the position of one ‘dialect’ as not only indexical of regional identity, but as the linguistic index of official Indian identity.

Pandian, Anand

Contemporary Lifeworlds and the Shaping of Leadership at the Margins of the State

Political engagement in India has emerged through specific contacts with the colonial state, local involvement in the nationalist movement, and affiliations with the development state in the years following independence. Various forms of leadership have emerged from and been shaped by imaginations of past struggles coupled with contemporary ethical, social and political competencies. The panel seeks to re-examine the ways in which forms of political leadership in India have been characterized solely as serving personal ends or for political and economic gain. In doing so, the papers examine the lifeworlds of local leaders, where “cultural style” is determined by development aspirations and ideas of what constitutes the “traditional” or “modern,” or where intentions are mediated by histories of being relegated to the margins of the state and cast as inferior subject-citizens. The papers will give new insight into the affective mobilization of identities and the cultural forms which shape political discourse in various marginalized spaces. The papers offer ethnographic examples of Bhil tribal leadership in Udaipur, Rajasthan, slum leaders in Delhi, and youth leaders in hill towns of the new state of Uttarakhand to show that in understanding the lifeworlds of these actors, we can better analyze how people construct the realm of the political, or negotiate what is outside the political, in the ways they choose to represent themselves.

Pathak, Suryasikha

Home away from home: the work of missionary wives in the evangelical project in colonial Assam

Despite a silence about their lives in official histories, wives accompanied their missionary husbands to the new frontiers of northeast India. Their duties as wives of missionaries not only included setting up comfortable homes, but also helping their husbands in the basic
duties of the missionaries. It meant active involvement with the community he worked with: acquiring language skills, followed by translations and instructing in schools. Since education was an important part of the missionary endeavor, wives were involved with imparting secular and religious education to native children.

Before the coming of single women missionaries, it was missionary wives who performed what was categorized as "women’s work." In the 19th century, women’s duties were essentially feminine: teaching, sewing, doing zenana work.

Those American women who spent a considerable period of their lives in the frontier region of Assam influenced the indigenous society while their own lives changed. Missionary work might not have been economically rewarding for missionary families, but in late 19th and early 20th century, it was empowering for missionary wives to move out of the domestic sphere. Many single women missionaries chose this vocation as opposed to the middle class ‘cult of domesticity’.

Women in missions emerged as an alternate strand of the "civilizing mission,” sometimes complementing the colonial state’s project and sometimes questioning its rationale.

Few of these women wrote and published diaries or accounts but almost all of them wrote home with unfailing regularity. In this paper, I will present the world that comes alive through these texts - a world that juxtapositioned the exotic frontier and heathen subject with notions of domesticity and home. I argue that the available literature: Mrs. P. H. Moore’s Diaries, Elisabeth Vickland’s stories, Mary Mead Clark’s accounts, and Mrs. Mildred Marston’s narration throw light on the evangelical endeavor as perceived by women.

Peach, Lucinda

The Prostitute Body in Cross-Cultural Perspective

In recent years, the United States Government has promoted the view that prostitution and other forms of sex work must be eliminated as inherently demeaning, degrading and violative of human rights. This “abolitionist” agenda is incorporated in US law and policy which is imposed on other nations, especially through policy and practice regarding funding to fight human trafficking and HIV/AIDS. When examined closely, US policy reflects a particular cultural perspective of the female body rooted in conservative Christian understandings of sexuality, which regards prostitution as sinful and the prostitute as either an “innocent victim” or a “sinful whore.”

In this paper, I will argue that such a Manichean view is at odds with the multiplicity of meanings of the prostitute body in India, which varies along lines of gender, caste and class, region, religion, marital status, and historical period. Regarding caste and class, high class ganikas of ancient India or tawa’ifs, courtesans of nineteenth century Lucknow, were historically held in high regard, as opposed to the ancient low caste kumbas or veshyas, nineteenth century thakahi and randi, and street walkers or brothel prostitutes of today. Regionally, before legislation outlawing the practice (and still to some extent today), some South India communities engaged in the “donation” of daughters to local temples to become “wives of God” or devadasis (lit. “slaves to God”) who engaged in forms of commercial sex. In certain regions, prostitution has been an inherited family tradition, as with the Bedias and Naiks of U.P. Other variations are reflected between religions, such as between the Muslim
baijis who were highly respected in nineteenth colonial Bengal, in contrast with the Hindu khentawalis, who were not. Marital status has been an important factor to the acceptability of some types of prostitution and not in others.

This variation has led to a multiplicity of meanings of the prostitute body in India today, ranging from national and state-level legislative agendas reminiscent of Victorian British morality to unions of sex workers fighting for the right to define their own means of livelihood, and protect their own members from HIV/AIDS, trafficking, and other forms of violence and coercion. I will draw on postcolonial feminist theory to argue that the multiple meanings of the prostitute body unveiled by this analysis show that US policy regarding prostitution is inappropriate as applied to India (and by inference, to many other contexts as well).

Peterson, Indira

Artful Negotiations: Circulation and the Reshaping of the Visual Arts in Colonial India

This panel uses the lens of circulation to illuminate the dialogic processes that impelled transformations of the visual arts in colonial India. Highlighting the important role played by the circulation of objects, genres, styles, themes and ideas among diverse constituencies in the development of new kinds of art in specific, local contexts, the papers challenge linear narratives of the production of art in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They demonstrate that the recasting of art practices in colonial India involved complex negotiations at varied sites and among multiple agents---- Indians and Europeans, patrons, artists, colonial agents, princely courts, critics, merchants, and the colonial state. Bean shows how, in the early nineteenth century, well before the transformation of art practices through colonial institutions and elite movements, traditional sculptors and painters in Calcutta developed new, cosmopolitan forms of art, drawing both from European works and artists and local practices. Peterson argues that, in pioneering hybrid styles of royal portraiture at the Maratha court in nineteenth-century Thanjavur, Serfoji II and Shivaji II were responding, not only to European models, but to the newly developed local visual culture and practices of the Company painters of the market. By the 1850’s, Maratha royal portraits, executed in newer popular styles, circulated in the bazaar. Dehejia and Khera focus on “Swami” silver, produced for the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In Khera’s analysis, the mixed critical reception of the work of Indian silversmiths in European workshops in Madras (praised for workmanship, but blamed for its hybridity) illumines British attitudes towards Indian craftsmen, debates on authentic “Indian” design, and changing aesthetic ideals. Using archival drawings from the Kutch workshops of Oomersee Mawjee and Sons, Dehejia analyses the themes, choices and valuation of Swami silver in its colonial context, and the sources on which this art form drew, including Ravi Varma’s lithographs. McGowan examines the production of heirloom carpets by convicts in jail workshops in nineteenth-century Western India. Although established by the colonial state in order to meet modern market needs, the workshops were mediated by art schools and scholars, and played an influential role in preserving and popularizing historic design. The papers shed light on the complex interchanges that resulted in discursive shifts in the production of visual art in colonial India, and they address contemporary perspectives and critiques, as well as the aesthetic, cultural, economic and political dimensions of these shifts.
This paper explores the multiple ways in which the current circumstances and possible futures of rural Bengal were understood by diverse actors in the first half of the twentieth century. Colonial officials, scholars and students, political activists, landlords and cultivators themselves articulated visions of agricultural practices, agrarian relations and rural life as a whole which were variously contradictory, contestatory and overlapping. Multiple comparative frameworks informed these visions, contextualizing Bengal not only within South Asian experience, but also, increasingly, within global circumstances. Modernizers both official and nationalist, seeking to apply agricultural expertise to Bengal, took multiple metropoles into account, sending students to the United States, Germany, Japan and elsewhere at the turn of the twentieth century. Emergent circuits of knowledge production articulated with expanding global agribusiness interests, with both developments evidenced on the ground and in the Bengali press. Newspapers, pamphlets and literature chronicled rural progress around the world for a growing readership, making comparative frameworks salient to an audience substantially broader than that for the burgeoning scholarly literature on ‘rural uplift’. Thus, to a surprising extent, Bengali public sphere debates increasingly featured detailed accounts of Italian anti-malaria campaigns or the curriculum of American land grant universities, as evidence of the technical and moral failings of British rule and the possibility of better futures. At the same time, other narratives of agricultural skill invoked other transnational frameworks and were articulated with other aspirations, as when Muslim reform movements in the eastern Bengal countryside coupled piety and peasant productivity. The transnational movement of people and information pertaining to the wealth and welfare of rural Bengal in the first half of the twentieth century thus afforded multiple opportunities for diverse actors to make sense of their present circumstances and ponder various futures.

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Philip, Kavita

Agricultural Circulation in South Asia, the British Empire and Beyond

The papers in this panel collectively seek to advance our understanding of the meanings of agriculture in the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Asia, approaching those meanings as they were articulated and contested in local, imperial, diasporic and global contexts. Drawing on materials ranging from Assam to Australia, Jayeeta Sharma offers a set of contrasting case studies (Assamese peasants, Santhal tea coolies, Indian diasporic migrants, and Anglo-Indian sheep station-hands) affording both an exploration of imperial constructions of race, agricultural productivity, and civilization, and an examination of the ways in which diverse Indian actors sought to fashion their own identities and further their own ambitions by adopting or challenging those constructions. Prakash Kumar’s analysis of European indigo planters in Bengal seeks to situate their actions and ideas within contexts both local – recognizing the agency of Indian peasants – and global – reconstructing a “planters’ diaspora” spanning the British Empire. He seeks, however, to move beyond the usual imperial circuits to consider the ways in which agricultural knowledge and technologies cross imperial boundaries (moving, for example, between the Dutch and British empires). Ian Petrie’s study of visions of agrarian improvement for Bengal in the first
half of the twentieth century illustrates the manner in which a variety of competing understandings of agriculture invoked increasingly international precedents. The theme of circulation is followed through the movement of people, technology and ideas, within and beyond the imperial context, as borne out in official discourse, emergent academic disciplines, vernacular print culture, and diverse forms of political and cultural activism. The presenters approach the history of agriculture in South Asia from a number of vantages, including labor history, the history of science and technology, cultural history and intellectual history. More broadly, the panel contributes to the emerging body of scholarship on mobility and circulation in South Asian history, and to ongoing efforts to contextualize South Asia within imperial and global circuits of people, ideas and commodities.

Philip, Kavita

Feminism, Science, Nature: Rewriting Anthropologies and Histories of the Nation

The traffic among historians and anthropologists of South Asia has grown vigorous in the years since Bernard Cohn wrote of his work as “an anthropologist among the historians.” This panel brings together scholarship in anthropology and history to reflect on the myriad ways in which women and nature have been, and continue to be naturalized. The insights of this research are not confined to women as “objects of knowledge,” however. These studies help track the genealogies of power and knowledge through which subjects of race, nation, caste, tribe, and ethnicity have come be materialized over time, while reflecting on contemporary lived meanings and strategic deployments of categories such as family, population, and nature.

Kim Berry analyzes her recent field work with the Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghatan of Himachal Pradesh, showing how land rights and subsistence farming function as particular forms of economic security for single women. Traditional work on land rights and women addressed women in conventional contexts of the family, community, and state. Berry pushes feminist theorizing not just into the undertheorized area of single women (ekal nari), but also into the political economic sphere, insisting that we read this gendered form of activism as challenging constructions of the neo-liberal state, the heteropatriarchal family, and the construction of women as dependent citizen-subjects. Ashwini Tambe addresses how the figure of adolescent girl was naturalized in early twentieth century internationalist discourses on trafficking. She focuses on how variations in the age of puberty across climates were constructed as evidence of racial/natural hierarchies, and then examines how climatological thinking continues to hold weight in demographic literature. In a co-authored paper, Shubhra Gururani and Kavita Philip build a framework to bring together a feminist critique of naturalized constructions of environments with contemporary work in science and technology studies. They suggest ways in which we might re-think histories of the nation in terms of gender and nature, drawing on a range of recent social histories of science, medicine, nature, and development.

Philip, Kavita

Constructions of Nature: Revisiting Feminist environmental studies
In South Asian ethnography and historiography, there are now rich and impressive accounts that map the complex and sedimented processes through which expert knowledges of plants, animals, forests, caste/tribes, and racialized bodies were mutually co-constitutive of the social categories of difference in diverse colonial settings at different historical conjunctures. While due attention has been paid to these questions of difference, there is an awkwardness about the question of gender. Gender is clearly not missing from such accounts but there remains a tendency to view gender either as a special interest group or focus on the sexual and gendered attributes of femininity and masculinity of science or technology.

The discourse of gender and environment tended, initially, to circle around the question of women; most general claims about gendering slipped quickly into claims about women’s participation (and this trend continues as a strong one in the gender, environment, development scholarship). Critical engagements with this trend have offered more complicated gendered readings of discourses, revealing ways in which “nature” was gendered female, sexualized characteristics assigned to tribes, and the bodies of communities or nations were mapped onto masculinized/feminized constructs of modernity. We welcome these efforts to extend gender analysis, but we wish to ask, also, what new directions might emerge from feminist readings of nation, caste, tribe, nature, that do not see gender as a concern separate from “more central” concerns of nation and modernity. We suggest that nature as a category centrally constitutes the nation, and that in such a reading of nation, all categories (e.g. planning, modernity, law, state) must be re-read. Rather than see nature as a dead place, and its gendering as a backdrop or effect, we attempt to read geographies of nation and nature together. In other words, it is not the case that “nature” is stabilized in some archaic time and place, and arrives, dead backdrop, for modern histories of nations and subjects. Nature, nation, and gendered/raced subjects are continually and dynamically co-produced. A sustained feminist reading must go beyond the uncovering of gendered and sexualized tropes, to situated engagements with the historical operations of notions of work, mobility, land, property, nature. Rather than being external to, or byproducts of, the process of nation formation, particular dynamics of gender, race, and nature have been central to and indispensable for the project of nation building from the 19th century to the present.

Poster, Winifred

Saying ‘Good Morning’ in the Night: Virtual Migration and the Temporal Discontinuities of Indian Call Centers

With advent of the information economy, labor migration in South Asia is taking new forms and directionalities. The traditional “material migrations” of workers bodies’ are being accompanied by new “virtual migrations” of the work itself, through the internet, computers, and satellite communications (Aneesh, 2006). Furthermore, while the former has tended to move from South Asia outward, the latter is moving in an opposite way, from the U.S. and UK inward. In this analysis, I explore the temporal implications of this virtual migration in India. My focus is the call center industry, in which Indian workers handle customer service phone calls for firms and their consumers in the U.S. Through case studies of three firms, and interviews with 80 employees, managers, and officials in the New Delhi area, I show how this industry involves a reversal of work time in which organizations and their employees shift
their schedules entirely to the night. One of the peculiar implications of moving the work virtually (as opposed to moving the worker physically) is that Indians must restructure their work schedules to when the U.S. consumers are awake, thus forfeiting their own daytime. I argue that this type of labor migration places urban educated Indian workers in a number of contradictory positions. First, call center work involves virtual dualities of the labor process. Transnational communication enables Indian workers privileged access to U.S. contacts, which they use to pursue personal agendas of job mobility and educational prospects, from a local context in which these are highly scarce. Yet, call center work also involves a temporal hyper-surveillance and rigidification; time is a heightened feature of managerial labor control. Second, employees struggle in what has become a temporally and transnationally divided urban landscape. Call center workers benefit from a “global” night time city, in terms of elevated incomes and lifestyles from their jobs, as well as improved housing and infrastructure that has been developed for the high-tech sectors and suburbs. Simultaneously, however, workers are increasingly isolated from the “local” day time cities of their families and social circles, from the public markets and businesses needed to run their households, and from the state services and medical care needed to sustain their bodies. How Indian call center workers negotiate these conflicting demands of virtual of migration is the subject of this paper.

Prasad, Ritika

Pilgrims and Profits: Railways and Religion in Colonial India

In the mid-nineteenth century, discussions between the Government of India and various British railway companies about the introduction of railways in India had assumed – given imperial perceptions of the supposed immobility of “natives” generally, as well as about their poverty and prejudices, especially religious and “caste” prejudices – that the chief business of the railways in the colony would pertain to the transport of merchandise, rather than of passengers. However, when receipts on Indian railways from burgeoning passenger traffic exceeded those from goods traffic, there developed, in official discussions, a correlation between this unexpected number of passengers, and travel on railways for religious purposes/pilgrimages, leading to the establishment of a specific category of traffic labeled as “Pilgrim Traffic”. It was argued that the large-scale use of railways by Indians could be explained by the fact that the railways had galvanized travel for religious purposes not only by increasing greatly the number of pilgrimage centers that were accessible, but also by decreasing the time and expense involved in traveling to these. Tracing a series of official discussions – conferences and committees established by specific railway companies or by the Government of India – in conjunction with a series of quasi-official publications and more public discussions in the contemporary press, this paper explores the articulation of this category of ‘Pilgrim Traffic’ and the various functions that it performed by mediating between imperial understandings of colonial mobility and the reality of passenger traffic on railways in India. It also examines the conditions of travel that many ‘pilgrims’ were subjected to, in particular the phenomenon of consigning “pilgrim-passengers” to goods wagons meant for merchandise and live-stock, as well as an imperial-capitalist logic through which this was effected. In conclusion, the paper highlights the impetus of capitalist profit that fostered, for pecuniary reasons, the very “colonial religiosity” that had been marked off in imperial understandings, scholarly, official, and public, as the systemic source of that supposed enervation and stagnation in the colony that the British
imperial project claimed to be combating – the railways, being articulated, in this context as a modernizing fulcrum of the intended capitalist “social revolution.”

Punathambekar, Aswin

Filmy Places: Towards a Cultural Geography of Indian Cinema

Scholarship on cinema in India has tended to focus on the politics of representation or on questions pertaining to the formal properties of film and narrative. This panel aims to broaden our understanding of cinema and public culture in contemporary India by focusing attention on the relationship between cinema and place. Moving away from approaches that conceive of cinema in purely textual terms, papers here tackle three different sites – production of song sequences in the Tamil film industry, film journalism in Mumbai, and the emergence of the “malltiplex” (mall + multiplex) in urban India – in order to trace and theorize relationships between the cinematic and the spatial.

Pandian approaches this question by examining the practice of filming song sequences in a range of locales worldwide. Drawing on interviews and ethnographic engagement with film crews from the Tamil film industry, Pandian explores how industry professionals imagine the relationship between spatial displacement and affect and how this shapes production practices. In the second paper, Punathambekar calls attention to film journalism and analyzes changes in this domain of cultural production engendered by the establishment of dot-com companies as key players in the reconfiguration of the “national” Bombay film industry into “Bollywood.” Drawing on interviews with film journalists and a range of industry professionals, Punathambekar examines how proximity and social networks in Mumbai shapes film journalism and the production of “Bollywood” as a place in the world. This is followed by Rai’s paper on the emergence of the “malltiplex” in urban India. Arguing that the “malltiplex” is an important site where a specific vision of globalization is realized and contested, Rai asks how we might begin to historicize this space. Drawing connections between technologies of mediation, cultural rituals, and a range of bodily practices, Rai constructs a genealogy that brings the social history of the bazaar to bear on the “malltiplex.”

In addition to opening up a space for the discussion of cinema and spatiality, this panel also addresses questions pertaining to the domain of production and the social worlds of professionals working in varied capacities in and around film industries in India. Papers here also pay close attention to how the imaginations and practices of the industry relate to questions of affect and cinema in the Indian context.

Punathambekar, Aswin

Brokering “Bollywood:” Film Journalism, New Media, and the Production of Locality

This paper begins as an examination of how convergence with new media has shaped Bollywood’s imagination of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) audiences. Drawing on interviews conducted with an array of professionals in the film and dot-com sectors in Mumbai, I demonstrate how dot-com companies emerged as knowledge brokers who could reconfigure a geographically vast “overseas territory” into a well-defined “NRI audience.”
I begin by detailing how dot-com companies situated themselves in relation to a discourse of corporatization and capitalized on three interlocking shifts in Bollywood: (a) the growing importance of marketing and market research, (b) the normalization of the overseas territory as Bollywood’s route to the global, and (c) structural changes in the domain of film distribution, particularly where the overseas territory was concerned.

Following this, I analyze how dot-com companies’ role as knowledge brokers was defined. Drawing on the work of cultural geographers and media industry scholars, I explain how the production and flow of Bollywood content on the Internet is a direct function of dot-com companies’ proximity to Bollywood and dot-com professionals’ ability to forge connections and establish themselves within existing social networks in Mumbai. Focusing on the domain of film journalism, I demonstrate how Mumbai-based dot-com companies leverage their proximity to create the conditions for overseas audiences’ involvement in Indian public culture on a daily and synchronous basis and, more broadly, produce and maintain the materiality of “Bollywood” as a place in the world.

Rai, Amit

From Bazaar to Malltiplex: Normalizing Consumption and Machinic Evolution

How can we historicize the coming of the malltiplex (mall + multiplex) in India? If the malltiplex signals the triumphant if neurotic entry of the globalizing elite into the fantasy of globalization, what more concretely can we say of the set of bodily practices and capitalist media assemblages that have secured a definitive place for these privatized playgrounds of public consumption?

I argue that a genealogy of the malltiplex must engage with the social history of the bazaar. The colonial bazaar in north India constituted a key site of normative modernity. Even as the bazaar became the fetishized space for an anthropological gaze, it gradually transformed into a mode of connecting indigenous production, religious rituals, and various media spectacles with transnational capital, technology, and culture in ways that were dynamic, non-linear, and yet riven with strategies of surveillance and domination. It was both exterior and interior to the nation-space, an evolving site of translation, hierarchy, rumor, and valuation. This paper attempts to think through questions of technology, media, and social power as they circulated within the relational capacities (or affects) of the different populations of the colonial bazaar. The aim will be to draw out the emergent capacities of the set of interactions, sensations, commodities, discourses, and transactions of the colonial bazaar: its historically specific diagram of power. Drawing on late nineteenth and twentieth century colonial discourses, filmic representations, as well as cultural anthropological and ethno-historical representations, I aim to show the evolution of the colonial bazaar’s ecology of sensation, and the specific capacities that were transformed in that evolution.

Rao, V. Narayana

Modernist Redactions: Writings on Family, Caste, Culture
Modernist Redactions: Writings on Family, Caste, Culture

A panel proposal for the Madison South Asia Conference, 2008.

(Ruby Lal, Gyanendra Pandey, V. Narayana Rao)

This panel will examine what notions of the ‘modern’ do to discourses of family, caste and culture in colonial South Asia. Given the analytic imprecision of these categories, how do colonizers and colonized, and the movements they inaugurate, lean towards fixing notions of family, caste and culture.

The papers in this panel will range over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to investigate various dimensions of these issues. We want to examine, for example, what happens to the idea of the family when formal education for the young becomes an important concern in respectable circles. What is the significance of the emergence of the girl-child as a particular focus for ‘education’ in the reformist texts of the nineteenth century? What happens to ideas of caste when hitherto subordinated groups move into the realms of a supposedly more invisible, urban middle class existence? What informs even such intimate practices as those of ‘naming’, when this occurs? What notions of civilization, tradition or religion are invoked in this context – by the colonizers and the colonized? How did the a new literature valorized a discourse of the “new” in opposition to the “old”. What were the new myths it created and how were they received?

The larger question for the panelists is this: how do family, caste and class converge with particular constructions of the cultural history of India, modern and pre-modern, and with particular promises of community and nation?

Rao, V. Narayana

When tradition was a bad word: Early twentieth century upper caste rebellion against its past.

V. Narayana Rao, University of Wisconsin-Madison

When tradition was a bad word: Early twentieth century upper caste rebellion against its past. During the early decades of the twentieth century many English-educated young men of upper castes rebelled against their caste practices. They rejected the past as superstitious, outdated and downright wrong. I explore the role of poets and writers in leading and promoting this rebellion. I look at the biographies of modernist writers in Telugu, who wrote during the early decades of the twentieth century, all of whom come from upper caste families. Using these biographies for my case studies, I show that the virulent rebellion evident from the life and writings of the new writers not only created a new discourse of the modern in literature, but led to a change in dress, food, language and social interaction. The new writers celebrated ideals of social reform, wrote on themes of inter-caste marriages, against social hierarchies and rewrote mythological themes, recasting them in utter disrespect of gods and holy men.
Young men in colleges and universities celebrated these new writers, read and reread their works and quoted them in conversations. They ridiculed their elders who did not approve of their new lifestyle. A wide gap emerged between the old and the new as never before in the families which underwent this change. Some seventy years after these battles were fought, the change is complete. There is not much of the old style left among these upper caste families. Homogenized in their customs and habits, they are now middle class—a model for other upwardly mobile lower castes to emulate.

Something new is happening now. Many members of the middle class that emerged from this rebellion are now reverting to celebrating the past. A new discourse of the greatness of the ancients is emerging and a recovery of Sanskritic “tradition” is in vogue. Drawing examples from Andhra Pradesh, this paper asks what has happened to the reform ideals, the rewritten mythologies and the discourse of the modern. What motivates the middle class, who came from upper castes, to revert to the past? The problem is posed in the context of an emerging new middle class from the ex-untouchables, now called the Dalits.

Rashkow, Ezra

Ecocide and Ethnocide? Pairing Ecological and Social Transformation in the Hills of Colonial Western India

At its theoretical base, this paper is a meditation on the concepts of endangerment and extinction. It provocatively asks: were hill and forest societies such as the Bhils of western India, much like the tigers, leopards, bears, wolves, and other species considered 'vermin', systematically targeted for eradication by the colonial state? It can be said that traditional ecological lifestyles and livelihoods became endangered and extinct like the wildlife that supported these ways of life; yet the parallel between the endangerment of species and transformation of human societies is as problematic as it is explanatory. In the early nineteenth century, while the phenomenon of species extinction was still disputed, rhetoric about the extinction of 'primitive races' was mounting. By the late nineteenth century, the fates of so-called 'wild tribes' and 'wild animals' were frequently and explicitly linked in colonial discourse. From a postcolonial perspective, it seems essential to condemn racist, imperialist, analogies that compare human societies to wildlife species. The fact that these analogies were so prevalent thus becomes a stunning indictment of colonial discourse. Furthermore, though massive social and ecological change for the Bhils in the modern period can be documented, there was no threat of biological extinction. Bhils remain one of the largest adivasi groups in India, but their status as kings of the forest is history. They have changed from being perceived as 'wild tribe,' to being classified by the post-colonial state as a 'scheduled tribe,' and this itself speaks of detribalization. The question becomes how to value this change. Is it progress and development, endangerment and extinction, or both?

Rees, Gethin
Buddhism and Trade: Defining Routes through the Western Ghats

This presentation will investigate the relationship between Buddhism and trade in the Early Historic period with the aim of using the location of monasteries to define the routes that were used to traverse the Western Ghats mountain range. Monasteries in this area often take the form of rock cut caves, and this presentation will examine the economic and landscape context in which they were constructed, aspects which have been largely ignored in previous studies. During the Satavahana era (roughly the second century BC to the third century AD), South Asia became an essential component in a burgeoning Indian Ocean trading network. Archaeological and textual evidence shows that a number of ports on the west coast of India such as Broach, Sopara, Kalyan and Chaul prospered at this time. In order to access these ports from the interior of the subcontinent, a series of passes through the Western Ghats mountain range had to be used which became foci of mercantile activity.

The rock cut monasteries are distributed along these passes and epigraphic evidence indicates that their construction was partly funded by merchants. The nature and strength of this relationship will be evaluated using evidence from texts and epigraphic evidence from monasteries located both in the Western Ghats and in other parts of South Asia. Subsequently, the position of Buddhist and settlement sites will be used to determine the configuration of Early Historic routes through the Western Ghats that led to port sites. An attempt will then be made to assess the intensity of trade and other movement along the different routes and hence the importance of the Indian Ocean trade network in the development of the Satavahana economy and Buddhist monasteries will be evaluated.

Rinker, Jeremy

India’s Drive to Consume: Clarifying the Politics of Consumption in the Post-Liberalization Period

Consumption holds a central position among India’s middle class, but remains under-analyzed with respect to work culture, advertising, national media policy, and status arrangements within society (in particular in relation to caste identity). The papers in this panel are aimed at demystifying the link between consumption (or more broadly consumer culture) and issues of culture, identity, and media policy in post-liberalization India. Addressing the dialectic relationship between inclusion and exclusion, as well as, pointing out some important semiotic and discursive aspects of glocal culture, the panel will blend symbolic and rational analytical methods to explore the underbelly of Indian consumption. Despite the talk of India as ‘The rising star of the East,’ the full effects of consumer culture’s interaction with work culture, advertising, social justice, and national media policy have yet to be fully explored. The diverse approaches represented by these papers will shed a critical eye on consumption’s effects, bases, and potentialities on the Indian sub-continent.

Rinker, Jeremy

While there has been debate among Dalit social reformers on the sub-continent over the use of religious conversion as a form of rights expression, many Dalit leaders in North America are uneasy with frames of social justice that are aligned with religion in any way. This paper aims to explore the dialectic between secular and religious frames apparent among Dalit Diaspora activists in North America. By interviewing and observing Dalit Diaspora leaders, who are organizing and mobilizing to actualize social justice for Dalits back home, this research explores the use of religious social justice frames among Dalit activists.

Given the May 1, 2007 passage by the 110th Congress of Concurrent Resolution 139, which urges US citizens working in India to “avoid discrimination towards the Dalits in all business interactions,” there is a need to more deeply analyze the Dalit Diaspora’s mobilization against, and framing of, Dalit discrimination. What are the secular and religious narratives that Dalit Diaspora leaders are employing as they mobilize to create and/or support social justice on the sub-continent? How do these narratives compare to those of Dalit activists on the sub-continent? What is the framing of these narratives based upon – Eurocentric conceptions of Human Rights; Eastern or Western conceptions of what it means to be religious; a common identity based on like-experiences of injustice; or something else entirely? Addressing these questions with respect to Dalit social justice mobilization in the United States, this research is aimed at getting at a deeper understanding of the meaning and significance of Dalit Diaspora activism. With particular attention focused on Diaspora groups that profess to follow the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the aim of the paper is to assess the role of religious frames in Dalit social justice activism.

As part of a larger research program aimed at developing a framework for approaching justice in Ambedkar Buddhists’ peacebuilding processes, this research highlights an un-analyzed aspect of the contemporary movement for Dalit empowerment. The frames utilized in transnational mobilization of Dalits take on a contextual character that is quite different from the character of mobilization within the sub-continent. Asking what role secular and religious social justice frames play in positioning Diaspora actors for social contention, this paper provides insight into the importance of critically analyzing these frames in attempting to better understand transnational Dalit contention.

Rook-Koepsel, Emily

Censor and Censure: Unity and the All India Newspaper Editors Conference

The All India Newspaper Editor’s Conference was founded in 1940 as a measure against censorship of the freedom of the press, especially around the increased activity of the Satyagraha movement. In late 1940, the Government of India attempted to impose a virtually complete pre-censorship of news, using the Defence of India Rules, on the premise of protecting public opinion about the British war aims. A conference of prominent newspaper editors was called to protest not just this further incursion into press freedom, but the general milieu of restrictive behavior on the part of the government. On the opening of the first All India Newspaper Editor’s Conference, its president, K. Srinivasan announced that the government, in consultation with members of the press, had chosen to withdraw its restrictive order. Although the conference was immediately hailed as a success, the new organization was beset with a schism leading from the ‘assurance’ that the president was said to have given to the government regarding the news press’s support of the government’s war aims. According to the Government communiqué announcing the withdrawal, this assurance led directly to the withdrawal of the offending order. This presentation considers the context of the assurance crisis of the All India Newspaper Editor’s Conference to discuss the role
Censorship and censure play in the representation of unity implied in the structure of All India organizations.

The assurance crisis was made up of three different censoring and censuring phases. The government, seeing an opportunity to further regulate the press, attempted to censor the content of news getting to the public about what the government referred to as ‘the movement’ and censure prominent newspapers for supporting it. The newspaper industry called a conference for the purpose of censuring the government for their restrictions, and in the aim of unity self-censored their own disagreements regarding the aims of the conference. The final phase was the censure of the organization by its critics, and the organization’s censorship of its own aims and outputs in the name of unified action. Thinking through these three phases of the assurance crisis, my paper considers the contradiction of All India organizations whose argument for power are based on public claims of representative capacity through widely held unified goals versus the internal capacity and proclivity to censor members’ individual initiative in the name of unified action.

Rudisill, Kristen

The Popularity of Indian Dance: Hybridity in a Cosmopolitan World

“Indian” dance comes in many forms, and this panel explores the dissemination of different styles of movement through combination with western performance idioms and expectations. Both bringing Indian dances to foreign audiences (whether in India or abroad) and bringing foreign dances to India for viewing and practice, encourage hybridity and exoticization. This panel looks at cultural exchanges of choreography and audience response to “exotic” foreign dances, which often includes an indigenizing tendency, from both from India to the West, and from the West to India.

Janet O’Shea and Davesh Soneji explore the reception and negotiation of classical Indian dance forms in cosmopolitan spaces at the end of the colonial period. By considering the ramifications of the influence of that experience on the dance forms, both papers contextualize the popularity of more recent performances in light of those histories. The Festival of India discussed by O’Shea took Indian dances abroad to foster international appreciation of Indian culture and tradition and to promote diplomatic relations between India and the West. Her paper argues that the Festival of India’s promotion of Indian classical dance forms relied upon the exoticization of these practices at the same time that it reinforced the position of the classical dancer as international artist. Soneji’s paper traces the movement of dance performances of javalis from the elite salons of Madras to the cinema. He argues that the various historical, aesthetic, and even affective registers of javalis can only be understood in the context of a hybrid, cosmopolitan Madras Presidency in which new flows of culture integrated a very loosely defined tradition of erotic poetics, European languages and performance idioms, and unstable political and libidinal economies. Kristen Rudisill’s paper, in examining ways that Disney India, through choreography competitions based on the Disney Channel’s 2006 original film High School Musical, brought American film dances to the lives of the Indian student participants. She argues that the involvement of Bollywood choreographer Shiamak Davar and the familiar format of High School Musical helped to popularize and indigenize the dances in India, creating a new enthusiasm for western dance-based amateur hybrid performances.
Uncomfortable Belongings: Rethinking Inclusions and Exclusions in Bengal.

The papers in this panel take belonging both as an analytic and a subject of historiographic inquiry. Specifically, the papers focus on three contexts. In enclaves along the India/Bangladesh border, multiple and overlapping notions of belonging are intimately bound to the cultural politics and political economy of territory, property, space, and nation. For the populations of the Darjeeling hills, anxieties over belonging perpetually haunt and undermine the affected Gorkha subject, while paradoxically enabling and over-determining the conditions of his/her possibility within India. Finally, within the urban environment, the localization of global politics plays a key role in determining the ways in which the state and its subjects determine who belongs and how that belonging is negotiated. An interrogation of refugee politics within the context of Calcutta's history demonstrates the ways in which citizenship and rights are contested through the politics of space and shelter.

Moving beyond understandings of belonging as a descriptive term, each of these projects re-imagines belonging as a central concept in the colonial and postcolonial history of greater Bengal. Taken as an analytic, belonging thus undermines simple notions of national and regional identity and the imaginary internal and external boundaries of state and nation. At once sentient and intricately linked to broader processes of state-formation, colonial and postcolonial governance, and shifting socio-political terrains, the question of belonging pushes us toward the experiential habitation of these conjunctures. This panel thus presents several scholars' recent attempts to grapple with this elusive, yet vital, thread of historical-being in Bengal.

Ethnography of a 'Civilizing Mission': Situating the Missionaries and Dalits in the Twentieth century Kerala

The interface of the missionaries and dalits has found entry into the Historical and ethnographic writings for a long time. This has given rise to interesting debates in history and anthropology. Some of the recent works in this area on India engage with larger debates in social and postcolonial theories. But in the Kerala context there hardly exits any social science writings that problematise the interactions of various Christian mission organizations and the dalit communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that attempt to engage with theoretical advances in the field. The predominant genre of writings has been oriented towards modernization theory. Various protestant missions were actively working among the dalit communities in Kerala from the mid nineteenth century onwards. This has brought
Sanyal, Romola

The Politics of Shelter: Identity, Belonging and the Question of Refuge in Post-Partition Calcutta.

Housing is one of the most politicized public goods provided by the state. The provision or denial of public housing or the attitude of governments towards informal housing determines categories of citizenship. While much urban literature concentrates on the plight of the urban poor and the affects of development on third world countries, little is said of those who affect the urban fabric through the migration of persecution. Refugee migrations into host nations pose a dilemma to the latter because they are guaranteed asylum. Nation states and their refugee populations engage in a variety of negotiations that distinguish between those who belong and those who don't, and how those belongings are articulated. This paper will look at the ways in which post-partition refugees in West Bengal staked a claim to the right to belong to the city and the nation through their politics of shelter. By tracing their social and political actions, the paper argues that questions of belonging and un-belonging to the state are contingent upon the anxieties and aspirations of both the host and guest populations which are negotiated through the policies and politics of the state.

Sarasij, Majumdar

Fragile Spaces, Contested Places: Politics of Land Use in South Asia

This panel explores the shifting sensibilities around land and land-use within the context of neoliberal economic policies and military interventions in South-Asia. Ownership and access
to land provide financial stability and food security, as well as create disputes, conflicts and social hierarchies. Moreover, emerging livelihood practices associated with global economic restructuring and defense requirements give rise to competing discourses on land-use. For local communities and state-institutions, such competing claims on land entail a redefinition of cultural meanings as well as political economy of space. Within this context, our panel explores the following set of questions: how do local symbolics and politics of land-use correspond to and conflict with state agendas that privilege militarist and economically-driven claims of appropriate and just land use; how do the polyvalent discourses of economic modernity and state security play out in conjunction with people's desires, aspirations, and subjectivities that are deeply enmeshed in particular ideologies and practices of land-use; and, how do the changing perceptions of land-use shape the ways people create new modes of belongingness to households, communities, and the nation-state? Finally, do these new discourses of belonging facilitate or constrain the political agency of the marginalized?

Individual papers in this panel will provide theoretical and ethnographic perspectives to delineate the vexed and emergent structures of feeling around land in people's consciousness and praxis in contemporary South Asia. The papers initiate an innovative dialogue to explore the intricate connections between state and local uses of space and place and seemingly disparate ideologies and practices of defense and development –agendas that are crucially dependent on the use and appropriation of land and the reconfiguration of community spaces.

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Satya, Laxman

British Empire and South Asian Ecology: The Great Transformation

This paper will look at the 'great transformation' that the environment of the Indian Subcontinent underwent during the nineteenth century. It will analyze the imperial infrastructure building and the extension of colonial control over land, forests, grazing grounds, and water to service Britain's domestic and imperial needs. It will show how the colonial commercialization impacted on the lives and material conditions of peasants, pastoral nomads, forest dwellers, town and city folks. Final section will deal with popular response to British imperial assault on South Asia's environment.

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Scott, J. Barton

Confessions of a Terrorist: H.T. Lambrick and the Literary Afterlife of the Hurs

In 1972, retired colonial functionary H. T. Lambrick published a book entitled The Terrorist. Ostensibly translated from an autobiographical Sindhi manuscript, it narrates the life of Sainrakhio. This devout murid of the Sufi Pir Pagaro joined the Hurs, a fierce anti-colonial force that, in the name of Islam and their pir, waged war on the British from the marshlands of Sindh in the 1930s and 40s. Lambrick claimed that the manuscript was found in 1947 in a tin box amid the smoldering ruins of a Punjabi village. It was taken at first for a Persian romance, but Lambrick, a key colonial official during the Hur campaigns, recognized it for what it
was—the memoirs of a revolutionary. He kept the manuscript and published it almost thirty years later. Sainraikhio's manuscript was not, however, the only text in Lambrick's collection. A fervent Sindh enthusiast, he amassed a rich archive of letters, decrees, court transcripts, and press clippings, that amply document state perceptions of the Hur uprisings in the 1930s and 40s.

I read The Terrorist against Lambrick's colonial archive, attending to how each represents the Hurs' religious subjectivity. I argue that The Terrorist, through authorial authority and narrative suture, completes the imperial work of taming renegade religion. In the spirit of our panel ("Paper Jihadis"), I treat paper as a weapon, a tool of violent coercion unavailable to the Hurs. Bureaucratic documents served crucial ideological functions. They justified the state apparatus that, under a controversial martial law, monopolized violence in Sindh, and they controlled the public discourse that identified the Hurs as icons of Islam gone wrong.

First, I consider Lambrick's literary representation of militant Islam. I trace the text's murky authorship, situating it in relation both to the events it recounts and to the literary genre in which it participates. In particular, I compare The Terrorist to Philip Meadows Taylor's Confessions of a Thug (1840) to suggest how Lambrick consolidated early colonial mistrust of Indian religions under a new globalizing term. Second, I use Lambrick's archive to analyze imperial representations of Hur religiosity. I pay particular attention to how colonial discourse incorporated Muslims' critiques of this guerilla Sufism, which allegedly bordered on pir worship (pir parast). Finally, I consider how Lambrick sought to straddle these two subjective positions—seeing like a state and seeing like a terrorist—and suggest that his double vision characterizes the discourse of "terrorism" more broadly.

Sen, Debarati

From Illegal to Organic: Spatial Politics of Fair Trade-Organic Tea Production in Darjeeling, India

My paper looks at how a growing demand for organic tea in the global market due to alternative trade movements changes the spatial politics of tea production in Darjeeling, India. Although tea grown in the Darjeeling region enjoys a place specific branding, the colonial legacy of plantations resulted in a peculiar spatial distinction. “Darjeeling” tea could be grown only on the land that came under the jurisdiction of the plantations. One formidable effect of this colonial legacy has been that the tea grown outside the plantations is considered “illegal”. My paper shows that production of these legal/illegal boundaries by the state deprives sections of the local population from the benefit of tea trade and has shaped the gender relationships among communities of “illegal farmers”. The “legal space” of tea production received more investment in the form of chemical fertilizers. Being deprived of such inputs, the illegal farms produced organic tea by default. When the British left (in 1947), many plantations were closed or abandoned. As a result, poor village women had to grow tea-leaves illegally in the existing plantation fringes, and had to sell tea-leaves in the local market to earn cash. Tea monocropping had made their land unsuitable for any other forms of agriculture. Over the years, these women farmers have continued to grow tea “illegally” in their backyards with home made/organic manure to supplement cash income. But at present, the
increasing earning from the sale of organic tea has intensified the gendered conflict around tea production in farming communities. The switch from conventional to organic due to alternative trade movements has led to the dependence of the “legal sector” or the plantations on the “illegal” and unrecognized producers, who are mostly women. While the Fair Trade-Organic movement gives prominence to the so-called “illegal farmers”, efforts to secure access to land and market among the “illegal” women farmers have gained intensity in the political life of the villages, so long excluded from the global circuits of tea-trade.

Sheoran, Nayantara

On Regulation and Consumption of the i-pill advertising campaign in India.

Cipla, a leading pharmaceutical company in India recently introduced the “morning-after” pill, or the emergency contraceptive pill, to Indian audiences through a targeted and extravagant advertising campaign. Since the “pill” is viewed as a contraceptive it is permissible to advertise in Indian media; however such advertising has raised questions about policy and polity within the “new” India. This paper examines the advertising campaign first by placing it within the policy framework that pharmaceutical advertising operates. Next, by way of semiotic/discursive analysis of the advertisements themselves, the paper will examine the meaning making processes undertaken by audiences of the message. Finally, the paper will undertake an ethnographic study of the reception of the campaign. The “ethnographic” examination undertaken here is unconventional in its approach as it uses the internet for all “interactions” – from participant observations to “deep-hanging out” in chat rooms and the “blogosphere.” The implication of this research goes beyond the need and effect of such advertisement campaigns. Rather in highlighting discourse’s ability to affect subject positions within post-liberalization India, this research explores the links between polity and policy in advertising regulation.

Shneiderman, Sara

Circular Identities: migration, citizenship and the challenges of cross-border belonging for the Thangmi of Nepal and India
This paper examines the history of Thangmi circular migration between Nepal (Dolakha and Sindhupalchok) and India (Darjeeling and Sikkim) to show how national identity and citizenship only emerged as important reference points for Thangmi identity construction after 1950. Despite more recent attempts by both the Nepali and Indian states to determine criteria for citizenship, Thangmi conceptions of it remain flexible (cf. Ong 1999). With the first Thangmi migrants leaving Nepal for what was then British India in the early 19th century, most did not have a clear sense of belonging to either the Nepali nation-state that they left behind, or to the emerging India in which they settled. Many had never been to the Nepali capital of Kathmandu before traveling to Darjeeling, and such migrants developed a particular brand of rural cosmopolitanism which involved traveling from one periphery to another, rather than from periphery to centre within a single nation-state. While many Thangmi migrants remained in India and never returned to Nepal, substantial numbers continued to practice circular migration, and cross-border seasonal migration remains a primary economic strategy for the Thangmi today. Many Thangmi individuals therefore maintain pragmatic elements of both Nepali and Indian citizenship, although this is technically illegal. These ‘flexible citizenships’ contribute to Thangmi ‘circular identities’—the affective result of moving back and forth between two fixed national identities yet feeling that they belong to both and neither at the same time. Such feelings put this group at odds not only with the regulatory bodies of the two states in question, but also with settled members of the Thangmi community who clearly identify as either Nepali or Indian. As identity politics as a whole has become an increasingly potent force in both Nepal and India over the last decade, the multiple forms of belonging that Thangmi experience have lead to new forms of tension, as well as collaboration, within the community itself and in relation to the modern nation-states of Nepal and India. The particular ways in which Thangmi have participated in the janajati and Maoist movements in Nepal, and the campaign for Scheduled Tribe recognition in India, have been strongly influenced by their experiences of cross-border mobility. By exploring these dynamics, I will show how old but ongoing patterns of circular migration have played a crucial role in producing circular South Asian identities over time.

Shneidermann, Sara

Shifting Identities in the New Nepal

Recent developments in Nepal have made ethnic identities increasingly salient in the political arena. Identity movements began to mobilize after 1990 but have accelerated and intensified since 2006, when all political actors became engaged in discussions about how to restructure the state and create an inclusive democracy. This panel examines how various groups of people are reconceptualizing and reframing their identities in the context of the growth of these identity movements and these shifts in the state. The first two papers look at two marginalizes communities, Dalits and Muslims. Folmar examines how five different Dalit castes in Western Nepal are negotiating their identities in the context of a Dalit nationalist movement that emphasizes a unified Dalit identity. Adamson Sijapati argues that the recently founded National Muslim Forum Nepal is trying to construct a unified Muslim nation around ideas of Nepali Muslim experiences of conflict and violence, and the opposition between Muslims and the idealized Hindu state-religious majority. The other two papers reveal how communities that had not previously engaged with ideologies of ethnicity and nationalism are adopting these ideas to frame their identities or economic claims. Hoffmann investigates how the deaf community in Nepal is working to reframe itself as an ethno-linguistic minority community, with Nepali Sign Language as its
central marker, and the challenges of incorporating individuals from a variety of backgrounds into this unified identity. Timilsina discusses how a community at the Nepal-India border deploys Nepali nationalism as a way of enlisting support for their efforts to reclaim land that has been occupied by settlers from India. Together the papers on this panel provide rich ethnographic data that demonstrates the multiple ways in which identities are shifting in contemporary Nepal.

Sinha, Amita

Restored Gardens and Regenerated Traditions

The Mughal garden has been a visible symbol of aesthetic achievement and design paradigm emulated right up to the early twentieth century. Its heritage value is partly derived from symbolism associated with its ceremonial functions—a tradition lost as the imperial Mughal power waned. The garden was a site of coronation and durbars, and was thus part of the state apparatus of display and commemoration. Conservation of historic Mughal gardens has proved to be a challenge for a number of reasons—accretion of new structures in the colonial era and partial destruction and dilapidation of older structures, loss of ceremonial and commemorative traditions, changing environmental contexts and urbanization—to name a few. When their context is irrevocably changed, not only are the gardens affected in terms of their accessibility but also internally as in the views and water resources they could command for their effective functioning. With urbanization there is pressure on them to perform as neighborhood parks or city parks.

I study three historic gardens—Shalamar Bagh in Delhi, Mahtab Bagh in Agra, and Vilayiti Bagh in Lucknow—as settings of display of imperial power over nature and human populace. Shalamar Bagh and Mahtab Bagh were built as Mughal gardens in the seventeenth century and the Vilayiti Bagh in the early nineteenth century in a style derivative of the Mughal tradition. Shalamar Bagh was a site of coronation (of Emperor Aurangzeb) and a resting stop for the imperial entourage in its journey from Delhi to Lahore. Mahtab Bagh or the moonlight garden was built to view the Taj Mahal from across the river Yamuna. Vilayiti Bagh too was built on the banks of the river Gomti by Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, Nawab of Lucknow and named after his European wife. I analyze the three Islamic gardens as sites of specific courtly and aesthetic traditions that legitimized royal privilege and social hierarchy at the same time celebratory of the concept of an otherworldly paradise. I trace the trajectory of their abandonment and restoration as heritage sites in the twenty first century and investigate the consequent changes in their form, uses and meaning. I argue that these sites hold the potential for regenerated garden traditions that imply new discursive political and social practices. They legitimize identity of the nation and its states and create spaces for local community recreation and regional (and global) tourism.

Srivastava, Priyanka

In the early twentieth century Bombay, growing rates of infant mortality and poor maternal health of Indian women became a prominent issue of concern. These concerns led to the publications of reports and research essays on the topic. Simultaneously, there were both government and philanthropic efforts to medicalize child-birth and provide facilities for ante and post natal care. Among other things, these activities and discussions underlined the fact that living conditions, poverty and unavailability of medical help made the factory women workers and their infants especially vulnerable. Therefore, the maternal bodies of women workers as well as their infants’ health became the major foci of medical and social activism. Beginning in the 1920s, medical professionals such as Margaret Balfour, Sakuntala Talpade, and Dr Jerusha Jhirad studied and published their reports in journals such as the Indian Medical Gazette and the Journal of the Association of Medical Women in India. Similarly, among others, the Bombay Presidency Women’s Council, the Bombay Presidency Baby and Health Week Association, the Bombay Sanitary Association, the Society for the Promotion of Family Hygiene, opened infant welfare centers, organized baby and health weeks in the mill areas, started birth control clinics and held classes to educate women workers in the ‘appropriate’ ways of rearing infants. Similarly, the Bombay Municipal Corporation opened maternity homes and appointed health visitors especially for the working class women. Analyzing these campaigns, my paper would delineate how the maternal and infant health discourse in colonial Bombay made lower class women objects of enquiry and medical activism. As is well known, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century social reform agendas of women’s education, widow remarriage or the campaigns against sati largely focused on the elite Indian women. The realm of maternal and infant health was also an elite discourse, dominated by middle class medical practitioners and social reformers. However, in a colonial industrial city like Bombay where about seventy nine percent of the population belonged to the laboring poor category, any discussions on maternal and infant health could not ignore the subaltern. Thus, my paper demonstrates that this particular branch of medical activism challenged the hitherto elite boundaries of social reforms in colonial India. Simultaneously, I would briefly analyze the limitations of medical practices and discussions in this realm and how they further strengthened the elite/subaltern boundaries.

Still, Clarinda

Experiencing the State from the Margins: Dalit Perspectives on the State in Andhra Pradesh

Taking its cue from Corbridge et al’s (2005) ‘Seeing the State’, this paper discusses the relationship between Dalits and the state through their ‘sightings’ of it. Officially categorised as ‘SC’ and ‘Below Poverty Line’ (BPL) and therefore the targets of state welfare, Dalits come into contact with the state in its various forms on a daily basis. In the South Indian village of Nampalli, the state is present in the form of the schools, the panchayati office, the subsidized houses, the newly built community centre and in the bodies of the state officials who occasionally visit the Dalit hamlets. Less visibly, the state manifests itself through its programmes for the rural poor, most significantly, BPL food and fuel provision, reservations for the lower castes and the women’s savings and credit schemes through Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). In this paper, I argue that through these programmes and institutions, Dalits have come to see the state as ‘on their side’; the state is viewed as a resource which, with the right know-how and contacts, can be exploited to their advantage. Although corrupt and unwieldy, Dalits believe that potentially the state can provide for them and further their interests. This partly explains why they choose to refer to themselves by the anodyne state category ‘SC’ rather than their caste name (‘Madiga’) or
their more politicised name, ‘Dalit’. The view that ‘the state is on their side’ is corroborated and exaggerated by the upper castes who resent state ‘favouritism’ towards the Dalits, particularly the policy of reservations. So much so that this has now become one of the key causes of inter-caste tension in the village, although the resentment felt is entirely disproportionate to the benefits actually brought. However, this positive picture of the state is counterbalanced by Dalits’ relationship to the police, a relationship essentially characterised by fear and mistrust, likened by Dalits to their relationship with ghosts (dayalu).

Stirr, Anna


The rodhi ghar is a traditional youth dormitory association particular to the Gurung ethnic group. Classic ethnography of the Gurungs, particularly the work of Andors (1976), McFarlane (1976), and Moisala (1991), describes the rodhi as a site for socializing youth into traditional labor exchange, and for its most famous aspects: all-night singing and dancing, including flirtatious dohori song duels between young men and women. A generation ago, Gurungs and outsiders to Gurung culture had ambiguous opinions about the rodhi: was it a tradition to be respected and upheld, or a site for degenerate behavior among unruly youth? Now, though the rodhi has died out in rural Gurung villages, it has become an important symbol of Gurung identity and cultural heritage among the urban Gurungs who aim to define a normative Gurung culture. They look back to a time when sexual activity purportedly had no place in rodhi relationships—when the institution was chokho, pure. Such discourse often downplays the rodhi’s role as a youth association and emphasizes the presence of younger and older members of society, attempting to elide generation-specific ideas of purity. At the same time, the dohori songs of the Gurung heartland have become a commercial phenomenon, with a burgeoning cassette industry and a major share of Kathmandu nightlife. Young men and women of many castes and ethnicities perform in dohori restaurants, but all the women wear Gurung dress. Even with references to village and ethnic cultural heritage in dress, decor, and (mainly) the music and style of dance, dohori restaurants are much like other Kathmandu restaurant-bars—they’re sites for indulgence in food, drink, and sexual interaction from pick-ups to prostitution. For some, dohori restaurants and their rodhi symbolism represent a connection with a tradition of free interaction between the sexes that can serve as a traditional justification for more modern forms of love relationships. This paper traces the development of these two related trajectories, as the rodhi becomes a symbol both of a purified traditional heritage and of adolescent abandon. With particular attention to the youth who perform in dohori restaurants, I examine their investments in both discourses of purification and freedom, how they link them with their own aspirations, and how they define their generation in relation to previous generations in a modern Nepal.

Subramanian, Mathangi

"Ragas in the Background": The Role of Technology in the Development of Hybrid Ethnic Identities Among South Asian American Female Adolescents

The following study explores the ways in which South Asian American young women use the
Internet to both strengthen / develop their ethnic identities and cope with / resist racism and other barriers to developing a strong ethnic identity. The study utilizes ethnographic data from deep interviews with South Asian American women between the ages of 18 and 19. While the study will investigate the ways in which South Asian women move through the stages of ethnic identity development through exploration and commitment (a process defined by developmental psychologists), it focuses more heavily on the ways in which South Asian women define their ethnic identities. The study begins with the assumption that ethnic identity is dynamic, and that women who have strong ethnic identities move beyond how others define them by exploring how these identities fit into their lives as Americans. For the youth in this study, the process of redefinition occurs through popular culture, political organizing, and social practices. Consequently, this study will focuses on a common site of popular culture production and consumption: media and technology. Specifically, the study examines the ways in which these women use social software such as facebook, youtube, and gchat to develop hybrid South Asian identities and to shape and redefine South Asian diasporic culture, particularly in terms of gender.

The data in this study is analyzed using a third world feminist framework, and particularly relies on the theories of Uma Narayan and Chandra Mohanty. The study provides evidence that young women use technology to build solidarity within and beyond the South Asian community; combat feelings of isolation and tokenism; trouble the notion that South Asian culture is dynamic and the South Asian female experience is monolithic; and challenge racism, sexism, homophobia, and faith-based discrimination on high school and college campuses. The study describes the ways in which young South Asian women are reshaping gender and cultural expectations within and outside of their ethnic communities, as well as the nature of third world feminist resistance in South Asian American diaspora.

TOGAWA, Masahiko

Encountering Islam

Encountering Islam: Historiography of Caitany in the Gaudiya Vaisnava Literature

This study analyzes the usage of the term Hindu in various contexts in the Gauriya Vaisnava literature, which is a series of hagiographies of the saint Caitanya(1486–1533). Caitanya is well known as the medieval Bengali saint, who took the initiative in the Bhakti movement in the eastern and northern parts of India. In particular, the term hindu appeared on two masterpieces of the hagiographies, namely the Sri Caitanya Bhagavata (completed around 1545) and the Sri Sri Caitanya Caritamrta (around 1612–15). Both texts are popular as religious scriptures among Bengali Hindus for many years, and are valuable as historical documents that describe the religious life and discourses among the Indian society of that time.

It is well known that Joseph T. O’Connell has discussed the term Hindu in these texts, and several scholars have referred to his pioneering study for their arguments over the modern construction of the concept of ‘Hinduism’. This fact demonstrates the importance of these Bengali texts with respect to the issue; however, at the same time, it is interesting to note that some scholars, who supported the colonial construction theory, such as R.E. Frykenberg and Richard King, referred to his study and made it the basis of their arguments. In the meantime, other scholars such as Wilhelm Halbfass and Arvind Sharma used it for their
counterarguments. In this context, it is important to re-examine the usage of the term Hindu in these texts, and to analyze its implications in the context of self-consciousness and self-representation as Hindus, in contrast to the others, the Muslims.

In the Sri Caitanya Bhagavata, the term Hindu appears 14 times, and in the Sri Sri Caitanya Caritamrīta, it appears 22 times. The author categorises the meanings of the term Hindu in each sentence, and points out the transition of the usages in both texts. This analysis sheds light on the process of the formation of ‘self-conscious religious identity’, to borrow David Lorenzen’s phrase, in which the native people of India became aware of a religious community, who suppose to share the same norms and values as the Muslims. In particular, the usage of the term Hindu-dharma indicates that the Hindu people recognised their beliefs and practices as a ‘religion’ (dharma), in contrast to the different beliefs and practices of the Muslims, who were dominated the Bengal region of those days.

Thachil, Tariq

Saffron Forests: The BJP's Efforts with Tribals in Chhattisgarh

The 2003 State Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh saw the replacement of the Congress government that had presided over the new state's first three years with that of the opposition BJP. Perhaps the most interesting development in these elections was the dramatic reversal in support by the state's Adivasi population, which overwhelmingly voted for the BJP, and in doing so turned the election in their favor. This strong performance of the BJP with Chhattisgarhi tribal groups was then repeated in the 2004 National Elections. Given the BJP's reputation as an upper-caste party, this voting pattern is counter-intuitive and demands closer analysis. Indeed Hindu nationalism has always been an elitist ideology seeking a mass base. As the movement's political party arm, the BJP has been particularly afflicted by the tension between the upper-caste roots of Hindutva and its electoral need for a popular following among India's lower castes and tribals. This paper looks at a case in which the party has managed to succeed in this venture of widening its support base without losing its elite core constituencies in the state of Chhattisgarh in central India. Relying on a combination of interviews with state, district and local party leaders in both parties coupled with surveys conducted in ST constituencies throughout the state, I analyze the reasons behind the BJP's surge with the state's all-important Adivasis electorate. My analysis reveals that the lack of both internal party organization and democratic procedures within the Congress party have severely hampered its image and ability to recruit effective Adivasi leaders, especially at the local level. In addition, the effectiveness of the BJP's organizational affiliates working with Adivasi populations has begun to pay electoral dividends for the party. The combination of vertical and horizontal organizational strength has allowed the BJP to break the stranglehold the Congress once had over Adivasi voters in the area, and indeed signal that this population is currently being molded into a vote bank for the Hindu right. Through this close analysis of the Chhattisgarhi case, my study also reflects more broadly on whether this success is a product of features unique to the state, or whether the Sangh's strategy can be implemented at a wider level to broaden the BJP's base across India and overcome the fundamental tension between Brahminical Hindu nationalism and Hinduism's oppressed.
Thomas, Sonja

From Chattas to Churidars: Homosociality, Heteronomativity and Modern Domesticity in Kerala, India.

For years, Kerala has been referenced for its ability to meet the basic needs of its people while suffering from low levels of economic development. Statistics boasting the high number of educated females, low birth rates, low infant mortality rates, later marrying ages for women, a population where females outnumber males, and high literacy rates have solidified Kerala’s standing as a model for South Asia. Yet the promising statistics involving women’s well-being does little to explain why Kerala ranks first the nation in crimes against women (including domestic violence, molestation and rape), why violence against women in Kerala has increased over 300% in the last 15 years, and why Kerala has one of the lowest female work participation rates in India.

This paper takes up the unfounded correlation between education and women’s empowerment by analyzing homosocial spaces in Kerala. While women share a public space with men in Kerala, this space is highly structured by gender. There are demarcated places for men and women on public transportation, bus stands, churches, temples, lines, protests, processions, etc. While some of the homosociality is explicit (with signs and dividers), others are self imposed and communally policed. I trace the historical shift from markers of religion/caste/gender to gender difference alone via Syrian Catholic women’s dressing practices—the chatta to the sari to the churidar. Using ethnographic and archival evidence from my dissertation research on Syrian Catholic women and Kerala politics in the 1950s, I argue that this shift in dressing practices coincides with the normalization of women in the public sphere and the emergence of a new domesticity and policing of feminine modesty. I will question the purpose and women’s promotion of homosociality by discussing heteronormativity, femininity, and how autonomy is dictated by modern domesticity.

The focus on the state of Kerala will provide a much needed and overdue analysis on points of statistical references used by South Asian scholars for decades (statistics mentioned above, birth rates, fertility rates, infant mortality rates, literacy rates, education). Through such a re-examination, we can re-situate Kerala within South Asia and question larger assumptions associated with achieving social, gender and political empowerment in the field of South Asian studies.

Towghi, Fouzieyha

Productions of Nationalized and Anti-National Subjects, Bodies and Territorialities in Pakistan, India, and Kashmir.

The papers in this panel examine historical and contemporary processes of gendered, sexualized, and racialized territorialization in three South Asian sites: India, Kashmir, and Balochistan in Pakistan. They each address procedures of gendered, sexualized and racialized co-constructions of Hindu, Muslim and “tribal” women’s, men’s and queer bodies and subjects, and of nationalized territorialities. The archives that these papers engage include mediatic, cinematic, governmental, organizational and social movement discourses. Together, these papers enable us to ask: what is the relation between these imaginings of territorialities,
religiously marked and “tribal” bodies and subjects across these various archives? How do they correlate or disaggregate? What claims are made and by whom about national belonging? What kinds of inclusions and exclusions are created and legitimized through these constructions and relationships?

Based on ethnographic research and an examination of human rights documents, Towghi’s paper addresses how contemporary Pakistani biopolitics and feminist human rights discourses construct Baloch “customs” and “tribal” social life as “backward” and uniquely misogynistic, a discourse that has been mobilized by the Pakistani government and army to blame “tribalism” for the under-development of Balochistan, the rape of Shazia Khalid, and to justify the military occupation of Balochistan and control of the province’s natural resources. Bacchetta’s paper addresses saturations of sexuality and processes of neo-racialization in the production of Hindu national territoriality, and Hindu, Muslim and queer subjects and bodies by two major Hindu nationalist organizations, the RSS and its women’s wing, the Samiti. Bacchetta’s paper is based on the RSS and Samiti’s publications and internal documents from 1939 to present, their current internet posting and communications, and on ethnographic research with both organizations. Dar’s paper explores the sexualized territorially/corporealities of Kashmir and Kashmiri Muslims in the Indian cinematic imaginary post-1989, where the “terrorist” is invoked only to be “disciplined and punished” by the biopolitics of Indian nationalism and is normalized into docility as simply “abnormal,” as sexual-deviant, thereby moving the locus of trouble in Kashmir from actual political grievances to the pathologized body of the individual Kashmiri. This panel takes seriously the gendered, racialized, sexualized, and spatialized power of the modern-traditional dichotomy in national imaginaries, and the challenges to the same from the nations’ discontented. Together the papers highlight the (re)emergence of neocolonial gendered, sexualized and racialized tropes in the discursive formation of national imaginaries, and their materialized effects.

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Towghi, Fouzieyha

Producing Gendered "Tribalism": Racializing the Tribal Social Body to Protect Women’s Bodies and Nation's Natural Resources

Whereas, contemporary anthropological scholarship on the Baloch is largely concerned with the category of ethnicity, it is the term tribe that has captivated thinking around social and economic development of the nation and that circulates in discourses about the Balochs and Balochistan province in Pakistani and human rights documents. In transnational development aid and rights discourses, Balochistan is depicted as the most under-“developed” province in Pakistan not so much economically as socially. This paper deconstructs the mechanism by which the marginalized region of Balochistan is represented through gendered, racialized, and sexualized terms of ‘backward tribes’ and familiar colonial tropes. Towghi examines how arguments toward universal rights for women end up re-invigorating primordial-biological notions to characterize tribal identity at the cusp of 20th and 21st Centuries. Marked as tribal, the people and the region of Balochistan are simultaneously positioned opposite of the “secular state” and “Islamic nation” in international, State, and local discursive spaces. The postcolonial constructions of particular subjects (i.e. Baloch tribes) and social practices (tribal ways of life) that are the object of development in Pakistan, and that form the rationale for designing policies of improvement; possess a good deal in common with earlier colonial
reifications and fetishizations of unfamiliar ways of life, albeit with a distinctive character that derives from the politics of Pakistan’s national identity in the present in which “tribal” ways are opposed to “national” ways. Unlike the colonial description of mountainous Balochistan and the romantic notions of Balochs as the warrior and more masculine of the “martial races”, human rights discourses equate Baloch sociality to “tribalism” and “tribal men” as hyper masculine, hyper sexual, and essentially anti-women. The social life of Balochs is deemed entirely controlled by “tribal” chiefs and norms. The discourses of social improvement, now dominated by the goals to advance women’s health and social status, rather than focusing on structural conditions and causes of social inequalities, locate cultural norms and ways as primary sites needing change. Specifically, human rights documents portray “tribal” men of Balochistan and their social values as the source of “honor killings” of women. Similarly, Pakistani nationalist discourse since at least 2003, in which emphasis is placed on the “brutal” nature of Baloch tribal practices affecting girls and women to convey the “pre-modern” “pre-modern” and “uncivilized” characteristics of tribalism, has been mobilized indirectly and directly by the government and army to justify the militarization of the Balochistan province.

Trautman, Thomas R
Discussant

Vaidik, Aparna

Constructing the Nation: the case of the Andaman Islands

The historiography of the nationalism, end of empire, and the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 have been intently focussed on the landmass of the Indian subcontinent. The story of how these trends played out over the Indian Ocean waters remains untold. This paper attempts to focus the attention of historiography on the Oceanic space by examining the history of the Andaman Islands. This it does by first examining the contestations over the Andamans in which both Nehru and Jinnah unflinchingly pursued the inclusion of the Islands in India and Pakistan respectively. The Andamans were peopled, much in the way several island colonies were, by the British from the late nineteenth century with convicts and free labourers from different parts of the Empire. The Andamans could well be part of either India or Pakistan. Ultimately Mountbatten handed over the Islands to India in 1947. With the inclusion of the Andamans into the Indian Union what did it mean for the inhabitants of the Islands to belong to the Indian nation? What implications did it have for the ‘scheduled’ tribes and castes who inhabited the Islands?

Vajracharya, Gautama

Nepali Fountains: Natural Phenomena in Art

The Kathmandu valley is dotted with water fountains, with sunken terraced and bathing place. The spouts of fountains are designed like a makara with a wide open mouth, vomiting a stream of water. The main characteristic of the makara spout is foliage
motif which appears like the elongated tail of the mythical creature. This motif is sometime replaced by aquatic creatures such as snakes, crocodiles, horses, ducks, turtles, and frogs etc. From the open jaw of the makara, in some examples, emerges a cow or a bull.

The main focus of this paper is to explain the symbolic significance of all these features of the fountain in light of oral tradition and textual evidence found in Sanskrit and Newari works.

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Vella, Stephen

A Passion for Conquest: The Sikh as Spiritual Soldier, 1806-1846

In the 1840s, British forces famously warred with and annexed the Sikh kingdom, transforming it into a reliable base for military recruitment and a testing ground for new modes of colonial rule. However, this transformative decade of confrontation was by no means the first time Europeans encountered the people of the Punjab. Much of that cultural contact was bridged by French and Italian officers working for British ally Maharajah Ranajit Singh during the 1820s and 1830s. While ostensibly hired to train Ranajit’s army along French lines, in their daily lives these men adopted a largely empathetic and assimilationist(if also ambivalent) attitude towards Sikh culture. Britons across the Sutlej River, on the other hand, constructed a “Sikh” character that was fiercely menacing. The nature of that Sikh menace, crucially, was grounded in distinctly British notions of Sikh religion. Through an examination of the newspaper press, narrative histories, personal journals, visual culture and diplomatic correspondence, this paper will trace the ways in which British representations of Sikh religion were developed and deployed before the outbreak of war. Along the way, Britons found justification for an inevitable clash between themselves and their latest colonial “other.” As a flip-side to this aggressively masculine vision of Sikh religion, this paper examines the feminized framing of Sikh government in the 1840s as both cunning and chaotic through British discourse of the Queen-Regent, Maharani Chand Kaur. Termed an Asiatic “Messalina”, Chand Kaur played in the British imagination as a perfect foil to Queen Victoria and secured the Punjab’s designation as a land ripe for colonial conquest.

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Vidyarthi, Sanjeev

Comprehending the conjoined twins: An American neighborhood unit and the abutting Kachhi Basti

This paper will provide an insight into how the construction of a “neighborhood unit” in the city of Jaipur triggered off the building of an abutting Kachhi Basti (informal settlement). By tracing their concomitant development over time, my aim is not only to highlight the linkages between these two spatial entities but also to demonstrate how the informality of Kachhi Basti has penetrated the formality of the planned neighborhood as much as can be stated the other way around.

American planner Clarence Perry introduced the neighborhood unit concept in volume seven of the Regional Survey of New York and its environs, published in 1929. Inspired by the “Chicago school,” Perry’s neighborhood unit was conceived as a comprehensive physical planning instrument for designing self-contained neighborhoods. Otto Keonigsberger, a
German architect, first introduced the neighborhood unit to India in his 1943 plan for Jamshedpur (Dutt 1993, 365). Albert Mayer, the American architect initially in charge of designing the new city of Chandigarh, used Perry’s model as the proto-typical unit of the plan (Mayer 1950, 173). The concept gained collective acceptance of the Indian planning community when it was used to derive “Planning standards for community services and facilities” at the fourth conference of Indian Town Planning Institute held at Lucknow in 1955.

My strategy to narrate the story of informalization of the formally planned and formalization of the informally planned settlement is based on highlighting the role of plebian characters that straddle the realms of both the subaltern and elite. Thomas Blom Hansen (2001, 9) has recently suggested that the extension of democracy to many groups secluded earlier has given rise to new and multi-dimensional plebian identities such as the low-caste but high profile constable of local police, and the part-time pickpocket and political worker. At some level, these characters defy categorization. To the subaltern they are elite by virtue of their local clout and prestige, and to the elite they remain subalterns owing to the perceived pettiness of their professions and frequent origins among low castes. Similarly many elites, notwithstanding their global aspirations and modern orientations, betray characteristics usually identified with the subaltern.

This paper is based on doctoral research conducted in India during 2006 and 2007. Three methods were employed in this study: Geographical Information System (GIS); open ended and semi-structured interviews with the residents of Kachhi Basti and the formally planned neighborhoods; and archival research.

Wadley, Susan

Kinship Matters! - Matters of Kinship in South Asia and the Diaspora

This panel will examine how kinship notions and practices have been retained, revived and modified in the context of the changes and challenges posed by the rapid political and socio-economic developments currently underway, both in India and amongst the Indian diaspora. Have notions of who is kin and how they are kin been renegotiated in light of contemporary concerns? How is kinship being sustained or abandoned as the case may be in such circumstances? In other words, what and how much value do people attribute to kinship today? The study of kinship in south Asia has followed the general anthropological shift away from structure, symmetry and semantics to focus on meaning, substance, practices and sentiments. Accompanying this shift is an emphasis on the everyday rather than just the ritual and the institutional. Such a stance has enabled the dismantling of the hitherto analytically discrete domains of female and male experiences, domestic and public and personal and political. This panel is interested in delineating these mutual imbrications. Rather than alternate between structure and substance, the goal is to (re)embed our analysis of kinship in a keen understanding of political and social realities. The paper discuss changing perceptions of the meaning and value of kinship and interrogate how these intersect with socio-economic changes and people’s own interests at a given time, on the basis of ethnographically and historically informed contributions.
Wald, Erica

Bodies of the Cantonment: Medical Morality, Venereal Disease and Legal Control in India, 1835-1858

This paper will explore the ways in which the East India Company sought to regulate the bodies both of their own rank-and-file and of women deemed to be a ‘threat’. The threat presented by these women arose from the spectre of venereal diseases, which infected the soldiery in (what was perceived to be) catastrophic numbers. As for the men, their class origins were seen to link them to disorder, drunkenness and sex. This paper will focus on the changing legal, medical and military means by which Superintending Surgeons and Commanding Officers attempted to regulate the bodies both of Indian women and European men. It will examine the changing legal status of women and how this was irrevocably tangled up with ideas about race, class and disease. Conversely, it will question how this compared to the attempts made to control the Company’s rank-and-file.

The demands to control these women came largely from the military and medical officers who oversaw the troops who perceived them to be vectors of venereal diseases. Increasingly, these demands were steeped with ideas about morality and social control which were, in turn, justified using the language of medical needs. This lexicon of medical morality spread quickly beyond the cantonment limits to shape ideas about women and prostitution across India. The same medicalized language of control was applied to the Company’s European soldiers, the judgement of whom was based largely on their lower- and working-class origins. However, the medical and moral guidance of these men was attempted in a very different way from that imposed on the women deemed to be prostitutes. Fear of disturbing the soldiery and the lurking potential of provoking a mutiny prevented officers from imposing the same medical regulations on the men which they so liberally applied to women. The men, in medical and military reports as well as Courts Martial, were portrayed in an almost animalistic light, often in ways more negative than the women who supposedly unleashed venereal disease upon them. Exploring these differences and apparent contradictions is an important way in which we can illuminate and understand the shifting notions of race, morality and sexuality developing in India at the time.

Weinstein, Liza

Democratizing Development? Participation, Negotiation, Cooptation in Mumbai’s Globalizing Mega-Project

Over the past decade, research on urban governance has contributed insights into the democratic nature of globally oriented development planning. In general, this research has clustered around two poles: one set suggesting that global city development may be creating the conditions for greater public accountability; and the other decrying the rise of the neoliberal mega-project as the end of local democracy. Despite their contributions, both sets
have generally failed to specify the conditions under which globalizing forces either facilitate or hinder democratic participation. Furthermore, such assessments tend to be ahistorical, measuring contemporary governance against idealized notions of democracy, rather than contextually specific precursors.

Based on a historically-grounded case study of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP), an effort to transform Mumbai’s largest slum settlement into a mixed use, mixed-income township, this paper considers the democratic implications of efforts to “globalize” development. Although many features of the DRP are consistent with earlier slum housing schemes, the project’s global orientation represents a break, explicitly seeking foreign investment and the involvement of global developers. Meanwhile, as these features were being devised, project administrators were (at least rhetorically) seeking the involvement of local residents in the early planning process. By most assessments, efforts to globalize and elicit local participation seem contradictory, oriented toward the interests of capital on one hand and the demands of predominantly disadvantaged residents and workers on the other.

This paper traces these efforts over the four years of the DRP’s initial planning process, highlighting their conflicts and congruities, but finding that they are not as contradictory as might initially appear. Overall, despite the democratic rhetoric, planning for the DRP was largely technocratic, devised by a private consultant and elite cadre of engineers in the bureaucracy. However, negotiations with key stakeholders beginning half way through the process undeniably shaped certain features of the project. Although such negotiations can be understood as cooptation, administrators engaged key stakeholders and addressed some of their demands. Analyzing potential explanations for this “backstage” democratic moment, this paper finds that administrators, aware that opponents have the potential to obstruct or delay projects with direct agitations and lengthy court proceedings, engaged in negotiations in an effort to avoid delays and allay the fears of skittish foreign investors. Acknowledging that such participation is highly tenuous, this paper argues that, under certain conditions, pressures to globalize development may be creating conditions for the enactment particular forms of democratic participation.

Williams, Philippa

Power and politics in social policy: experiencing the state from the margins

 Debates regarding the role of the Indian state in ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of its citizens have recently gained particular prominence. This has largely come about because of the recognition that the larger forces of neo-liberalization and globalization have left the vast majority of India’s population untouched, if not worse off, through their negative effects on sectors such as agriculture, small scale enterprises and natural resources. In response, a plethora of social policies which aim to address the needs of the ‘common man’, for instance the RTI, NREGA, and Tribal Rights Act, the Sachar Committee report, policies on reservations etc. at the same time as deeply disputed policies such as the SEZ act have recently emerged. These then reflect greater contestation and tension between the promise of citizenship and its actual reflection and refraction in India’s developmental agenda. Given the patchwork of policies and institutions/actors that are prevalent in India, and the zig-zag
movement of their interactions, the question is how these social policies are formulated and enacted through the interplay between the state and pressures from below?

To answer this, the panel will explore the processes of social policy making by critically considering, not only how marginalized groups and their representatives are included and occluded in state political processes, but the extent to which their responses to state actions feed reiteratively into the political process. As both positive and negative impacts of these policies are played out, it is essential to appreciate not only the interactions between and within the state and marginalized people that shape these policies, but also the power and political dynamics that operate within these interactions. By exploring these issues within an overall framework for ‘inclusive citizenship’, this panel seeks to unpack issues of power and politics in the making and implementation of social policies.

Papers in this panel are empirically grounded and include:
1) How marginalised populations are included or excluded within the conception, formulation and implementation processes of social policy, and how the politics of power relations influence the nature and degree of their participation (Bina, Bharat, Deepta)
2) How the experiences of marginalized populations and their reactions to state policies may in turn shape state processes (Deepta)
3) Reviews of existing policies and assessments regarding their suitability to the needs of marginalised communities and how these in turn impact on local issues of power and politics (Bharat, Bina, Clarinda)

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Williams, Philippa

The case of the missing ‘welfare state’: muslim community experiences and agency

For a Muslim weaving community in Varanasi, North India the ‘welfare state’ is most conspicuous by its absence, but nonetheless filled with expectations. Building on over 10 months of multi method fieldwork in Varanasi, this paper explores Muslim narratives that emerged from expectations and experiences of the Indian ‘welfare state’. At odds with the Constitutional promise of equality and non-discrimination, this Muslim community perceived its consistent and relative marginalisation by the ‘welfare state’. For the community’s poorest weavers, deprivation was further amplified by internal patterns of elite capture of intended government support. In the absence of the state the Muslim weaving community does not alienate itself entirely from the state and democratic structures; instead it demonstrates its own agencies and capacities to fill the vacuum of welfare provisions and strategically appeals to the state to recognise and legitimise its community and services. Beyond highlighting the complexity of Indian Muslim’s experience of the state and its internal shifting dynamics, these findings raise the question; what is it that sustains the Muslim community’s expectations of the state to deliver its citizenship rights? To this end, the paper explores the predicament of secularism and the practice of citizenship for India’s Muslims.

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Wolcott, Susan
Microfinance in Colonial India

It has long been argued that rural India is poor because of a lack of investment. Farms were too small and worked with too little fertilizers, too little irrigation, and too few livestock. Government administrators have suggested more rural credit, but none of the programs from colonial times to the present have been satisfactory. In Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank is seen as a singularly successful attempt to provide rural credit. Field representatives go to the village, and form lending groups of 5. The groups will only continue to receive loans if all of the members repay previous loans. Thus the incentive to repay is access to future loans and standing within the village. The Grameen Bank has what is perceived to be an astounding 98% repayment rate. Yunus received the Nobel Prize in 2006.

No one would consider giving such an honor to a moneylender. Yet, moneylenders were seen as indispensable in colonial Indian villages. Colonial moneylenders followed many of the same practices as the Grameen Bank. They loaned without collateral based on their personal knowledge of the borrower. They lent very small amounts. They were, most historical descriptions agree, reasonably flexible with regard to repayment. Colonial moneylender rates were similar to the rates charged by the Grameen Bank today. This paper examines the provision and nature of credit in rural colonial India, including moneylenders. I exploit the voluminous records of the 1929-1930 Provincial Bank Enquiry Committees and a remarkable data set on Indian rural expenditures and finance from 1950-51, the All India Rural Credit Survey. I first establish that the colonial credit market was large, competitive and reasonably efficient, at least relative to mid-19th century US credit markets. This is a relevant comparison as the US was another very large agricultural economy, but unlike colonial India, is considered to have successfully developed. I will argue that there was a fully understood, if somewhat implicit, system of collective liability based upon caste standing. In short, there was microfinance in colonial India. In fact, I will argue that there was no shortage of credit in rural India, despite appearances. There was credit, but it funded ceremonies, not investment. It is important to understand this, both to interpret colonial Indian development, and to correctly fashion future credit policies in India.

Wright, Jr., Theodore P.

"Adoption of Muslim Personal Law for South Asian Muslims in the West"

Sponsored by the South Asian Muslim Studies Association.

There is a long history in South Asia of the application of Muslim Personal law by British and post-independence courts. This includes only family matters: marriage, divorce, inheritance, but not criminal or commercial law or procedure. The Indian constitution provides for enactment of a "common civil code", but under Muslim political pressure, this has never been done. As South Asian Muslims in large numbers have emigrated to Europe and North America, demands have been raised to extend to them the application of "Shariat" by courts and indeed in some cases, where all litigants agree to accept the verdict, this has been done. For others in the West, this is opposed as a violation of individual citizenship and equality before the law. The rise of "diversity" and post-modern cultural relativity has undermined this argument. It will be the purpose of this panel to investigate comparatively the transfer of this typically South asian dispute to "modern", non-Muslim milieus.

THe four panelists are:
1. Jeff Redding of Yale Law School, comparing treatment of this issue in India with Europe and North America.  
2. Rita Akhtar of USEFPakistan will locate the issue in the broader context of debate on multiculturalism and the ideological alignments it produces, as a case of the limits of toleration in modern liberal thought. 
3. Martha Bailey of Queens University, Law, Canada, will address how the dispute has been handled in Canada.  
4. Irfan Omar of Marquette University, Milwaukee, will discuss the debate in the USA. Theodore P. Wright, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Political Science at State University of New York, Albany, will chair the session for SAMSA.

Yothers, Brian

Facing East, Facing West: Pandita Ramabai in America, Mark Twain in South Asia

I examine the South Asian portions of Mark Twain's Following the Equator (1891) alongside Pandita Ramabai's The Peoples of the United States (1889; trans. Meera Kosambi 2003). I argue that reading Twain and Ramabai together can allow us to theorize travel writing in non-Eurocentric ways. Both Twain and Ramabai use exotic elements within the cultures they are visiting to call for reform within their native cultures as well as to entertain and instruct audiences at home. Particularly, both Ramabai and Twain use the tropes of beauty and justice to persuade readers to reject cultural chauvinism and learn from cultural difference, and both use humor to defend and critique their homelands. The relationship between these texts is further complicated and enriched by the context of British imperialism: Twain's ambivalent critique of British imperialism becomes a nascent critique of U.S. imperialism, and Ramabai's celebration of American independence becomes a defense of South Asian resistance to British imperialism. By reading these texts together, scholars of travel writing can confound conventional classifications of "Occidental" and "Oriental" travel writing and identify the global attributes of both American and South Asian literature.

Zinck, Pascal

"Fractured Selves and the Frailty of Memory in Michael Ondaatje’s Anil’s Ghost and Ambalavaner Sivanandan’s When Memory Dies"

The development of human rights owes a debt to the ascendancy of the UN International Court of Justice, witness the increasing number of war crimes prosecuted before the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia or the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. 
For all its limitations, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was instrumental in fostering national reconciliation and ensuring the transition to democracy. The achievement was to influence the international human rights movement in the case of los desaparecidos in Latin America or in Ulster. 
Despite human rights initiatives, a similar Kanamal ponathu / Athuruthahanvuvo project has yet to gain national, let alone international, recognition.

The present paper examines these issues in the fictional context of Michael Ondaatje’s Anil’s Ghost and Ambalavaner Sivanandan’s When Memory Dies. 
These two novels by Sri Lankan exiles expose the ethical complexity and ambiguity that characterise human relations during the civil war and as such they pose the question how far
does one go to secure peace and reconciliation or are there times when we must swallow injustice in the name of peace or post-colonial guilt? To what extent can the imposition of Western values and standards of justice – denounced by Said and more recently by Zizek - undermine national identity and thwart reconstruction? Recovery of personal as well as national memory provides the key to overcoming ethnic demonisation and oppression. Despite the traumatic events they describe, When Memory Dies and Anil’s Ghost celebrate the resilience of the human spirit over the forces of bigotry and irrationality.